Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language Teachers' Classroom Practices

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I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given, where reference has been made, to the work of others.

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Abstract

In recent decades, innovations in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers worldwide have enhanced the quality and sustainability of ESL education in school systems. Advancements in technology, training opportunities, practitioner research, and collegial networks introduced significant innovations to CPD, which also need constant support and revival to underpin teachers' practices (Campbell et al., 2004). However, innovations vary from one context to another depending on 'context-specific' resources and characteristics (Hayes, 2014). Thus, CPD in Sri Lanka in particular, needs a deeper focus on context-specific understanding to instigate a change in the CPD process for the improvement of ESL teaching and learning processes. With the goal of addressing this need, my doctoral study explores Sri Lankan ESL teacher perceptions of CPD and application of their newfound knowledge in classroom practices by embracing a sociocultural theoretical perspective of second language teacher development. For this qualitative study, five ESL teacher participants who were doing CPD were chosen through a purposive sampling strategy. Data generated over a period of seven months through online semi-structured interviews and classroom observations followed by post-observation interviews were analysed thematically, initially creating visual representations. The findings were presented as three case studies in relation to school settings: urban, semi-urban and rural. The findings suggest the need for a reciprocal four-way transformation in the nature of CPD that would result in strong positive relationships among authorities, trainers and teachers, for an enhanced CPD scenario. Future research is recommended to broaden the scope by covering different parts of the country and involving more stakeholders.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ii
Abstract iii
Table of Contents iv
List of Tables x
List of Figures x
List of Abbreviations xi
Chapter 1 Introduction 1
1.1 Background of the study 1
1.2 Aim 4
1.3 Overview 4
Chapter 2 Sri Lankan Context 6
2.1 The education system 6
2.2 Primary and secondary Education 8
2.3 A glimpse of the history of English education in Sri Lanka 9
2.4 Teacher recruitment and pre-service teacher training 10
2.5 CPD provision and role of higher authorities 11
2.5.1 'English as a life skill' 12
2.5.2 iTESL (Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka) Project 13
2.5.3 CPD-related issues 14
2.6 My specific research context 15
2.7 Impact of COVID-19 on the school system and the CPD provision 16
2.8 Chapter summary 17
Chapter 3 Literature Review 18
3.1 Introduction 18
3.2 Emergence and development of SLTE 19
3.3 Quality of teaching, issues, and expectations of SLTE 22
3.4 Teacher training, teacher education and teacher development 23
3.5 Aspects of knowledge 29
3.6 Nature of teachers' beliefs 30
3.6.1 Research on teacher beliefs and classroom practice 31

3.6.2 Impact of CPD on teacher beliefs 33
3.7 Impact of human cognition in developing teaching expertise......... 35
3.7.1 Teacher cognition and decision-making in language teaching36
3.8 What is teacher change? 38
3.8.1 Why teachers need to change 39
3.8.2 What influences teacher change 40
3.8.3 Teachers as autonomous practitioners................................ 44
3.9 Defining teacher evaluation 47
3.9.1 Impacts of teacher evaluation.. 47
3.9.2 Collaborative, bottom-up reflective tools for teacher evaluation48
3.10 Chapter summary and identifying gaps in literature....................... 55
Chapter 4 Methodology 58
4.1 Chapter overview.. 58
4.2 My paradigmatic stance 58
4.3 Qualitative approach... 61
4.3.1 The qualitative multiple case study design 62
4.4 Participants and the recruitment process...................................... 63
4.4.1 Sampling 64
4.4.2 Recruitment 68
4.4.3 Teacher participants 69
4.5 My positionality as an ‘inbetweener’ 73
4.6 Ethical considerations... 75
4.6.1 Obtaining participants’ informed consent............................. 76
4.6.2 Protecting participants’ identities and confidentiality 77
4.6.3 Mitigating the power relationship 78
4.7 Data generation instruments... 79
4.7.1 Semi-structured interviews 80
4.7.2 Classroom observation... 82
4.7.3 Post-observation interviews.. 84
4.8 Pilot study 85
4.9 Data generation and analysis 87
4.9.1 Briefing 87
4.9.2 Data generation... 87
4.9.3 Data analysis... 90
4.10 Trustworthiness 95

4.10.1 Credibility 95
4.10.2 Transferability 96
4.10.3 Dependability 96
4.10.4 Confirmability 97
4.11 Chapter summary 97
Chapter 5 Findings – Case study 1 – Urban Setting 98
5.1 Introduction 98
5.2 Different beginner stories of Krishan and Nirmal 100
5.2.1 How Krishan became a teacher of English 100
5.2.2 How Nirmal became a teacher of English 102
5.2.3 Reflections on the initial training experiences 103
5.3 Reasons for gaining professional development 104
5.3.1 Self-oriented reasons 105
5.3.2 Student-oriented reasons 107
5.4 Reflections on CPD opportunities 110
5.4.1 Most influential CPD experiences 110
5.4.2 Implementation of learnt knowledge 113
5.5 Collegial reciprocity vis-a-vis outside expertise in support of classroom practice 120
5.6 Identified inconsistencies in the CPD process 122
5.7 Views on future directions for CPD 125
5.8 Chapter summary 129
Chapter 6 – Findings – Case study 2 – Semi-Urban setting 130
6.1 Introduction 130
6.2 How Anjalee became a teacher of English 132
6.2.1 Reflections on initial training 133
6.3 Reasons for gaining professional development 134
6.3.1 Self-oriented reasons 135
6.3.2 Student-oriented reasons 138
6.4 Reflections on CPD experience 139
6.4.1 The most influential CPD opportunities 140
6.4.2 Impact of CPD on Anjalee's classroom practices 141
6.5 Factors that impeded the CPD process 144
6.5.1 System-related factors 144
6.5.2 Teacher-related factors 145

6.5.3 Trainer-related factors 147
6.6 Trainer intervention vis-a-vis collegial reciprocity for classroom implementation 148
6.6.1 Trainer intervention: motivations and demotivation 148
6.6.2 Collegial reciprocity 150
6.7 Anjalee's views on future directions for CPD 151
6.8 Chapter summary 153
Chapter 7 Findings – Case study 3 – Rural setting 154
7.1 Introduction 154
7.2 Different beginner stories of Nadee and Tharu 156
7.2.1 How Nadee became a teacher of English 157
7.2.2 How Tharu became a teacher of English 157
7.2.3 Reflections on initial training 158
7.3 Reasons for gaining professional development 160
7.3.1 Mitigating contextual challenges of being a teacher of English in a rural setting 160
7.4 Reflections on CPD opportunities 162
7.4.1 CPD provision and delivery 162
7.4.2 The most influential CPD opportunities 164
7.4.3 Impact of iTESL on teachers' classroom practice 166
7.5 Factors impeding CPD and implementation of new practices 170
7.5.1 Lack of government intervention for providing CPD 170
7.5.2 Lack of facilities 172
7.5.3 Experts' lack of contextual understanding 173
7.6 Collegial reciprocity vis-a-vis trainer intervention 174
7.6.1 Trainer intervention; motivations vs demotivation 175
7.6.2 Collegial reciprocity 176
7.7 Views on future direction for CPD 177
7.8 Chapter summary 178
Chapter 8 – Discussion 179
8.1 Introduction 179
8.2 Nature of CPD in context 179
8.3 Participants' expectations from CPD 183
8.4 Inconsistent processes and practices 189
8.4.1 Teachers 190

8.4.2 Trainers 190
8.4.3 Training opportunities 190
8.4.4 System 191
8.5 A framework for addressing CPD inconsistencies: The Cycle of Transformation 191
8.6 Factors inhibit or facilitate teacher change 194
8.6.1 Politicisation 199
8.6.2 Exam-oriented system 201
8.6.3 Teacher beliefs, practices and behaviours 202
8.6.4 Teachers' lives, their work, disposition and commitment 203
8.6.5 Conventional methods 205
8.6.6 Cultural and normative limitations 207
8.6.7 Lack of facilities 207
8.6.8 Teacher learning possibilities 208
8.6.9 Contextual challenges 209
8.6.10 Societal expectations and the influence of higher authorities 209
8.6.11 Teachers' professional capital 210
8.7 Participants' expected support vs received support for CPD 211
8.7.1 Collaborative classroom observation as a support mechanism 212
8.7.2 Collaborative strategies for an enhanced CPD scenario 214
8.8 Chapter summary 217
Chapter 9 Conclusion 219
9.1 Reflections 219
9.2 Contributions 220
9.3 Thesis overview 221
9.4 Limitations 222
9.5 Implications for the field of teacher education 223
9.6 Future directions 225

References 226
Appendix A : Survey Questionnaire 242
Appendix B : Sample Participant Information Sheet 244
Appendix C : Sample Participant Consent Form 247
Appendix D : Sample Information Sheet for Parents 249
Appendix E : Sample Parental Consent Form 251
Appendix F : Sample Information Sheet for Principals 252
Appendix G : Sample Consent Form for Principals 254
Appendix H : Ministry of Education Approval 1 255
Appendix I : Ministry of Education Approval 2 256
Appendix J : Letter from the British Council, Sri Lanka 257
Appendix K : Approval from the Zonal Director of Education 258
Appendix L : Interview Prompts 259
Appendix M : Sample Interview Protocol 264
Appendix N : Observation Protocol - Anjalee 267
Appendix O : Initial Codes 268
Appendix P : Visualized Coding 269
Appendix Q : Ethical Approval 274

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Types of schools 8
Table 4-1. Stratifications for selecting sample population 65
Table 4-2. Participant Information 69
Table 4-3 Details of the data generation 89
Table 4-4 Initial codes and categories of interview 1 with Anjalee 92

List of Figures

Figure 2-1 The education and training system in Sri Lanka 7
Figure 3-1 Embedded Cultures (Wedell and Malderez, 2013, p.31) 41
Figure 3-2 Educational change as a complex system (Hoban, 2002, p.37). 42
Figure 3-3 Professional development journey 56
Figure 4-1 The CPD process and practices 94
Figure 5-1. Case study 1 (Urban setting) 100
Figure 6-1. Case study 2 (Semi-Urban setting) 132
Figure 7-1 Case study 3 (Rural setting) 156
Figure 8-1 The Cycle of Transformation 192
Figure 8-2 Web of Educational Change 200

List of Abbreviations

ADE	Additional Director of Education
A/L	Advanced Level
AR	Action Research
CCQ	Concept Checking Questions
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DELIC	District English Language Improvement Centres
EP	Exploratory Practice
ESL	English as a Second Language
ICQ	Instruction Checking Questions
ISA	In-service adviser
iTESL	Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MT	Mother Tongue
NCOE	National Colleges of Education
O/L	Ordinary Level
PRINSETT	Professional In-service English Teacher Training
RP	Reflective Practice
SLTE	Second Language Teacher Education

Transcription conventions used	
Unintelligible phrases	(…)
Pauses	…
Stressed phrases	Bold
Author excluded	[x]
Author commentary	[laughs]
L1 use	(තේරුණාද?)

Chapter 1 Introduction

> *The seeds of development will not grow if they are cast on stony ground. Critical reflection will not take place if there is neither time nor encouragement for it. Teachers will learn little from each other if they work in persistent isolation. Creative experimentation with instruction and improvement will be unlikely if changes are implemented from the outside by a heavy-handed administration.*
>
> (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, p.13)

1.1 Background of the study

Since childhood, I had an English-speaking background at home, as my parents received English medium education during the colonial period in Sri Lanka. Despite my mother being an English teacher, I never had the desire to follow in her footsteps. Instead, I chose a different path, studying Advanced Level (A/L) in the Maths stream. After not qualifying for university, I completed a draftsman course and became a draftsman, a career I loved. However, I eventually had to give up this career to fulfil my parents' wishes and became a teacher. Thus, my journey to becoming an English teacher was unintentional. I entered the system after completing a three-week pre-service training, possessing limited theoretical and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and language proficiency. This was compounded by having studied in my First language (L1) as the medium of instruction for 13 years. Transitioning into my role as a beginner teacher, I occasionally attended training programmes conducted by in-service advisers (ISAs). However, drawing on my English-speaking background at home, I approached classroom teaching with enthusiasm, striving to inspire students to learn English. It was not long before I realised the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), particularly in my rural school setting where I was the only English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher.

After a year, I transferred to a semi-urban setting, where, after three years of teaching, I enrolled in the PRINSETT (Professional In-service English Teacher Training) distance-learning programme. As I gradually enhanced my proficiency through higher education, pursuing a degree, postgraduate diploma and Master's degrees, I obtained rare foreign scholarships through hard work, enthusiasm and strong determination. However, it became evident that they

were not readily available to every ESL teacher seeking higher educational opportunities.

While working as a teacher I received a rare opportunity to enter the university to follow a BA degree at a state sector university while also receive the teacher salary. As I was determined to continue my higher education, I obtained masters qualifications along with professional qualifications

After working as an English teacher for twenty years, I was selected as a teacher trainer through a competitive examination. As a teacher trainer, I conducted island-wide teacher training programs, became an attached lecturer for pre-service teacher training programmes at two National Colleges of Education, and received two scholarships. One of these opportunities allowed me to study for three months at a university in India as one of forty scholars. The second was being selected as the Hornby Scholar in 2013, representing Sri Lanka to pursue my second master's in TESOL (Teacher Education) at the University of Leeds. This was a major turning point that inspired me to investigate teacher education, which eventually led to my PhD journey. Simultaneously, my extensive experience as a teacher trainer, particularly during school visits, teacher-training programs, and informal gatherings, gave teachers the opportunity to share their concerns with me, sparking my interest in delving deeper into the challenges of CPD and exploring how teachers learn and develop their knowledge and skills as professionals. These discussions presented puzzles to me, which I sought to unravel by discussing them with other teachers and trainers.

My initial research experience occurred during my postgraduate diploma course in teaching, and over the course of my career, I gained experiences that have uplifted my professionalism as a teacher, trainer, pre-service lecturer and Master trainer. While working on numerous CPD programmes across the country, particularly during my visits to schools as an ISA, I witnessed and understood the struggles and occasional enthusiasms of ESL teachers as they endeavoured to upgrade the level of English proficiency in schools. Secondly, the findings of my MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages dissertation in 2014 at the University of Leeds, titled 'Opportunities and barriers for Sri Lankan ESL teachers' professional development', served as a catalyst for further investigation into CPD related-issues. This inspired me to delve into

the breadth and depth of CPD issues to shed light on Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) in Sri Lanka. Throughout my career, I have observed that teachers often lack self-regulation in seeking CPD opportunities, typically attending such programmes when they are mandatory.

In Sri Lanka, whenever a new government comes into power, higher educational authorities often implement large-scale ESL teacher-training programmes. However, these initiatives tend to fade away when a new political party assumes power. Additionally, national, provincial and zonal level teacher-training programmes are organised, introducing new methodologies and techniques to teachers with the aim of facilitating changes in their classroom practices. Despite these efforts, the actual change observed in the classroom remains minimal.

Fullan (2007a) argues that top-down changes often lack ownership, while bottom-up changes lack sustainability, suggesting that a combination of both approaches is necessary for achieving success, fostering 'a sense of mastery, accomplishment and professional growth' (p.23). In this study, I investigate CPD-related issues, focusing on how ESL teachers in Sri Lanka perceive available CPD opportunities, how teacher learning and application of new CPD knowledge occur, and how teachers are supported in implementing changes in their classroom practices to achieve the desired outcomes.

In the ever-evolving field of education, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers stands as a cornerstone for fostering growth, innovation and efficacy in the teacher role. Therefore, developing CPD models is fundamental to meet educational needs. CPD models can be pursued individually or with the assistance of an expert (Campbell et al., 2004). While certain educational needs are similar across contexts, some vary depending on contextual factors. Thus, the provision of CPD should prioritise the needs of the beneficiaries within the wider society. Borg (2018) categorises the impacts of Professional Development Initiatives (PDI) as impacts on teachers, students and systems. Impacts on teachers include their satisfaction, motivation, improvement of language proficiency, knowledge, instructional skills, attitudes and beliefs, classroom practice, and reflective competence, while the impacts on systems include productivity in the education system and the impacts on students aimed at developing students' achievement levels. While achieving the targets of CPD is paramount, as suggested above, the outcomes might vary due to the influence of diverse factors. Hayes (1997) identifies teachers' lack of awareness and practice in reflective thinking, as a significant factor affecting the change process and professional development. Similarly, Mann (2005) underscores the

importance of reflection as an essential requirement for development. Therefore, addressing this gap is crucial, with a focus on prioritizing the cultivation of reflective thinking among teachers to empower them to drive innovations and facilitate meaningful change.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this study is to understand the nature of CPD in the Sri Lankan context and how teachers implement the knowledge, they gain in their classroom practice. In Sri Lanka, the authorities organise CPD programmes with the aim of developing teacher professionalism and improving student achievement levels. However, the efficacy and effectiveness of these CPD initiatives require attention in order to meet the ever-evolving needs of society. Recognising the limited research on CPD provision and its impact on classroom practice in the Sri Lankan context, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring teacher perceptions and their practices to gain an in-depth understanding. Thus, the study focuses on addressing the following two main research questions, which emerged through the literature search.

1. What are the ESL state schoolteacher participants' perceptions regarding the provision of CPD in Sri Lanka?
2. How do participants perceive expert and collegial support they receive for CPD?

1.3 Overview

This thesis comprises nine chapters.

In Chapter 1, I briefly introduce the research background and explain the origins of my inspirations and the aims of the study.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the research context, briefly explaining the history of the Sri Lankan education system, primary and secondary education, teacher recruitment procedures and my specific research context.

In Chapter 3, I position my study in the relevant literature by exploring the concepts of teacher education, teacher development and teacher training. Next, I examine how teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge impact on classroom practice. Finally, I focus on why teacher change is needed and how teachers achieve autonomous status through mediation. This chapter specifies the theoretical foundation underpinning the study and ultimately identifying the gaps in literature that lead to forming my research questions.

In Chapter 4, I provide an overview of the methodological decisions made for conducting the research, including the rationale behind choosing the qualitative

approach, the use of a multiple case study design, participant recruitment strategies, data generation instruments, methods of data analysis, and ethical consideration.

Chapter 5, 6, and 7 are the three findings chapters, in which I present the three case studies and discuss the findings.

In Chapter 8, I discuss the main findings in the light of previous literature. This chapter explains the transformations required for an enhanced CPD process and the factors that influence the transformation process in teachers' classroom practices.

In Chapter 9, I mark the conclusion by discussing my reflections, consider the limitations and outline some pedagogic and policy implications of the study. In the concluding chapter, considering the limited scope of this study, I also suggest future research covering different parts of the country and including more stakeholders.

Chapter 2 Sri Lankan Context

> *Describing context is complicated. It is made more so by the fact that contexts are not static but changing over time.*
>
> (Wedell and Malderez, 2013, p.19)

The research context is pivotal in any study to elucidate the meaning of the investigation. Walsh and Mann (2019) claim that researchers and practitioners working specifically in English language teacher education research and practices need to understand the context to gain insights into specific issues and produce better outcomes. Thus, in this section, I will briefly explain the structure of the education system, including primary and secondary education, as well as the historical background of English education in Sri Lanka. Following that, I will examine the teacher recruitment procedure and the provision of pre-service teacher training, before teachers join the school system. Next, I will explore the in-service teacher training process and two major CPD programmes conducted island-wide in Sri Lanka. Finally, I will provide a brief description of my specific research context.

2.1 The education system

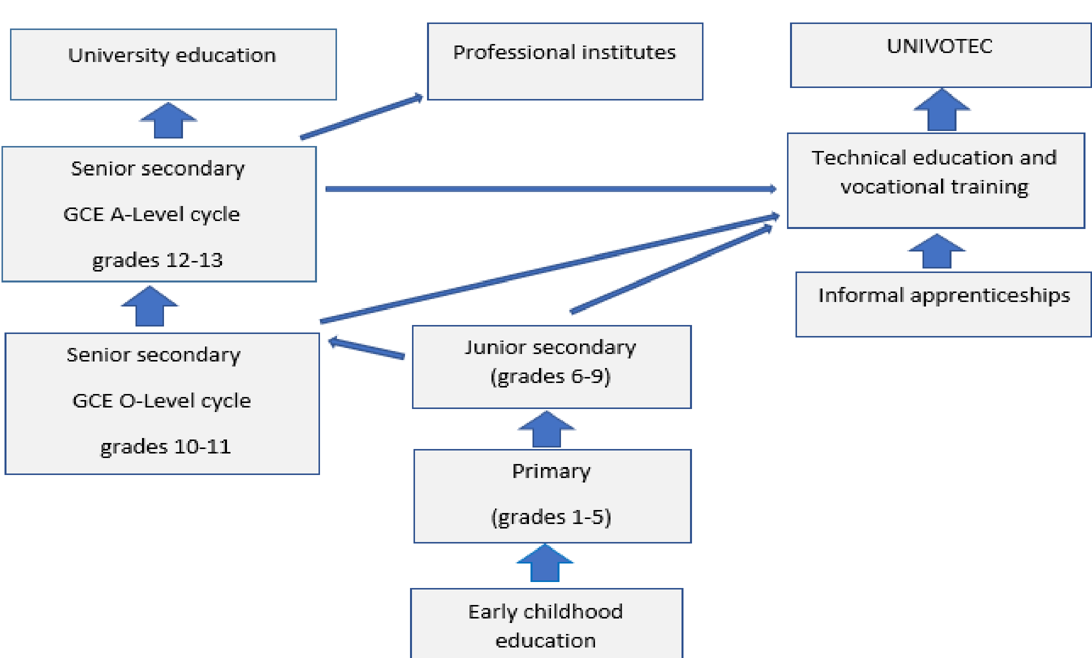
The education system in Sri Lanka comprises three different types of schools at primary (1-5), junior secondary (6-9), senior secondary (10 and 11) and university entrance (12 and 13) grades: government, semi-government and international or fee-paying schools. Based on the marks obtained in the university entrance Advanced Level (A/L) exam, students have the right to access free tertiary education in government universities for degree programmes or National Colleges of Education (NCOE) to pursue three-year teacher training programmes for various subjects. Due to the highly competitive selection process for government universities, some students, depending on affordability, opt for private fee-paying institutions or offshore campuses for tertiary education. Students, who do not qualify for the A/L, enter vocational training centres and technical colleges to acquire professional qualifications and skills. Figure 2.1 (see page 7) illustrates how the education system is structured.

As shown in figure 2.1, formal education begins at the age of five. It is compulsory for parents to enrol their children in the school system at that age,

either in the government or private institutions. It is vital that the government-sector education at all levels, from primary school to university, is state-funded, and in state-sector schools, free textbooks and uniforms are provided to all students regardless of their economic background. The government also offers free morning meals to primary students in certain selected underprivileged schools.

There are schools located in urban, rural and border areas of urban and rural settings which are categorised as semi-urban schools. These schools are further divided into five types, as illustrated in table 2.1 (see page 8).

Figure 2-1 The education and training system in Sri Lanka



Adopted from Dundar et al. (2017)

As depicted in Table 2.1 below, there are five types of schools: national schools, type 1AB, type 1C, type 2 and type 3 schools. Excepting Type 3, some of the schools that come under other four categories offer both primary and secondary grades, while others exclusively offer secondary grades. Type 3 schools encompassing grades 1 to 5 are categorised as primary schools. Additionally, the schools are divided into three categories, based on the

geographical location: rural, semi-urban and urban. There is an unfair distribution of the infrastructure facilities and human resources across the different locations. However, all the five types of schools described in the table below (Table 2.1) are available in rural, semi-urban and urban settings for primary and secondary education. I will next delve into some features of primary and secondary education.

Table 2.1 Types of schools

	Type of schools	Description of schools
1	National schools	Type 1AB or/and Type 1C schools
2	Type 1AB schools	With science A/L
3	Type 1C schools	Non-science A/L
4	Type 2 schools	Years 1 to 11
5	Type 3 schools	Years 1 to 8 or Years 1 to 5

2.2 Primary and secondary Education

As a multi-ethnic country, Sri Lanka has categorised its state-sector schools as Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim, based on students' ethnicities and the mediums of instruction. However, students have the right to enrol in any school they wish, irrespective of their ethnicity. For instance, some Muslim and Tamil students study in Sinhala medium schools. The two main mediums of instruction in state-sector schools are the vernacular languages, Sinhala and Tamil, which are spoken by the majority community, the Sinhalese, and the two main minority communities, the Tamils and Muslims, respectively. In all three types of schools, English is taught as a compulsory second language, with formal ESL teaching beginning from grade 3. Depending on ethnic orientation or parental preference, students can opt for either Sinhala or Tamil-medium schools with the freedom to choose bilingual education for secondary education.

Students face three high-stakes public examinations: the fifth standard scholarship examination, Ordinary Level (O/L) examination and Advanced Level (A/L) examination. Grade five students, typically ten years old, are eligible to sit the fifth standard scholarship examination, which serves as the main route to entering the privileged secondary schools in urban areas with more human resources, and educational and infrastructure facilities (D'Souza and Moore, 2017). The scholarship exam exerts pressure on students, as teachers are

compelled to adopt mechanical methodologies, focusing on the structure of the test paper (Liyanage, 2014). For instance, ten-year-old students are trained to practice and memorise, leaving little room for critical thinking in teaching and learning. In this exam, students can earn up to five marks out of a hundred for questions related to English knowledge, with questions involving translating English words or phrases (such as ‘playground’, ‘laboratory’, ‘office’) and simple statements, greetings, requests or questions (‘Good morning’, ‘please sit down’, ‘Let’s make a kite’) into their mother tongue and vice versa.

The next hurdle that students face is the O/L examination in grade 11, at the age of 16, which they need to pass to qualify for the A/L. They need to take nine subjects, with first language and mathematics being compulsory for entering the A/L class, while English language is not an essential qualification. Science, commerce and the arts were the three main streams at A/L until the introduction of the technology stream in 2013, and students should take four subjects, including General English. The A/L serves as the high-stakes university entrance examination for 18-year-old students in grade 13. During the two years spent in the A/L class, many students often prioritise the three main compulsory subjects needed for university entry, and therefore they might neglect improving their English skills. According to Wedell and Grassick (2017), some countries make English paper qualifications a prerequisite for university entrance. However, the situation in Sri Lanka differs slightly, as a General English grade is not a mandatory requirement for university selection and enrolment on certain courses. The significance of this qualification only emerges when students opt for specific courses like law. Additionally, students struggle when learning subjects in medicine, engineering, law, or management streams in English at the university level, as a result of their inadequate proficiency in English. Furthermore, all three public examinations in the state-sector school system solely assess reading and writing skills in English. Consequently, the majority of students leave school after thirteen years of learning English without acquiring the ability to speak the language.

2.3 A glimpse of the history of English education in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic country where Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims coexist that was under British rule from 1815 until it gained independence in 1948. During this colonial period, English gained official status, serving as the official language and the medium of instruction in schools until 1956, the year the Sinhala Only Act replaced English with Sinhala (the mother tongue of the majority community) as the official language. Consequently, English acquired the status of a second language, and Sinhala became the medium of instruction

in state-sector schools. Currently, primary education is offered in Sinhala and Tamil mediums, while bilingual education (Sinhala-English or Tamil-English) is also available for secondary education in state-sector schools. However, teaching and learning English as a second language has become more complicated and less effective in the state-sector school system than learning English as the medium of instruction prior to 1956 owing to diverse reasons, such as restricted exposure to the English language, students' motivation to learn ESL, teachers' competence, teacher recruitment, and training processes. Among these, teacher recruitment and training processes are the two primary reasons more relevant to this study and thus worth considering.

2.4 Teacher recruitment and pre-service teacher training

Before establishing the NCOEs in 1986, ESL teachers were recruited through a competitive exam. The basic qualification for applying to sit for the ESL teacher selection examination was obtaining a credit pass (over 45) at the O/L examination. Along with this Basic English Language qualification, the candidates who obtained the highest marks at the examination were given a three-week residential pre-service training course before being deployed to schools as teachers. During this period, the trainees were provided with basic awareness about the school system, administration, teaching the main subject, other minor subjects, and co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Thus, the novice teachers were left to sink or swim in terms of their teaching practices within three weeks, performing a "learning-while-doing" job and developing their skills by teaching in real classrooms in their first school (Lortie, 1975, p.60).

Another batch, who obtained lower marks at the ESL teacher selection examination, underwent a one-year pre-service training course at District English Language Improvement Centres (DELICs) to become teachers. After completing three years of teaching in the school system, in-service teacher training was provided for the untrained teachers in two ways:

- A two-year teachers' college certificate programme designed as an intensive residential course
- The Professional In-Service English Teacher Training (PRINSETT) programme conducted during weekends parallel to the teachers' college certificate programme.

Completion of either programme enabled the untrained teachers to attain 'trained' teacher status after passing the teachers' college's final examination. Parish and Brown (1988) acknowledge PRINSETT, the 14-hour weekend programme, as more effective than the teachers' college training programme,

as trainees have the opportunity to apply gained knowledge and skills immediately in the classroom during the week.

In 1986, the National Colleges of Education (NCOEs) were established, becoming the primary teacher recruitment method. With the change in the teacher recruitment procedure after the NCOEs were established, the need for the PRINSETT centres and DELIC centres diminished, and the teachers' colleges turned into NCOEs.

Currently, ESL teachers are recruited mainly after successful completion of a three-year National Diploma in Teaching course offered by NCOEs. The NCOE trainees receive residential training involving two years of academic learning along with teaching practice and a one-year internship in a school. After passing the final teaching diploma examination, they are then recruited as teachers.

The current ESL teacher population mainly comprises all the above-mentioned ESL teacher categories, and they receive CPD through various types of island-wide, provincial and zonal-level in-service teacher training programmes. Enhancing teacher professionalism and improving the quality of ESL teaching and teacher learning processes are the primary goals of CPD in the context, and I will next explore how these teachers receive continuing professional development.

2.5 CPD provision and role of higher authorities

The Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Education, Provincial Education Departments, Zonal Education Offices, Provincial and Additional Directors of English (ADE), and ISAs are collectively responsible for providing CPD opportunities for ESL teachers. Additionally, non-governmental organizations support these efforts in diverse ways, which may involve funding the programmes, organising joint initiatives with higher education institutions like the British Council and the American Centre, or hiring experts from universities.

The Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education implement training programmes and train ISAs and Regional English Support Centre (RESC) trainers by utilising foreign experts. ISAs and RESC trainers organise CPD programmes for ESL teachers all over the country and expect teachers attend those programmes, gain new knowledge and develop their skills. Some enthusiastic teachers try to implement the newly gained knowledge and skills in their classrooms, yet some teachers continue their own usual, conventional practices. Moreover, ISAs occasionally visit schools, observe lessons and provide feedback as it is one of their responsibilities.

Periodically, the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Education and the provincial education departments invite ADEs and ISAs for training programmes, assigning them to plan and conduct workshops for teachers in their respective zones. Towards the end of each year, the zonal education office organises programmes for ISAs to strategise their CPD initiatives for the upcoming year, and ISAs are required to calculate expenditures for the planned programmes, considering the allocated amount for the subject. The determination of the number of training programmes is contingent on the available funds. These expenses encompass payments for teachers attending, hourly payments for ISAs, RESC trainers or other resource persons conducting sessions, payments for other officials for their visits and observations, stationary costs, and the provision of tea for attendees.

The most common CPD initiatives comprise one- or two-day trainer-led seminars. Apart from these small-scale CPD programmes offered periodically throughout the year, depending on the available allocations for the zone or the province, the government, jointly with foreign governments or organisations, introduces occasional island-wide CPD programmes. However, long-term island-wide programmes are infrequent. As this study delves into teacher perceptions of their CPD experiences, it is important to examine the nature of such large-scale CPD initiatives for a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of CPD programmes. In 2008 and 2019, the Ministry of Education implemented two major in-service CPD programmes island-wide, and in the subsequent sections, I will explore these two long-term CPD initiatives that were conducted with a ten-year interval.

2.5.1 'English as a life skill'

The 'English as a life skill' programme was implemented as a 10-day CPD programme following a cascade model. Cascading is passing on knowledge and skills to other groups successively to disseminate the training to a large number of trainees, with Malderez and Wedell (2007) identifying cascading as "one common model for designing large scale ToTing" (p.99). ToTing involves expert trainers training one group of trainers, who then provide the training to another group of trainers (Wedell, 2005). Similarly, master trainers (MTs) for the 'English as a life skill' programme were appointed after receiving international training, and they trained 320 teachers of teachers (ToTs) to deliver sessions to 22,000 ESL teachers to bring about a change in the teaching and learning process, particularly focusing on speaking and listening skills. As speaking and listening are not tested in public examinations, teachers and students pay less attention to improving those skills. Realizing this issue, the government took

steps to implement this programme in schools prioritizing the improvement of speaking and listening skills in students.

The programme continued for nearly six years, making some changes in attitudes and practices in the school system and in society until the next government came into power. Highlighting this issue in the country, Liyanage (2014) claims that "education policies of Sri Lanka have been changing from one political regime to the other" (p.133). There is a tendency to implement new practices when a new government gains power, and as proof of this tendency, the 'English as a life skill' programme faded away from the system with the arrival of the new government. Ten years after the introduction of the 'English as a life skill' programme, iTESL was introduced to train all the ESL teachers in the country.

2.5.2 iTESL (Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka) Project

Under a broader theme called 'Transform', the British Council, Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Education collaboratively implemented the iTESL project, a programme wholly aimed at improving the quality of English language education to reach an international benchmark by enhancing the quality of English language teaching. The initial step was deploying British trainers to provide pre-service teacher training in order to develop practical teaching skills for teacher trainees in the NCOEs. Through research, the British Council identified the content of the iTESL project and the core skills needed for twenty-first-century learners (Dick, 2020). For instance, English skills were recognised as essential employability requirements, and critical thinking, creativity, innovation and communication were recognised as the core skills to develop in twenty-first-century learners (Dick, 2020). Consequently, phase 1 of the iTESL project was implemented for pre-service and in-service CPD, incorporating all the above skills. In the phase 2 of the 'Transformation' process, British consultants trained a set of master trainers comprising teacher educators, ISAs and RESC staff to train another set of ToTs from different parts of the country. ToTs were well equipped with not only knowledge and skills but also empowered to make the right decisions at the right time when supporting teachers.

The entire iTESL programme followed a cascade model. As Malderez and Wedell (2007) explain, "ToTs need to develop their own 'knowing to' expertise in terms of noticing and accurately interpreting indications of emotional states in their learners" (p. 21), as this 'knowing to' type of knowledge enables ToTs to sense and respond to learners' needs intuitively. British consultants then aimed to create master trainers for the iTESL programme and assign them to train

batches of ToTs. Finally, in 2019, iTESL was launched, cascading training to ESL teachers across the island.

The iTESL course covered topics such as teaching grammar, teaching reading, classroom management techniques, and effective teaching activities. For example, teachers gained knowledge and skills in teaching grammar effectively by following several stages, beginning with contextualization. Needs analysis had revealed that teachers typically taught grammar deductively by introducing rules directly. Since 2019, the iTESL programme has been conducted nationwide, providing teachers with knowledge and skills to teach grammar inductively, emphasizing the concepts of form and meaning. However, Indrarathne's (2024) study, conducted post- iTESL programme with five hundred participants from different experience levels and regions of Sri Lanka, found that most teachers became aware of the concepts "form and meaning" for the first time through this programme. This finding indicates inconsistencies in CPD provision.

Despite these efforts and the investment involved, my experience suggests that the CPD process does not function as smoothly as intended. It encounters issues related to teacher attendance, effective knowledge transfer during CPD programmes, and the application of acquired knowledge and skills in classroom practices. Some of these challenges will be discussed in the following section.

2.5.3 CPD-related issues

It is important to elucidate the persistent issues surrounding teacher attendance in CPD programmes. Abeywickrama and Ariyaratne (2020) highlight that "ESL teachers mostly engage in PD initiatives to satisfy the requirements in their workplace context or when the management considers attendance to PD is mandatory" (p.108). While their observation specifically addresses university ESL teachers, it is pertinent to state-sector ESL teachers as well.

Drawing from my experience as a teacher trainer, I encountered the same attendance challenges in CPD programmes within the Sri Lankan school system. Additionally, studies on CPD in the Sri Lankan context indicate that the quality of teacher training needs enhancement in order to uphold the expected quality in teaching (Boyle, 2016). Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is often measured through students' performance in written exams. Therefore, research findings of this nature may only reflect certain dimensions of progress, such as changes in teacher knowledge and skills, as well as modifications in their classroom practices, but not necessarily the overall quality of CPD programmes. This research in particular attempts to understand perceptions of

ESL teachers in the Balangoda education zone regarding the CPD provision, quality of CPD and the extent to which Sri Lankan teachers apply the knowledge and skills acquired through these programmes in their classroom practices. In fact, it is important to acknowledge the contextual specificities for better understanding. Thus, I will briefly describe my specific research context in the following section.

2.6 My specific research context

This study was conducted in my hometown, Balangoda, a small city in the Ratnapura district of the Sabaragamuwa province, Sri Lanka. The schools in Balangoda fall under the Balangoda education zone, where I worked as both an ESL teacher and a teacher trainer. The zone comprises 158 schools, divided into three divisions, each encompassing a mix of urban, rural, and urban-rural bordering settings, which I classify as semi-urban. This classification is primarily based on geographical location, though specific characteristics must also be considered, as they directly impact both teacher and student learning.

Schools in rural areas, located far from main cities, are underprivileged. Both teachers and students face a lack of facilities, a limited teacher population, and most students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. As Dick (2023) points out, teachers in Sri Lanka who are appointed to rural schools often seek transfers to more convenient city schools from the day they are appointed. Dick (2023) highlights that, due to the shortage of ESL teachers in rural areas, students miss out on opportunities to learn English. Although this issue was identified in the Uva province of Sri Lanka, similar conditions exist in the rural areas of the Sabaragamuwa province, where this research was conducted.

The next category of schools in Semi-urban settings, located closer to main cities, have higher student and teacher ratio compared to rural settings. However, students' proficiency levels are generally lower because most who qualify through the fifth standard scholarship exam move to urban schools to benefit from better opportunities. Urban schools, situated in cities, often have excess teachers due to the convenience of commuting, and students' proficiency levels tend to be higher as many of the top-performing students from both rural and semi-urban areas move to urban schools after the fifth grade. Most students in urban settings come from upper-middle-class or wealthy

families, or have well-educated parents who can afford tuition classes or hire private teachers for additional support. Some students also come from English-speaking backgrounds. However, some urban schools still have students with mixed proficiency levels, and teachers face pressure from authorities to improve results in high-stakes examinations.

The schools are further categorised into five types: national schools, 1AB, 1C, Type 2 and Type 3 (see section 2.1).Type 2 schools located in rural settings have experienced a dearth of ESL teachers. In some schools, where one ESL teacher cannot cover teaching English from grades three to 11, other subject teachers manage to teach English. Consequently, these teachers lack opportunities for collegial support in CPD, and they must travel a considerable distance to the city to attend CPD programmes. Conversely, urban schools have a surplus of teachers who teach other subjects. This unequal distribution of ESL teacher population negatively affects the professional development of ESL teachers and hampers the improvement of the level of English in rural settings.

Nonetheless, this usual process of teaching and professional learning of teachers changed due to the rise of COVID-19 in 2020. The next section explains the impact of COVID-19 on the school system and specifically explores how COVID-19 affected ESL teachers' CPD attempts.

2.7 Impact of COVID-19 on the school system and the CPD provision

The impact of COVID-19 on the school system and CPD provision was significant, as the number of school closures immensely disrupted students' educations (UNICEF, 2021). Due to the school closures in 188 countries, similar to other countries, Sri Lanka implemented online leaning in the school system (OECD, 2020). However, despite teachers being instructed to conduct online lessons, they did not receive any training on using technology, particularly the Zoom app (UNICEF, 2021). Moreover, a considerable number of teachers and students lacked access to digital devices and were unfamiliar with their operation (UNICEF, 2021), and the majority of parents struggled to afford the expensive devices and data required for online learning (Leanage and Saito, 2023). Internet connections were not stable in rural areas, and students

resorted to climbing trees or nearby hills to access signal and join online classes. However, despite these attempts, the extent to which students gained a quality education is questionable (OECD, 2020).

There were few attempts to provide online CPD opportunities in the country amidst the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis it brought. Power cuts over long periods were one impact among other disruptions to daily life caused by the economic crisis, resulting in both teachers and students lacking engagement in education (Leanage and Saito, 2023). Moreover, they had more concerns about their daily struggles. I started my data collection during these challenging times.

2.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I briefly introduced the research context, providing information about the education system in Sri Lanka, including the higher education and training system. I primarily focused on the primary and secondary education in state-sector schools, which is relevant to this study. Next, I discussed a brief history of English education in both pre- and post-colonial periods, explaining how English gained second language status in the Sri Lankan school system. I then explained the ESL teacher recruitment procedures across the country and the primary modes of pre-service and in-service CPD. I provided detailed information on the two most recent major CPD programmes – 'English as a Life Skill', and iTESL – as well as CPD-related issues for a better understanding of the CPD process in the country. Finally, I discussed the challenges faced by the school system and the CPD process due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as this study was conducted during that time.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

> *If we want to improve teaching and teachers, we must therefore improve the conditions of teaching that shape them, as well as the cultures and communities of which they are a part. We must invest in developing teachers' capabilities and give them time to sharpen these capabilities to a high standard.*
>
> (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, p.45)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the literature underpinning this study. As this research is mainly concerned with the CPD of in-service teachers in Sri Lanka, my main argument is that second language teacher education (SLTE) should allocate equal emphasis to both initial teacher training (ITT) and CPD as requisites for professional development of ESL teachers. Consequently, the overarching goal of CPD should be to cultivate ESL teachers to become capable of taking ownership of their own learning and self-development, rather than relying solely on external expertise, thus mitigating a lack of critical inquiry, throughout their career journey. Adhering to this conceptualisation, I will explore relevant literature in this chapter.

It is evident that subject expertise is an essential requirement for quality teaching, and ITT courses attempt to develop the subject knowledge of teachers. The ultimate goal of ITT should be to create professionals and "equip them well to start out as effective teachers, forming the basis for on-going development" (Carter, 2015, p.6). Accordingly, the foundation for CPD must be laid through ITT, and gradually the process of development will continue throughout their career journey via in-service CPD and experience. Nonetheless, studies show that there is a lack of correspondence between ITT and CPD in the system (Carter, 2015). It is important to understand possible pitfalls and identify measures for the development of both ITT and CPD, therefore, considering CPD as a developmental journey, I will explore the evolving multifaceted SLTE processes and practices and the impact of SLTE on ESL teachers' CPD. Moreover, SLTE is considered a key constituent of the development process of ESL teachers, which enables "changing the person the teacher is" by changing behaviour, attitudes and beliefs through reflection and

self-understanding (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, p.7). In addition, sociocultural theory explicates how SLTE mediates in teacher development, synthesizing scientific and everyday concepts to regulate teachers' classroom practices. Scientific concepts, comprising theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills, accompanied by teachers' everyday experiences enable teachers to make instructional decisions in the classroom context (Johnson and Golombek, 2011; Golombek, 2011). Thus, the emerging concerns in achieving this goal through SLTE programmes are as follows:

> What is the nature of the activities embedded in our teacher education programs? What are we collectively attempting to accomplish in these activities? What sort of assistance are we providing for teachers as they engage in these activities? And how does participation in these activities support and enhance the development of teaching expertise? (Johnson and Golombek, 2011, p.3).

In consequence, understanding how the new knowledge gained by teachers attending teacher education programmes impacts the transformation of their preconceived beliefs and practices ultimately leading to changes in classroom practices and the sustainability of professional development is worth considering for a better understanding of the CPD process. Consequently, my primary area of investigation centres on the critical theme of in-service ESL teachers' continuing professional development. This strategic narrowing of the research scope was undertaken to facilitate a more in-depth exploration of this specific facet within the broader field of SLTE. In my attempt to address these concerns, I will first briefly examine the emergence and development of SLTE, along with scholarly conceptualisations of modern trends in SLTE practices, differentiating key concepts such as teacher training, teacher education and teacher development. Next, I will discuss how a novice teacher gains expertise by experiencing CPD throughout their professional journey, exploring the following four interconnected primary domains – teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs, teacher cognition and teacher change – which are all integral and cognate with ESL teachers' professional development.

3.2 Emergence and development of SLTE

The origins of SLTE date back to the 1960s as a way of providing short training sessions for certification (Burns and Richards, 2009). Traditionally, teacher learning was perceived as a process of transmitting knowledge and skills from trainers to teachers (Johnson and Freeman, 2001; Burns and Richards, 2009). Even a decade later, in the 1970s, teachers continued to follow the same model, uncritically carrying out what experts taught them in their classrooms.

Consequently, as Freeman (2002) rightly explains, "classrooms and schools were simply settings in which teachers implemented the thinking of others" (p.5). This suggests that teacher thinking did not receive sufficient attention.

Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, this 'knowledge transmission' view shifted to a 'knowledge construction' model, where teachers engage in constructing knowledge by consolidating theory and practice, reflecting on their classroom experiences to develop understanding (Johnson and Freeman, 2001). This marked the "decade of change and reconceptualization", during which teacher thinking, teacher beliefs, their mental lives and decision-making gained prominence in classroom practice (Freeman, 2002, p.5). Consequently, teachers were expected to enhance their capacity for thinking and decision-making as professionals through continuing professional development. As Day (1999) ascertains, teacher learning is a gradual process, acquired through "natural and evolutionary, sometimes opportunistic and sometimes the result of planning" (p.1). Similarly, Hayes (2014) identifies CPD as

> multi-faceted, lifelong can take place inside or outside the workplace and is influenced not just by the experience of the CPD activity itself but also by teachers' prior professional experiences their beliefs and contexts (p.155).

Thus, teacher learning and development can occur individually or as collective efforts in diverse ways and at different stages throughout their career journey. As a means of achieving this ultimate goal in SLTE, the prevalent developmental possibilities in many countries include one-time training sessions and/or workshops conducted by trainers, as well as individual considerations and motivations for life-long learning for one's own CPD (Day and Sachs, 2004; Mann, 2005; Hayes, 2014). Regarding the former, Hanks and Dikilitas (2018b) perceive one-time training sessions as "'a one-stop shop' with a 'foreign expert' flown in briefly, never to be seen again" (p.14). They suggest, instead, a life-long autonomous learning approach through which teachers gain self-awareness, ensuring that professional development is sustainable. Recent developments in conceptualisations view teacher learning as a "self-directed, inquiry-based" process (Burns and Richards, 2009, p.6) and that for teacher learning to be more effective, teachers should engage in collaborative social practices (Burns and Richards, 2011). Consequently, teachers are expected to be self-reflective and accountable for their own learning in a life-long continuing professional development process. However, it is noteworthy that ideologies related to professional development vary depending on the values, practices and requirements of different cultures or contexts.

Drawing upon various scholarly arguments, Mann (2005) distinguishes between the European and North American concepts of teacher development. The North American perception of teacher development involves the transfer of knowledge by an outside expert. Conversely, the European concept is characterised by personal growth and taking responsibility for ones' own professional and personal development. In line with this European ideology, the Sri Lankan concept encompasses both professional and personal development, emphasising personal value-based growth that involves maternal and paternal instincts and the accountability of teachers for regulating their development as moral individuals. Hayes (2010), in his study of an ESL teacher in Sri Lanka, implies a moral purpose in the teacher's role through his narrative. In this study, I will frequently use the term CPD with a leaning towards more self-directed self-development encompassing the moral purpose.

The ultimate goal of designing SLTE programmes (both ITT and CPD) should be to improve the quality of ESL teachers and their teaching. However, as Hayes (2010) highlights, in the Sri Lankan context, teacher training involves equipping teachers with prescriptive knowledge in teaching, incorporating commonly used ELT training manuals. A key issue here is that "[n]owhere do these ELT training manuals recognize the existence of teachers' broader roles and responsibilities within a specific social context" (Hayes, 2010, p.536) and demanding attention for effective teacher development.

The 1996 educational reforms in Sri Lanka introduced School-Based Teacher Development (SBTD) programs as a new concept to improve SLTE. These reforms addressed the limitations of SLTE programs previously organized by the Ministry of Education, Provincial Departments, or Zonal Education Offices, which were hindered by the difficulties teachers faced in commuting to distant training centers (Bandara, 2018). However, Bandara's (2018) study on SBTD noted that despite teachers and principals employing effective strategies for teacher development, several challenges impeded the success of SBTD programs. These included a lack of support from the Zonal Education Office, limited awareness among principals on initiating programs, insufficient funding, lack of time, and increased workloads. Bandara (2018) further states that,

> [E]ndemic systemic problems in and across the Sri Lankan Education system have left schools without national or local policy and professional development frameworks regarding the provision of SBTD in Sri Lankan secondary schools (p.1133).

According to Johnson and Golombek (2011), professional development is a "complicated, prolonged, highly situated, and deeply personal process that has no start or end point" (p.xi). Therefore, it is imperative that CPD programmes should be thoughtfully designed, taking into account the evolving and diverse needs of teachers at distinct stages of their career trajectories. Such well-crafted CPD programmes play a pivotal role in enhancing teacher quality, thereby fulfilling the expectations of SLTE, which will be discussed in detail next.

3.3 Quality of teaching, issues, and expectations of SLTE

To elucidate the importance of producing better practitioners, it is vital to focus on what is meant by the quality of teaching and the expectations of SLTE. SLTE aims to develop the professionalism of language teachers by providing opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in ESL teaching, and teachers undergo professional development in diverse ways throughout their career journeys.

Johnson and Golombek (2011) note that teacher trainees embark on their professional development upon entering an ITT programme, which continues as they begin teaching in the classroom from the very first day. Throughout their career journeys, in-service teachers continue to enhance their professional growth through classroom experiences, participation in professional development programmes, and reflection on their own and other's experiences. The ultimate outcome of this process should be to create outstanding teaching professionals. There is a societal demand for professionals who are accountable, highly capable and dedicated (Malderez and Wedell, 2007), and their service to the educational industry is considered an investment (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Treating teaching as a profitable enterprise, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) coined the term "professional capital" to refer to the contributions of high-quality teaching professionals. Professional capital is comprised of human capital, referring to an individual's contribution and capacity, social capital, emphasizing interconnectedness and collegiality for improvement, and decisional capital, highlighting the ability to make right decisions at the right time (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) "professional capital is something that must be acquired, spread and reinvested by teachers themselves-individually and together" (p.xvi). Therefore, the fundamental aim of SLTE programmes should be to provide self-development opportunities that foster the creation of capable, dedicated and high-quality teaching professionals. Consequently, investigating

the impacts and issues of professional development opportunities will be crucial for the evolution of professional capital.

Golombek (2011) identifies an issue related to the knowledge disseminated by SLTE programmes, that there exists a mismatch between teachers' existing knowledge, the knowledge required for better teaching, and the knowledge acquired through CPD programmes (Golombek, 2011). This indicates that prioritizing the updating and restructuring of CPD programmes is essential for promoting teachers' professional capital. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore diverse professional development models and processes in SLTE that can be utilised at various stages of teachers' career journeys. In recent decades, scholars have introduced distinctive terminology to differentiate the diverse yet interrelated aspects of the teacher learning process. Some key practices, including teacher training, teacher education and teacher development, will be briefly explained in the next section.

3.4 Teacher training, teacher education and teacher development

In describing the notion of teacher learning, the three key terms teacher training, teacher education and teacher development imply various aspects of growth for teachers, yet some distinctive features or nuances need consideration. When teachers embark on their profession as trainees or novices, they must undergo CPD throughout their career to enhance knowledge and skills. However, as Guskey (1994) asserts, the success of acquiring professional development lies not solely in gaining new knowledge but utilising that knowledge thoughtfully towards a "self-directed journey" (p.23). In reaching this perfection, as Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) highlight, teachers should be,

> [H]ighly qualified people who have undergone rigorous training that connects theory to practice and who stay many years in the job – people who are constantly perfecting their practice and always inquiring into how to do it better. (p.83)

Moreover, such teachers gain higher social status as professionals. Thus, teachers should be trained, educated, and developed with the aim of producing proficient and insightful practitioners. Mann (2005) identifies individual attempts at self-direction crucial for obtaining self-development as one of the key factors in teacher education. Moreover, while external experts can provide training and education, development is a lifelong process that unfolds within oneself. Hanks (2017) aptly explains this as, "one cannot develop another person" (p.191). This indicates that professionals should take responsibility for their own learning, utilizing their inherent capabilities, as external support can only guide others in

their development. In this regard, by further clarifying the three notions, teacher training, teacher education and teacher development, Mann and Walsh (2017) elucidate the essentiality of lifelong professional development in the process of teacher development.

> The emphasis of second language teacher education, as distinct from second language teacher training, means that the focus of attention is much more on the realization that teachers need to develop themselves and that this is a life-time CPD (continuing professional development) process. (p.7)

Furthermore, Mann and Walsh (2017) highlight the distinctive nature of the three concepts, noting their interconnectedness across various aspects. In terms of the objectives of the three practices, teachers need training, education and development in varying degrees at various stages throughout their career journeys, depending on their needs, motivations, and dispositions (Tarone and Allwright, 2005). For instance, experienced teachers excelling in their classrooms might seek education and development opportunities rather than training for acquiring specific skills. According to Tarone and Allwright (2005),

> Indeed, experienced in-service teachers are often people who return to teacher education programmes for an in-depth understanding of theory to support their current classroom practice … (p.15)

This suggests that CPD organisers should plan programmes to cater to the needs of the attendees, as teachers have different requirements, rather than organising a one-size-fits-all type of CPD programme. I will next discuss the characteristics of training, development and education, considering them as unique practices.

In the 1960s, the concept of teacher training emerged as a means of making teachers aware of new methods through short programmes, aimed at providing them with classroom teaching skills to implement these new methods. A few decades later, in the 1990s, discussions on the distinction between teacher training and teacher development appeared, concerning practicality and the theoretical aspects of the two practices (Richards, 2008). In fact, teacher training has been identified as initial training for mastering skills, while teacher development has gained attention as a lifelong process of professional development (Burns and Richards, 2009). Teachers were trained through the observation of microteaching or peer teaching conducted by experienced teachers (Richards, 2008).

Generally, training furnishes people with skills to perform day-to-day tasks like riding a bicycle or tying a shoelace. Similarly, in relation to teacher training, the process of training is equipping teachers with essential practical skills and

techniques to perform teaching in the classroom (Burns and Richards, 2009). Richards and Farrell (2005) state that teacher training is a prerequisite for beginner teachers to manage their responsibilities. For instance, training enables teachers to carry out every day classroom practices such as following the systematic process in a lesson and ensuring teacher talk is audible enough for the whole class or using the blackboard, which needs an immediate and short-term practice (Freeman, 1982; Tarone and Allwright, 2005). According to Freeman (1989) and Mann (2005), teachers are appropriately trained with trainable skills to incorporate new methodologies, techniques and strategies to make their classroom teaching more effective. Mann (2005) highlights the general belief that training is a one-sided approach that transmits from trainer to trainees and correlates with the notion of ‘teacher preparation’ to bring about a favourable impression. However, the concept of teacher training often carries a negative connotation due to the misconception that it involves a process similar to training animals to perform actions as it lacks insight, acute consciousness or feelings in a similar way that training animals to perform actions does. Edge (2003) aptly explains this by stating that, “[T]o train is to instil habits or skills, and the word collocates just as happily with dogs and seals as with teachers” (Edge, 2003, p.7).

Nonetheless, it is important to distinguish between the term ‘training’ and its objectives when applied to dogs or seals versus teacher training. For instance, animals perform trained skills without cognitive awareness, yet teachers apply trained skills when working with human learners, and they often need to adjust or adapt trained techniques or strategies to align with the specific context and individual learner characteristics. This process continues until they achieve the desired improvements in both performance and outcomes. This understanding and the ability to take instantaneous decisions in the classroom reflects the development that teachers gain through their accumulated experience and knowledge. Similarly, Nunan (1989) identifies teacher development as self-development, a journey towards autonomous application of knowledge and skills. Development is an ongoing, lifelong process moving towards one’s own personal and professional growth by gaining awareness of the nuances within the school or classroom context (Freeman, 1982; Mann, 2005). Thus, teachers should continuously seek opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and effectiveness in the classroom.

Education, in its broader sense, suggests that teachers must possess knowledge and a deeper understanding of the concepts to effectively apply their trained skills or simply know why, when, and how to use them. For instance, education provides knowledge about the various uses of the blackboard or the

elements of grammar (Tarone and Allwright, 2005). Similarly, Borg (2015) perceives teacher education as "growth in one or more facets of teaching – behavioural, (meta)cognitive, attitudinal and emotional" (p.541), which teachers acquire through various forms of professional learning.

While the three notions – training, development, and education – are distinct in nature, as illustrated above, there are discernible characteristics that illustrate their interconnectedness. Thus, for further understanding, it is worth unpacking the viewpoints of other scholars on how they differentiate the three concepts and identify their interrelations. Freeman (1989) posits that within the process of education, training and development emerge as two main strategies, each serving unique functions. Consequently, teacher education can be conceptualised as an overarching term serving as a foundation upon which teacher training and ongoing development are constructed. For instance, what the teacher knows about the effective use of the blackboard is explained as education, whereas a teacher's understanding of why the teacher needs to use the blackboard methodically is concerned with development. In the following quote, Tarone and Allwright (2005) further explain development as understanding.

> By understanding, we are referring to something beyond merely having a particular skill or having a certain piece of knowledge. Understanding is whatever helps us to use our skill and knowledge appropriately. (p.7)

Accordingly, understanding makes teachers feel confident in what they do in the classroom (Tarone and Allwright, 2005). Moreover, this understanding will enable teachers not to use inappropriate techniques or methodologies or implement prescribed content if it does not match with the achievement level of the students for the sake of completing the syllabus or the textbook. Teachers might develop understanding, intuition, and gain expertise in what they do through the experience in the classroom over time. They also need to develop understanding not only about what they do, but why and when they do it (Malderez and Wedell, 2007; Hanks, 2017) and which methodologies and strategies they incorporate or how they incorporate them to make their teaching more effective. Malderez and Wedell (2007) identify understanding that teachers gain through experience as "experiential knowing" that enables teachers to say "[I]t just felt like the right thing to do at the time" (p.31).

By relying on experiential knowing, Hanks and Dikilitaş (2018b) in relation to three case studies done on exploratory practice in İzmir, Turkey and in Northern Cyprus intentionally avoided using the term "training" anywhere in the chapter on research as they worked with experienced teachers, teacher educators and

teacher trainers. The experience they gained by working with experienced professionals made the researchers confident in their expertise.

> We have deliberately moved away from the term ‘training’ over the course of this chapter because we were working with experienced teachers, teacher trainers, teacher educators and curriculum developers, each of whom came with a wealth of ideas, knowledge, skills and expertise. (Hanks and Dikilitaş, 2018b, p.33)

Accordingly, in this particular study, researchers identified these experienced teachers as experts with experiential knowledge and understanding. However, attaining expertise through experience might not be applicable to all experienced teachers, as some experienced teachers are reluctant to take risks and tend to continue their routine practices, which might happen because of fear of failure or because they feel it is safer, easier and saves time to be in their comfort zones, as teachers need to spend extra time and make more efforts to implement new practices. Moreover, when new techniques and strategies are introduced to teachers (e.g. technology), experienced teachers might also need training about applying those efficiently in the classroom, despite their professional knowledge and experience in teaching, as “experience does not entail expertise” (Tusi, 2009, p.191).

Johnson and Golombek (2011) clarify this view further, based on Vygotskian “everyday concepts and scientific concepts” (p.2). Everyday concepts are what teachers understand superficially about the language and how it is learned and taught through day-to-day observations as language learners, over time, whereas teachers build up scientific concepts, which contribute to their deeper understanding by engaging in “theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices” in CPD programmes (Johnson and Golombek, 2011, p.2). According to Johnson and Golombek (2011), everyday concepts, or in other words experiential knowledge, acquired by teachers are often inadequate for professionals, as they are primarily based on casual observations and assumptions.

It is crucial to distinguish between what is referred to as “experiential knowing”, as defined by Malderez and Wedell (2007) and previously discussed, and the experiential knowledge gained from surface-level everyday observations. However, the Vygotskian sociocultural perspective emphasises the significance of experiential knowledge as the foundation for development, which should then be further enriched with scientific and theoretical knowledge. Consequently, teachers should transition from relying solely on experiential learning towards embracing scientific and theoretical awareness and its practical application to foster the development of professional expertise. As Tudor (2001) states,

experiential learning – learning which “revolves around direct experience” (p.78) – does not cater to every aspect of learners’ needs. Johnson and Golombek (2011) explain the danger of relying on experiential learning in the following quote.

> Experiential knowledge is insufficient, even detrimental, in the development of teachers’ expertise and this then is why SLTE programmes can and must play a key role in supporting and enhancing teachers’ professional development. (p.2)

This suggests that teachers will acquire only a superficial understanding through mere observations and personal generalisations, and they might therefore require interaction, assistance and guidance in this regard. Vygotskian sociocultural theory examines four domains – phylogenetic, sociocultural, ontogenetic and microgenetic – all of which play a role in triggering the change and development in an individual’s thinking process through mediation (Lantolf, 2000). Of the four domains, I will discuss both the phylogenetic and sociocultural domains, which focus on mediation and interaction for the development of adults’ thinking processes relevant to this study. The phylogenetic domain explains how the human mind engages in the evolution process through mediation, while the sociocultural domain identifies how cultural and historical mediation contribute to regulating thought processes. In the development of an individual’s mental system, these domains provide a comprehensive framework for elucidating the interplay between evolutionary history, cultural influences, individual development through social interaction and cognitive processes in adapting to new cognitive demands (Lantolf, 2000). Consequently, CPD programmes need to be designed effectively to bridge the gap between teachers’ experiential knowledge and theoretical expertise through mediation, involving the three aspects of teacher learning: training, education, and development.

In summary, the above discussion indicates that mere training will not produce a teacher who is capable of taking correct decisions at the right time in the classroom. The knowledge and skills they gain through education and training will lead for understanding, self-development, and growth in cognitive abilities, which will ultimately empower teachers to practice autonomous decision-making. As Malderez and Wedell (2007) aptly assert, “[p]rofessionals are autonomous and use relevant knowledge and skills to make practical decisions in a range of ever-changing situations” (p.11). Accordingly, to cultivate such autonomous teacher professionals, it is essential to harness pertinent scientific and theoretical knowledge to help teachers comprehend how to teach what they teach in dynamic scenarios. Therefore, a clear understanding of the concept of teacher knowledge is of utmost importance.

3.5 Aspects of knowledge

Freeman et al. (2019) categorise the broader concept of knowledge into two types: the knowledge that teachers require for their classroom practice, referred to as English language teaching knowledge, and the knowledge that educates teachers to utilise English language teaching, referred to as English language teacher education. Due to the evolving nature of English language teaching, English language teacher education needs to adopt new approaches to meet the needs of English language teaching. English language teaching, or teacher knowledge, is a complex concept that can be defined from diverse perspectives and covers a vast area in research studies, as there are different dimensions of teacher knowledge. Alexander et al. (1991) define teacher knowledge as the "individual's personal stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs, and memories" (p.317). Teachers gain knowledge throughout their career journey through diverse modes and aspects. Fenstermacher (1994) divides teacher knowledge into two, as propositional and practical knowledge, claiming that propositional knowledge is "a form of justified true belief" (p.22). Accordingly, propositional knowledge includes what teachers know about theories related to second language teaching and learning, how languages are learned, teaching methodologies, learner characteristics and a wealth of factual knowledge, which can be justified by using accepted theoretical conceptualizations based on former studies. Practical knowledge encompasses what teachers know and feel intuitively about how to plan and perform teaching in the classroom in a better way. Fenstermacher (1994) explains that,

> Practical knowledge in teaching is, as already noted, more than techne, more than knowing how; it is a collective concept focusing on the mental lives of teachers, their thinking, ruminations, purposes, planning, desires, and a host of other features. (p.36)

This suggests that most of the decisions teachers make in the classroom are based on practical knowledge; as asserted by Woods and Çakır (2011), "action stems from practical knowledge" (p.386). However, both propositional and practical knowledge contribute to teachers making better decisions for improved classroom performance. Apart from the above discussed two domains of knowledge, disciplinary knowledge is essential for a teacher to gain insights of the nature and characteristics of language, how language learning takes place and which methods teach the language best. This knowledge helps to promote teacher professionalism (Hall, 2019).

Conversely, insufficient or unobtainable knowledge may compel teachers to rely on what they believe is correct (Pajares, 1992; Woods, 1996). When teachers acquire new knowledge, and if that knowledge is influential, they may change their existing beliefs and adopt new ones. Therefore, similar to teachers' knowledge, beliefs also play a vital role in teachers' decisions. In the next section, I will focus on how beliefs influence teacher learning and classroom practice.

3.6 Nature of teachers' beliefs

In the field of cognitive research, diverse terms are used to refer to teachers' beliefs. Pajares (1992) records a large list of terminology the researchers used in defining beliefs.

> [A]ttitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy. (p.309)

However, the use of distinct terminology does not make the concept transparent. Therefore, different scholarly conceptualisations of the characteristics of beliefs may be helpful to understand what beliefs are. Nespor (1987) accepts the static nature of beliefs but emphasises its possibility to change even if deeply rooted. As beliefs evolve through individual experiences, they are connected with personal feelings and emotions.

Consequently, teachers are not judged externally or free from emotions (Nespor, 1987). Both Nespor (1987) and Pajares (1992) perceive the static nature of beliefs, and Pajares (1992) considers beliefs as another aspect of knowledge that influence individuals' decisions. However, Pajares (1992) claims that, despite researchers' attempts to define teacher beliefs, they have so far failed to develop a 'sensible definition' for them. Woods (1996) supports Pajares (1992) view by claiming that,

> [B]eliefs refer to an acceptance of a proposition for which there is no conventional knowledge, one that is not demonstrable, and for which there is accepted disagreement. (p.195)

Accordingly, beliefs are personal convictions lacking widely accepted or established knowledge that can be proved through empirical evidence. Yet, certain positive beliefs can emerge out of previously internalised knowledge and

shape teachers' decisions and behaviour. Richards (1996) rightly explains this ideology as follows.

> Teachers hold personal views of themselves, their learners, their goals, and their role in the classroom, and presumably try to reflect these in their teaching (p.283).

The above explanation regarding teacher behaviour implies how perceptions or beliefs that teachers hold throughout their professional sphere affect their teaching. Richards (1996) examines teachers' beliefs based on teacher narratives of his study with ESL teachers in Hong Kong and explains that when teachers express their views on their teaching experiences, they consciously or unconsciously unveil their belief systems. Richards (1996) identifies these belief systems as "Teachers' Maxims" which act as rules to direct teachers for decision-making and classroom behaviour (p.286). Basturkmen (2012) defines two types of beliefs – explicit beliefs and implicit beliefs – as follows.

> Espoused or explicit beliefs are those, which a person can readily articulate, and implicit beliefs are those, which are held unconsciously and can only be inferred from actions. (p.283)

According to Basturkmen's (2012) definition, teachers are able to explain explicit beliefs, or they are aware of them; however, what teachers do in the classroom should be observed in order to unveil implicit beliefs. This implies that beliefs and classroom practices are interconnected. In fact, this discussion leads me to examine the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices.

3.6.1 Research on teacher beliefs and classroom practice

When considering multifaceted research on teacher beliefs, contradictory findings are evident. In the recent past, SLTE research has gained significant attention in investigating the correspondence and impact of teacher beliefs on classroom practices. For instance, reviewing 11 studies on the correlation between teachers' beliefs and practices, Basturkmen (2012) reports a lack of correspondence in teacher beliefs and their classroom practices. In relation to the findings of six out of 11 studies, Basturkmen (2012) argues that the beliefs and classroom practices of more experienced teachers correspond more consistently than those of less experienced or inexperienced teachers do.

> More experienced teachers are likely to have more experientially informed beliefs than relative novices, and principles or beliefs informed by teaching experiences might be expected to correspond clearly with teaching practices. (Basturkmen, 2012, p.288)

Thus, the findings of the six studies suggest that experiential learning makes the beliefs more consistent and spontaneous in practice. As this is a common issue for many ESL contexts, I explore one of the above mentioned six studies conducted by Farrell and Kun (2008) in more depth considering the applicability of the study to the Sri Lankan context. The study was on the correspondence of teacher beliefs and practices in using Singapore Colloquial English (Singlish) in the classroom for instructions and the feedback strategies incorporated by three Singaporean primary English language teachers. The study revealed that all the three teachers believed British English as the only standard variety that the students need to improve but use of Singlish was also accepted. Moreover, they had similar attitudes towards error correction. When considering the findings related to their classroom practice, the beliefs and practices had one-to-one correspondence (Farrell and Kun, 2008).

Conversely, Basturkmen (2012) identifies lack of correspondence in teachers' beliefs and practices due to two reasons. One is the situational and contextual restrictions teachers encounter (Basturkmen 2012). For instance, when teachers have obligations to stick to the curriculum and align their teaching with exam-oriented systems, they may fail to implement their practice that corresponds with the new belief system. Tomlinson (1988), in relation to his experience in in-service training in Indonesia, claims that,

> The motivation and stimulus they had gained would soon have been negated by the confusion and frustration they would have suffered in trying to apply all that they had learned and the guilt and inadequacy they would have felt as a result of their almost inevitable failure to accommodate a new approach within the existing parameters of syllabus, examinations, materials, official expectations and class size. (p.18)

Tomlinson (1988) rightly conceptualises a common occurrence in many contexts. Only a few teachers may try to reflect on their unsuccessful attempts to find the actual cause for failure and try to balance career obligations and application of new belief systems.

The other reason for lack of correspondence can be when the teachers experience a changing process in their belief system. Although certain beliefs remain forever, there is a possibility of changing beliefs which are not deeply rooted, or beliefs may remain somewhere between the new and the old be. As Basturkmen (2012) argues, during this changing process, "[t]eacher's practice may reflect at one time one belief and at another time a belief that is at odds with the former belief" (p.284). In this transitional period, what the teachers believe may not be evident in their classroom practices. Some teachers may return to their former beliefs after trying out and failing to continue, yet some

may succeed in implementing new beliefs in their practices. To understand this phenomenon further, I will next examine whether teachers change their former beliefs to accommodate new ones and the extent to which teachers change beliefs after attending CPD programmes.

3.6.2 Impact of CPD on teacher beliefs

Investigating teacher beliefs after they have attended CPD programmes is another dimension of research into SLTE. The following assumptions emerged in relation to qualitative investigations on the impact of CPD on teacher beliefs. Freeman (1993) investigated the influence of an in-service CPD programme for French and Spanish teachers on their perceptions and classroom practice, and he identifies "tensions" in teachers' application of new practices and explores how teachers' reflections on these "tensions" or frustrations are utilised for the transformation of their former perceptions and classroom practices to newer ones after attending the programme (p.488). Subsequently, he poses two questions:

> How does taking part in the teacher education programme help them to do so? How does such participation enable them to reconstruct their conceptions of practice? (p.488)

In my view, considering these two questions is vital for the development of the CPD process, as this transition does not take place in every circumstance, for distinct reasons. For instance, Lamb (1995) encounters a mismatch between teacher beliefs and classroom practices in an INSET programme conducted for teachers in an Indonesian university. He commenced investigations one year after the INSET programme with 12 participants, inquiring about teachers' learnt knowledge and practices during the INSET programme. Instead of changing their detrimental beliefs, the teachers interpreted the learnt knowledge and practices differently to align with their existing beliefs. For instance, the training they received at the INSET programme a year earlier on using first language, teaching reading, incorporating group work and using teaching materials was accommodated without a proper understanding of the new knowledge and new beliefs for effective classroom practice. Lamb (1995) claims that,

> A great deal of our original 'input' had simply been lost, and what was taken up was reinterpreted by teachers to fit their own beliefs and their own concerns about what was important to them and their students. (pp.78–79)

This suggests that there were contradictions among teachers' beliefs and the new knowledge they gained through the INSET. Nonetheless, despite immediate inconsistency, Lamb (1995) identifies some constructive aspects that INSET built into teachers' mental processes. In attempting to acculturate their

beliefs with innovative ideas, the teachers might raise awareness on the change they need in their existing beliefs and ultimately consolidate the new beliefs with their future practices.

However, Peacock's (2001) study on the impact of a three-year ESL programme at City University of Hong Kong on the changing beliefs of trainee teachers revealed that "detrimental beliefs were very slow to change" (p.187). Consequently, based on his study with 146 participants over a three-year period, Peacock (2001) claims that CPD lacks the strength to change certain harmful teacher beliefs and suggests the need for an immediate transformation in CPD to achieve this goal.

Conversely, Borg (2011) finds positive impacts on beliefs and practices in his study. After completing an eight-week in-service Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) programme in the UK, Borg (2011) interviewed six teachers. The study reveals that the programme had a significant impact on the beliefs of all six teachers to varying degrees. For instance, three participants exhibit considerable progress in acknowledging their own beliefs, whereas the other half of the population experience progress to a lesser degree. Considering the findings, Borg (2011) claims that,

> [T]hrough teacher education teachers' beliefs can be strengthened and extended; they can be made more apparent to teachers and assume a form that can be verbalized; teachers can learn how to put their beliefs into practice and also develop links between their beliefs and theory. (p.378)

Borg (2011) suggests that effective and well-planned CPD programmes will provide teachers with opportunities to express their beliefs, and eventually, favourable beliefs will be nourished and prolonged. Thus, effective CPD opportunities may guide teachers to build up new productive beliefs by giving up beliefs that are detrimental. Consequently, the aforementioned studies highlight the importance of strengthening the CPD scenario to impart up-to-date teacher knowledge, which can counteract harmful beliefs and instil new, positive ones to enhance teacher expertise. As Johnson and Golombek (2011) emphasise, CPD programmes should strive to cultivate "new forms of thinking" (p.3) among teachers to foster teaching expertise. Therefore, the development of cognitive skills in teachers is essential to empower them in decision-making and taking responsibility for their own teaching and learning. The next section focuses on the influence of human and teacher cognition on developing teaching expertise.

3.7 Impact of human cognition in developing teaching expertise

Examining the concept of “human cognition” is crucial from various perspectives. Vygotsky’s (1978) perspective on human cognition is intricately linked to the socio-political conditions of the 1930s in the Soviet Union, as he explores the influence of culture on an individual’s behaviour. He summarises the main facets of his cognitive theory to include, “[t]he transformation of an interpersonal (social) process to an intrapersonal one; the stages of internalization; and the role of experienced learners” (p.131), stating that this process of transformation occurs through mediation initially among people (interpersonal) and then within individuals (intrapersonal). Lantolf (2000) proposes that second language learners transition through three stages in reaching self-development, as they progress from interpersonal to intrapersonal development. These stages involve encountering “objects” in the environment, interacting with “others”, and ultimately culminate in “self-regulation” (p.6), which influences transformation. In fact, language, the tools incorporated and social interaction play pivotal roles in the process of transformation through mediation for cognitive growth of a person (Van Lier, 2014).

When comparing the features of human cognition with teacher cognition in the context of SLTE, teachers bring their past internalised theories and conceptions when joining the profession. These conceptualisations, along with social interactions and mediation by teacher educators and peers contribute to the development and shaping of teacher cognition (Johnson and Golombek, 2011). As Johnson and Golombek (2011) explain, teachers develop cognitive skills through active engagement in “socioculturally mediated” activities, acquiring expertise in both “what is taught” and “how it is taught” (p.3). In relation to this Vygotskian sociocultural perspective, Golombek and Doran (2014) further explain that,

> Human cognition is conceptualized as originating in and being shaped by engagement in social activities, emerging on the interpsychological plane and gradually transforming to the intrapsychological plane (p.104).

Thus, some readers of the Vygotskian sociocultural perspective accept that human cognition develops through the interconnectedness of the mind and the body, affected by the individual’s association with the society. According to Johnson and Golombek (2018), the Vygotskian concept of “Obuchenie” – teaching and learning as an intentional, collaborative interactive process – steers cognitive development when teachers are effectively guided and mediated by experts (p.444). Moreover, social interaction and mediation are key

factors for establishing general higher mental functions such as reasoning, abstraction, problem solving, critical thinking and digital literacy skills, and these skills make a person independent as learners and as social beings. As Kotik-Friedgut and Ardila (2020) explain, these are the essential skills needed for the twenty-first century, which can be promoted through social interaction when parents, teachers and peers mediate and promote cognitive growth in learners. This cognitive model extends into the realm of teacher education as “teacher cognition”, which pertains to the decision-making process of teachers. These factors will be explored further in the next section to understand teachers’ mental life.

3.7.1 Teacher cognition and decision-making in language teaching

Teachers’ thinking process, understanding and interpretation of events by teachers are grounded in their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge, collectively falling under the broader theme of ‘teacher cognition’. In particular, Woods (1996) identifies the process of language teachers’ decision-making as a “cognitive model” which involves “background knowledge, assumptions and beliefs” (p.49). The acronym BAK was coined to represent the three facets of teacher cognition – beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (Woods, 1996; Woods and Çakır, 2011) – and BAK influences the teaching process and decision-making. According to Woods (1996),

> [T]he teachers’ beliefs, assumptions and knowledge play an important role in how the teacher interprets events related to teaching (both in preparation for the teaching and in the classroom), and thus affects the teaching decisions that are ultimately made. (p.184)

Thus, BAK influences teachers’ decision-making in both prior planning and the execution of every action in the classroom. The language teaching and learning process comprises two main facets that significantly influence the success of classroom practices. One aspect involves the planning and preparation for conducting effective teacher behaviour in the classroom or, in simpler terms, what teachers do in the classroom for everyday classroom practice. The other dimension encompasses teacher perceptions related to specific goals, prior knowledge, and teacher beliefs and assumptions (Woods, 1996).

Woods (1996) elucidates how knowledge influences the decision-making process in relation to understanding.

> [I]n order to take appropriate action, people need to understand; and to understand they need knowledge about the world and specifically about the situation they are in. (p.59)

In addition to background knowledge, teachers' 'belief systems', or what they believe about language teaching and learning and how it is conveyed to learners, will influence teachers' decisions in planning classroom work, actions and behaviour, ultimately shaping the outcome of the lesson (Woods, 1996). Moreover, teachers may employ both explicit and implicit beliefs in the classroom (Basturkmen, 2012). For instance, teachers may intentionally plan and use certain strategies, techniques, or methods that they believe are effective in teaching. Subsequently, they may take involuntary, on-the-spot decisions intuitively based on what they implicitly believe is appropriate.

In a nutshell, teachers bring their past learning experiences, internalised conceptions, and beliefs gained from school about teaching and learning, along with professional training and knowledge they acquired as beginner teachers, their CPD experiences, and their knowledge of the world into their classrooms (Johnson, 2006). While these cognitive skills enhance teachers' professional practices in the classroom, their continuous engagement in classroom practices subsequently influences the moulding of their cognitive skills in a cyclical process (Borg, 2006). Many researchers investigate how teachers conduct themselves in the classroom and why some teachers excel more than others in their classroom practices (Leinhardt and Greeno, 1986; Johnson, 2006). Woods (1996) questions the factors influencing teachers' decision-making processes regarding what they choose to do and what they refrain from doing. According to Verloop et al. (2001), these cognitions range from consciously made decisions to decisions made unconsciously. Conversely, Borg (2006) argues, "teachers' thinking, and behaviours are guided by a set of organized beliefs and that these often operate unconsciously" (p.9). It is evident that teachers utilise their thinking, intuition, or multifaceted cognitions when deciding what actions to take and what to avoid in the classroom.

By exploring 25 research studies on teacher cognition involving in-service teacher participants from 16 different countries, Borg (2012) identifies diverse perspectives of teacher cognition beyond what teachers think, believe and know, recognising the importance of considering teachers' attitudes, identities, and emotions as other integral elements of cognition that cannot be excluded. Accordingly, teachers' beliefs are intertwined with their feelings and emotions, which in turn influence their decision-making. Borg (2012) explains the impact of emotions on teacher cognition by stating, "[t]he study of teacher cognition, given its concern for understanding the unobservable dimension of teacher's lives, in no way excludes attention to emotions" (p.12). Thus, the study broadens the scope of cognitive perspectives and suggests the need for future studies on

teacher cognition to gain insights into the relationship between teacher cognition and classroom teaching (Borg, 2012).

In my view, CPD endeavours should focus on developing various aspects of teacher cognition, creating teachers with the potential to make appropriate decisions consciously or unconsciously in order to meet learner expectations, institutional requirements, and societal needs. In other words, CPD should have the capacity to enhance teachers' decisional capital, and considering the rapidly changing digitalised world, teachers' decision-making and cognitive skills should be adaptable to these changes. Consequently, fostering teacher change becomes paramount in achieving this goal. The next section will delve into the different dimensions of teacher change.

3.8 What is teacher change?

The statement "Change is inescapable in education today" (Lortie, 1975, p.214) is pertinent in every context every time. In the context of education, 'change' encompasses a wide range of interconnected social systems, sub-systems and dimensions, including educational policies, curriculum, teacher education, syllabi, school systems, classrooms, teacher training, trainers, teaching methods and teachers themselves. For the purpose of this study, I will focus specifically on the process of teacher change, exploring how social systems influence this change and examining the implications it holds within the field of education.

It is obvious that teacher change substantially influences change within any education system. According to Fullan (1993), "teachers are agents of educational change and societal improvement" (p.11), and the terms "change agents" (Kennedy, 1987; Fullan, 2007a) and "key players" (Wedell and Malderez, 2013, p.9) are commonly used to refer to teachers, emphasising their role and accountability in implementing change in education systems across diverse contexts (Guskey, 1994). As Fullan (2001) highlights, their service contributes to the improvement of society. Nonetheless, if teachers stagnate without espousing change, the workforce they produce may be ill-equipped to progress along with societal changes. Lortie (1975) identifies "greater adaptability, more effective colleague relationships, and more sharing in issues of knowledge and expertise" as requisites for teacher change (p.221).

The other side of the coin of teacher change is the concern for teachers' own security and mental wellbeing. As Fullan (2007b) states, "change is needed because many teachers are frustrated, bored, and burned out" (p.138). When teachers persist in applying the same teaching methodologies, styles and

techniques for an extended period, regardless of emerging changes emerging in the education system and society, they may eventually become overwhelmed with pessimistic thoughts and cynicism.

Lortie (1975) identifies three questions related to teacher change. The first concern is, “what types of changes are probable to take place?” Secondly, the focus is on the consequences that change would bring to the teaching process and how this change is connected to the context and teacher professionalism. Thirdly, “what forces influence teacher change and the strategies to manage them” are considered (Lortie, 1975).

More than two decades later, Fullan (2001) acknowledges the “what of change” and the “how of change” (p.8) as key features to consider in teacher change, further explaining that in order to reach the destination efficiently and accurately, one needs to be aware of where to go, the way to reach there, and the capacity needed to complete the journey. When considering the conceptualisations in both explanations of teacher change, each feature is beneficial for a successful journey of change. Yet, while Fullan (2001) emphasises ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions, the ‘why’ question is embedded in the idea of ‘where to go’. The process of teacher change can be made more fruitful by knowing where to aim, and this ‘why’ question is indirectly included in Lortie’s (1975) three questions as “the implications of projected changes” (p.215). However, the three questions why, what, and how, in particular, encompass all the crucial areas of the change process. In the preceding sections, I examined the developmental changes required for teachers to become better practitioners. In the next section, I will discuss the specific reasons why teachers need to change and what influences or impedes their change. Subsequently, in upcoming sections, I will explore strategies for facilitating this change.

3.8.1 Why teachers need to change

A variety of reasons can be identified for why teachers need to change. Primarily, the goal of teacher change is to embrace best practices and, consequently, become better practitioners by developing professional capital to keep pace with the constantly evolving world. The notion of ‘better practitioners’ or ‘better professionals’ is relative and depends on societal changes and shifts in educational cultures, and this concept of better practitioners can be interpreted as the development of a new identity within the community.

Miller (2009) explains identity “as a process of continual emerging and becoming” (p.173) highlighting its evolving nature and further clarifies by discussing its functions as “relational, interactional, constructed, and performed

in context” (p.175). Clarke (2008) defines identity as “individuals’ knowledge and naming of themselves as well as others’ recognition of them as a particular sort of person” (p.8). Thus, in relation to both conceptualisations, teachers might need to develop a new identity in line with societal changes to maintain their status within the ESL teacher community. Further conceptualising identity, Clarke (2008) links identity with teacher education and transformation, framing “teacher education as a process of identity formation” and “education as identity transforming” (p.10). This perspective suggests that identity is not static; teachers shift between identities depending on the context and conditions (Sachs, 2005), which indicates that teachers who acquire new knowledge, develop new skills and transform their practices ultimately construct a new teacher identity.

As Dikilitaş and Yayli (2018) argue, teachers transform their identity over time through professional learning, active involvement and commitment. They assert that teachers demonstrate teacher identity more when they are flexible in accepting development and change with their experience in self-directed learning. Hence, it is crucial to focus on the influential factors that drive teacher change to understand how teacher change might promote their identity development.

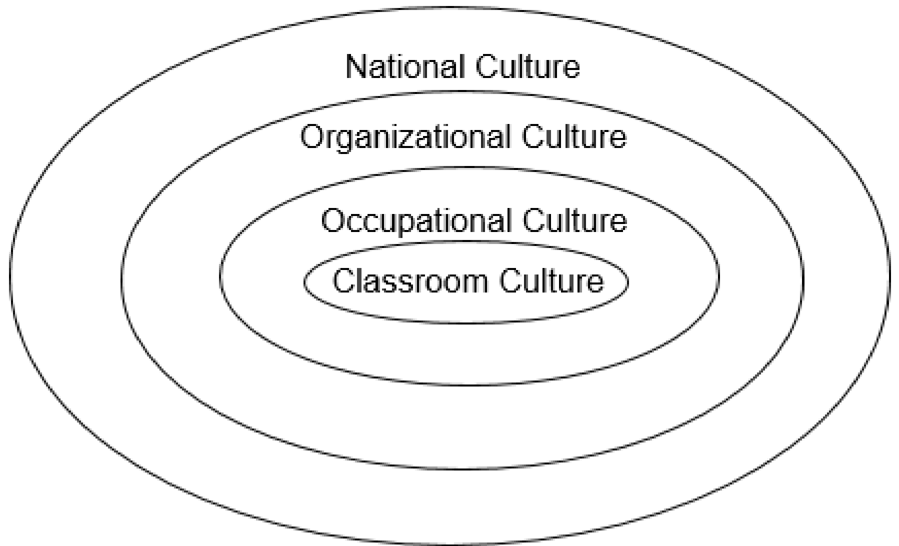
3.8.2 What influences teacher change

In my view, one of the most dominant factors in educational and teacher change is the influence of various interconnected cultures and systems (Hoban, 2002; Wedell and Malderez, 2013). Wedell and Malderez (2013) define ‘culture’ as an “invisible belief system underlying the external social behaviour of a particular national group” (p.23). They identify four subcultures: national, organisational, occupational and classroom, as illustrated in figure 3.1. Accordingly, individuals of the same nationality, ethnic or religious group who share the same belief systems and behaviours and adhere to the taboos in the same culture belong to the national culture. Members employed in organisations such as educational departments, universities or institutions belong to the organisational culture and follow specific rules and regulations. Professionals such as teachers, doctors or lawyers, who belong to the same discipline and have their own routines, fall under the institutional culture. Institutional culture is a part of educational culture and is embedded in occupational culture (Wedell and Malderez, 2013). For instance, doctors, engineers, teachers, and English teachers belong to the occupational culture, while those working in universities, schools or businesses represent different institutional cultures. However, members of one particular culture may fall into other cultures simultaneously. Wedell and Malderez (2013)

perceive these subcultures as levels within the broader culture, and due to their interconnectedness, they are referred to as “embedded cultures” as illustrated in figure 3.1 below.

All these levels have their own and shared conventions, values, and practices. Nonetheless, educational culture from 50 years ago was presumably hugely different from today’s educational culture in almost every country and context. Teachers cannot rely on the same methodologies or treat students in the same ways as they did in the past. They must adapt their methodologies and employ different strategies to accommodate evolving circumstances. Furthermore, if a teacher moves from a village school to a popular city school, there can be vast differences between the educational cultures of the two schools, which we can specifically identify as school cultures. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), “culture is about what goes together and what should be kept apart” (p.103). Thus, teachers should be flexible in utilising their capacities to make appropriate decisions regarding their practices, depending on diverse contexts and situations. This suggests that teacher change is inevitable as a professional endeavour in order to enhance professional capital and reshape how we perceive teaching and the quality of teaching to make teaching a sustainable investment. As Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) assert, “professional capital involves a change of culture in your school” (p.164). Consequently, this change will yield higher returns on investment.

Figure 3-1 Embedded Cultures (Wedell and Malderez, 2013, p.31)



In explaining figure 3.1, Wedell and Malderez (2013) refer to diverse systems embedded within subcultures that influence educational change. Similarly, in Figure 3.2 below, Hoban (2002) depicts “Educational change as a complex system” (p.37), wherein ‘culture’ is included as one of the diverse systems influencing educational change.

Figure 3-2 Educational change as a complex system (Hoban, 2002, p.37).

As shown in Figure 3.2, diverse systems, people, and practices are interconnected and mutually influence one another within the context of significant educational change. Hoban (2002) characterises these systems as “change frames”, which can either facilitate or hinder change. For instance, “leadership” involves the motivation and support provided by the school principal during the change process, while “structure” pertains to the internal

organisation of the school and “politics” encompasses external authoritative and governmental powers and policies affecting change. According to Hoban (2002), ‘culture’ serves as a change frame wherein teachers collaborate and share beliefs and practices within the school culture. However, teachers might encounter conflicting beliefs, expectations and practices among various subcultures within the same region, nation and culture, which can impede change. Indrarathne (2024) notes that in the South Asian region, including Sri Lanka, English is regarded as a prestigious asset in society due to its colonial history. Conversely, persistent inconsistencies in teacher training quality, teaching standards, and teacher proficiency in English contribute to the slow pace of educational change. Thus, in addressing these issues, higher authorities can strategically mediate and facilitate by providing insights that help compensate for limited resources and enhance teachers' proficiency levels (Indrarathne, 2024).

“Teacher learning” is another identified change frame, which includes the resources provided to teachers intended to facilitate the implementation of new changes. It delineates how ‘teachers’ lives and work’ influences change both positively and negatively. For instance, teachers from the age of 40 tend to exhibit resistance to change, while those below 40 are more welcoming of it (Hoban, 2002). “Context” serves as a change frame encompassing all organisations and surroundings connected to the school and its community in Hoban’s (2002) conceptualisations of the spider web of change, influencing teachers’ practices and their efforts to bring change about.

When considering ‘context’ as a system, Wedell (2009) states that “One reason for initiating change that seems to be felt in many national contexts today is linked to the technological and economic effects of globalization” (p.14). Technology has invaded every aspect of human activity, bringing about numerous changes in educational cultures as well. Access to information has become quick and easy from any part of the world, and consequently, teachers are expected to adapt and evolve their professional lives to meet societal expectations. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) identify this process as developing one’s professional capital with the ultimate goal of empowering individuals to participate in the process of change within the system. However, there exists a contradiction between change forces and conservativeness, as Fullan (1993) aptly explains in the following quote.

> On the one hand, we have the constant and ever-expanding presence of educational innovation and reform. (…) On the other hand, however, we have an educational system, which is fundamentally conservative. The way the teachers are trained, the way that schools are organized, the way that the

> educational hierarchy operates, and the way that education is treated by political decision-makers results in a system that is more likely to retain the status quo than to change. (p.3)

These dynamics may apply across various contexts, though their effects can differ depending on the unique characteristics of each context. For example, in Sri Lanka, the “exam-dominated nature of educational practice…, predictable exams which stimulate memorisation, reproduction, and cramming-oriented teaching and learning,” along with a limited connection between assessment and the teaching-learning process, have been identified as major issues that conflict with educational expectations (Brunfaut et al., 2019, pp. 10-11). Nonetheless, the potential for change varies, influenced by the “cultures” (Wedell, 2009) and “systems” (Hoban, 2002) within these contexts. These factors may either hinder or support teachers' efforts toward innovation, depending on how they operate. Small-scale changes are possible when teachers are capable and intrinsically motivated to make decisions for their own satisfaction or are driven by the moral purposes of teaching. Thus, empowering teachers is essential for fostering long-term change.

A core requirement for teachers, as professionals, is the ability to take responsibility for their development and teaching by making instantaneous decisions in their practice, and cultivate the potential for autonomous decision-making. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) emphasise, “[m]aking decisions in complex situations is what professionalism is all about” (p.5), while Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) further explain that some of the primary requirements for teachers to be professionals include “self-regulation of conduct, autonomy to make informed discretionary judgments, working together with other professionals” (p.80). Similarly, Hanks (2017) explains, “the only person who really learns (…) is the person who ‘owns’ that learning and takes charge of it for themselves” (p.192). This suggests that learners need to take ownership and be accountable for their own learning. Therefore, it is evident that CPD should initiate this gradual process of teacher change, leading to the creation of autonomous practitioners. The next section will focus on teacher autonomy and scholarly perspectives on fostering autonomous practitioners.

3.8.3 Teachers as autonomous practitioners

When exploring literature related to various aspects of teacher development and practices that lead to teacher change, one important concept that emerges is the attainment of self-development. In the context of Sri Lanka, Murdoch (1994) emphasises the significance of instilling self-development strategies in teacher trainees during their initial teacher training for two specific reasons.

> Encouraging self-development strategies not only helps trainees to raise their proficiency levels during training, but also develops habits which can enable them to maintain their standard of English when they are teaching in a less linguistically rich environment. (p.255)

Furthermore, self-development can foster autonomy in teacher learning and teaching, empowering teachers to take control of their own learning and teaching and engaging in instantaneous decision-making. Across the globe, the significance of teachers making their own decisions to facilitate self-directed learning and teaching, thereby equipping learners with twenty-first century skills, has also been recognised. Following this acknowledgment, I will next explore the implications of teacher autonomy and elucidate how teachers can attain an autonomous status.

McGrath (2000) acknowledges teacher autonomy as “self-directed professional development” and defines teacher autonomy as “control over one’s own professional development” (p.100), making connections with Benson’s (2000) definition of personal autonomy as, “freedom from control by others” (p.112). Both definitions highlight the authority and freedom teachers need to manage their professional actions and their own CPD process.

It is generally believed that various forces influence teachers in diverse ways. McGrath (2000) identifies two categories: macro forces, which are uncontrollable, and micro forces, which are controllable. While external pressures exerted by higher authorities are uncontrollable, institutional influences can be controlled to some extent. Nonetheless, a certain degree of freedom from all types of pressures is needed for autonomisation and the development of autonomy in teaching (Benson, 2001). Pearson and Moomaw (2005) state that,

> If teachers are to be empowered and exalted as professionals, then like other professionals, teachers must have the freedom to prescribe the best treatment for their students as doctors/lawyers do for their patients/clients; and the freedom to do such has been defined by some as teacher autonomy. (p.37)

The two terms ‘empowered’ and ‘exalted’ are crucial in this definition when comparing teachers to other professionals that utilise their professional capital such as doctors and lawyers. However, teachers can attain empowerment by acquiring knowledge and developing competence through CPD programmes, engaging in research work, collaborative efforts and other means. These efforts enable them to achieve autonomous status, performing at the same level as other high-calibre professionals.

Examining a study conducted with 300 teachers from three schools in Florida, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) assume that autonomous teachers possess "less on-the-job stress, greater work satisfaction, perceived empowerment, and a high degree of professionalism" (p.42). The study reveals that teacher autonomy empowered the teachers and strengthened their professionalism, and that, subsequently, the teachers worked with less on-the-job stress. However, this study did not demonstrate a strong interdependence of autonomy and job satisfaction (Pearson and Moomaw, 2005). In another study reviewing 20 diverse forms of self-directed and inquiry-based pre-service and in-service programme records, Manzano Vázquez (2018) suggests that,

> Although there is a great diversity of practices and strategies (e.g. workshops, seminars, exchange of experiences, cooperative and self-directed work, peer-teaching situations, action research projects, etc.), a common thread runs through these initiatives: reflective, inquiry-oriented teacher education is presented as the most powerful approach to the promotion of TA2 [teacher autonomy]. (p.395)

Specifically, regarding ESL teaching, greater autonomy is needed for teachers to exploit every possible opportunity to turn it into a language learning experience. Dikilitaş and Mumford (2019) record the implications of a study on "autonomy development through reading" with 11 language teachers at a university in Istanbul, utilising two specific tools: thinking-aloud protocols and focus group discussions (p.253) and suggesting that "reading Teacher Research promotes autonomous teacher development" (p.254). By incorporating autonomous learning principles, the teachers were given the authority to choose their own reading materials and the freedom to manipulate their own learning through critical reading. Teachers built their own interpretations of research readings, and reflection on reading and interpretation were the two main strategies used throughout the programme (Dikilitaş and Mumford, 2019).

Thus, the above examples suggest the possibility of creating autonomous teachers by incorporating autonomous learning activities as tools for mediation in CPD efforts. If teachers are free from outside pressures, if they have developed their potential to engage in autonomous learning and teaching, and if they are motivated to be autonomous teachers, the activities discussed above, which encompass research components, can be assets for developing teacher autonomy.

The focus of this section is to discover the implications of autonomous teaching and the extent to which teacher autonomy empowers teachers. However, it is vital to consider which strategies can effectively help teachers who lack capacity

to work autonomously to become autonomous. Teachers need supportive mechanisms and scaffolding to achieve autonomy. In this regard, innovative teacher-led or collaborative development and evaluation strategies have been identified and implemented in diverse contexts. In the next section, I will first define the concept of teacher evaluation to elucidate what it entails. I will then examine how conventional teacher evaluation strategies operate for CPD and how certain innovative evaluation strategies develop individual's autonomous decision-making and functioning skills.

3.9 Defining teacher evaluation

It is crucial to comprehend the concept of teacher evaluation from various perspectives, particularly by addressing two fundamental questions: 'What is teacher evaluation?' and 'Why are teachers evaluated?'. Nunan (1992) succinctly addresses both questions by stating that it involves "not only assembling information but interpreting that information making value judgments" (p.185). In addition, Malderez and Wedell (2007) explain evaluation in relation to the processes of classroom teaching and teacher training.

> […a] process that ends with an overall judgment about whether particular practices (leading to the design, the plan, the preparation, the actual teaching, the assessment) have been 'good' or achieved their purposes. (p.164)

Thus, evaluation involves determining the value of any performance or practice. In essence, evaluation entails judging and decision-making about the quality of practices considering available information. According to Darling-Hammond (2013), moreover, the authorities must "ensure that teacher evaluation is connected to-not isolated from-preparation, and induction, daily practice, and a productive instructional context" (p.7) for an effective evaluation process.

3.9.1 Impacts of teacher evaluation

Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992) explain how evaluation generally affects people as social beings outside educational settings. In social life,

> [E]valuation is not always something that we do in a principled and systematic way. The criteria we use in making judgments may sometimes be vague and ill-defined. (p.4)

This shows that the decisions we make in daily life, based on improper evaluations, may bring detrimental impacts to people personally when judgments are inaccurate. Similarly, in order to avoid causing any harm to teachers through educational evaluation, standardised criteria are needed, as the future of both the teacher and the learners may depend on the decisions based on teacher evaluation.

> Ill-prepared and ad-hoc evaluations are likely to be unreliable, unfair, and uninformative. They are not a suitable source on which to base educational decisions. (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992, p.4)

In fact, all evaluations need to be well prepared, reliable, fair and informative to achieve expected outcomes. Evaluations must be conducted systematically using diverse, well-prepared, goal-oriented and reliable tools and specifications for diagnosing learners' levels of achievement, so that the evaluation process involves gathering and interpreting information systematically to judge overall quality. The impact may depend on the quality of the evaluation process, evaluation tools, and the purpose of evaluation. As Peterson (1995) suggests, an updated and state-of-the-art evaluation procedure is essential for improving teacher quality. Moreover, for improving teacher quality, qualitative, in-depth evaluation data are a prerequisite for planning future work considering evaluation data.

Similarly, Kiely and Rea-Dickins (2005) propose that "teacher-led evaluations" (p.246), which can be planned and conducted by teachers individually, in small groups or collaboratively with trainers, and connected with action research and reflective practice, will contribute to teachers' professional development by fostering critical enquiry. This teacher-led evaluation might serve as an initial step in gaining experience while working within teachers' own contexts.

However, in many contexts, prevailing evaluation practices may not bring expected outcomes. Danielson and McGreal (2000) claim that evaluation practices today are similar to what prevailed in the 1970s, and those practices do not fulfil the requirements of the current teaching-learning process. I will focus on effective teacher evaluation practices for self-development based on reflective practice in the next section.

3.9.2 Collaborative, bottom-up reflective tools for teacher evaluation

According to Richards and Farrell (2005),

> [a]lthough much teacher development can occur through a teacher's own personal initiative, collaboration with others both enhances individual learning and serves the collective goals of an institution. (p.12)

Most collaborative, bottom-up teacher evaluation practices are based on Reflective Practice (RP) as a professional development and evaluation strategy. In RP, teachers reflect on their practices and gain awareness of the strengths and drawbacks of their planning or actions in order to remedy the flaws or avoid replicating flawed practices. However, current RP practices are limited to individual written forms of evaluation (Mann and Walsh, 2015). Iyer-O'Sullivan

(2015) rightly identifies the reality in the application of RP in teacher training contexts.

> Reflection is a challenging activity and students who have not grasped the basics of how to reflect usually end up describing what went right and wrong. (p.72)

I witnessed the same RP evaluation process in Sri Lanka while working with ESL pre-service teacher trainees, where RP was used as an assessment tool rather than as a professional development strategy. Teacher trainees wrote reflective journals in English, and some of them failed to express their feelings and thoughts about their lessons due to a lack of second language writing skills. Some trainees were reluctant to write about certain issues, fearing that it would affect their final mark. Consequently, they tended to focus only on the positive aspects in hopes of receiving higher marks. For these reasons, teacher trainees do not grasp the underlying principles of the concept. As a result, they might not continue RP for professional development after joining the school system as ESL teachers. Mann and Walsh (2015) experienced this issue and state that, "[t]oo many RP accounts rely on general summaries and so are neither critical, transparent, nor usable by other practitioners" (p.291), which suggests that some teachers do not have a clear idea about writing reflections critically. Moreover, Freeman (2016) explains this situation as "in second language teacher education, reflection is probably the most widespread but the least well understood" (p.208). In this particular evaluation process, RP may not contribute to the purpose of self-understanding and self-development, as teachers might not realise the true purpose of reflecting on their practices.

Exploratory practice (EP) is another professional development strategy that fosters teacher autonomy through working collaboratively. As Dikilitaş and Hanks (2018b) define,

> Exploratory practice (EP) is a form of practitioner research with potential for personal and professional development. ….it promotes the idea of teachers and learners working collaboratively to understand their learning and teaching worlds. (p.11)

Dikilitaş and Hanks (2018b) promote the Vygotskian sociocultural perspective of professional development, explaining how the EP framework contributes to teachers' professional growth through mediation and collegiality. In relation to a study conducted by Allwright, Dikilitaş and Hanks in 2015 in Izmir, Turkey, it was found that "[M]any feel almost burnt-out…." (p.204) with no on-the-job satisfaction. Generalising this phenomena, Hanks (2017) states,

> In many parts of the world, teachers are struggling with heavy workloads … lack of time, lack of energy and lack of resources are ever-present worries for those working in education. (p.200)

Taking into consideration the plight of teachers in many countries, Hanks (2017) emphasises the relevance of EP practice for teachers' professional development, suggesting that EP allows greater autonomy for teachers as practitioners to take decisions regarding what, how and when to engage in research as insiders with contextual understanding. This view is connected with the EP principle of 'Quality of Life', which aims to make teachers' lives easier and more comfortable while gaining continuing professional development. Hanks (2017) explains that,

> Teachers, and teacher educators, are positioned as ever-learning, capable of infinite varieties of development; they can enjoy learning from colleagues and from their learners. (p.212)

Accordingly, it is important to consider that engaging in EP, linked with the principle of "working collegially for understanding" (Hanks, 2019b), can provide a platform for teachers and teacher trainers to work and learn collaboratively and foster positive relationships, a feature often lacking in many contexts. Consequently, EP emerges as a well-suited CPD strategy.

In current SLTE literature, there exist alternative collaborative, self- and peer-evaluation reflective tools that can be effectively utilised. Examples include stimulated recall, critical incident analysis, self-monitoring and self-evaluation, and peer co-operative development. These bottom-up, reflective, self-evaluation strategies will be discussed in more detail below.

3.9.2.1 Stimulated recall as a reflective tool for self and peer-evaluation

Despite constraints, stimulated recall proves to be an effective collaborative strategy for self- and peer-evaluation. According to Mann and Walsh (2015),

> One of the most powerful means of promoting reflective practice is to get teachers to make a video-recording of their teaching and then discuss it with a critical friend or colleague. (p.307)

This video recording serves as a valuable tool for peer evaluation, providing both the teacher and the critical friend with tangible evidence. Randall (2015) suggests that, "systematic recordings of lessons can be used as an effective teacher development tool for raising awareness" (p.57), as every aspect of the lesson offers insights into teacher behaviour, including how the teacher elicits answers, utilise eye contact, allows sufficient wait-time for student responses, and attends to backward learners. These details can then be noticed, analysed and evaluated. Furthermore, the recording provides the teacher with an

opportunity to reflect on and share their feelings and thoughts, enabling peers or critical friends to activate their awareness and engage in critical evaluation.

3.9.2.2 Critical incident analysis

Critical incident analysis shares similarities with stimulated recall. Instead of video recording the lesson, participants recall a critical incident, which is then collaboratively analysed and evaluated for developmental purposes (Mann and Walsh, 2015). Iyer-O'Sullivan (2015) elaborates on the purpose of this entire process as follows.

> By helping teachers identify and probe one event from a delivered lesson, they are encouraged to break down and deconstruct that event which usually leads to reflecting on the entire lesson, prior beliefs, and post-lesson strategies. (p.77)

In critical incident analysis, the teacher is afforded the freedom to decide the critical incident, potentially promoting autonomous decision-making, and the supervisor's role is primarily limited to mediation. Iyer-O'Sullivan (2015) elaborates on the teacher's role, emphasising the notion of power balance between the supervisor and the teacher, stating that, "teachers can be equal and powerful participants in deciding, determining and directing feedback discourse" (p.79). In fact, through critical incident analysis, teachers may develop skills for self- and peer-evaluation, thereby enhancing their self-development and autonomy.

3.9.2.3 Self-monitoring and self-evaluation

This is an attempt to promote autonomous learning by giving teachers the opportunity to plan and evaluate experimental lessons through reflection. They monitor their observations and evaluate their lessons using a self-observation guide and a self-evaluation guide to engage in self-monitoring and self-evaluation. These strategies effectively promote autonomous learning.

As Roberts (1998) describes,

> Learning derives from the teachers' self-monitoring and self-evaluation, enriched by the perspectives of colleagues. Ultimately, self-monitoring is the only possible basis for long-term change. (p.305)

This suggests the sustainability of the change process. Roberts (1998) presents findings related to a two-year CPD programme implemented in 1992 for secondary school teachers in the Baltic States. Subsequently, after completing the programme in 1994, a resource pack named Preventive approaches to disruption (p.297) was developed to promote self-direction and collaborative relationships among teachers and included reflective exercises, discussions,

video observations and paired observations. The evidence from the study indicates that peer observation, collaboration, and self-directed monitoring might encourage teachers to engage in further continuous autonomous and independent practices provided there is constant intervention by authorities and expertise (Roberts, 1998).

3.9.2.4 Peer co-operative development

When teachers gather informally outside of school or training centres, they often engage in discussions about teaching-related issues, students, unusual occurrences or anecdotes from their experiences. During these interactions, they may receive suggestions from colleagues that address these classroom challenges. This phenomenon motivates both parties, as they receive encouragements, admiration, evaluation and opportunities for sharing experience. Mann (2004) proposes peer co-operative development as a more systematic and reflective evaluation tool similar to these informal interactions that offers teachers opportunities to exchange experiences with colleagues and receive support in multiple ways. They may convene physically or virtually, forming collegial WhatsApp, Teams or Zoom groups, depending on everyone's accessibility. Mann (2004) explains that, through peer co-operative development

> ….peers can work together in more sustained and developmental ways that keep the attention on the ideas of the individual teacher in his or her attempt to move thinking forward. (p.121)

This practice may raise teachers' self-awareness of their capabilities and areas needing improvement, motivating peers to listen and respond attentively (Mann, 2004). Moreover, it can foster the development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity among teachers. Encouraged by the desire to engage in scholarly conversations with colleagues, teachers may seek out innovative practices, which may ultimately enable them to develop self-esteem as a member of a professional team.

This trend is becoming increasingly common today, particularly with the rise of collegial groups formed during innovative teacher training programmes. For instance, following participation in the initial iTESL trainer and teacher training workshops in Sri Lanka, British Council iTESL consultants, master trainers, and ISAs established several virtual iTESL groups through which to share experiences and seek support from trainers. Even after the consultants, who were on a contractual basis, left the country upon completion of their contracts, they remained active members of these virtual groups, offering support and keeping teachers and trainers informed of new research findings and innovative

practices. As Mann (2004) suggests, peer co-operative development tools offer opportunities for the “eventual integration of ideas” (p.121), enabling reflection and the development of critical thinking.

3.9.2.5 Collaborative Learning communities

As discussed in section 3.8.2, diverse cultures (Wedell and Malderez, 2013) and systems (Hoban, 2002) connected to the education process influence the change process, either impeding or enhancing practices. Since schools are linked to various internal and external systems, the factors that hinder change and development can be minimized through the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders working toward a common goal. Therefore, teacher change can be facilitated through CPD by establishing collaborative learning communities that foster bottom-up, peer and self-evaluation and strengthen relationships among teachers, school communities including principals, teacher trainers, parents, and relevant authorities. Hayes (2019) provides practical examples of Collaborative Learning Communities in various contexts that produced positive outcomes. In Clausen et al.’s study, Canadian teachers and the principal of an elementary school worked collaboratively to achieve a shared goal, fostering positive communication and understanding among stakeholders. However, as Clausen et al. (2009) explain, the principal initially implemented a top-down model until the teachers developed collegiality and made the community a part of their professional lives by recognizing their own potential. Ultimately, this learning community fostered self-direction and promoted egalitarianism by eliminating hierarchical pressures, encouraging collegial thinking, and making CPD an ongoing process (Clausen et al., 2009; Hayes, 2019). Similar to the Canadian case study, Hayes (2019) presents Sales et al.'s study from Spain, which encouraged teacher development through self-direction and self-evaluation in a school-based in-service training (SIT) programme. Teachers participated in action research, receiving support from a teacher educator who acted as a 'critical friend,' while the principal initially displayed authoritative behaviour. Despite initial negativity among teachers about the school community, the introduction of the action research process in the SIT programme gradually fostered trust, a sense of moral purpose, responsibility, and autonomy, allowing teachers to engage in a community of practice and build positive relationships and understanding (Sales et al., 2011). Hayes (2019) highlights the positive impact of this collaborative learning community, particularly in establishing the sustainability of teacher change.

3.9.2.6 Communities of Practice (COP) /Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs)

As explained from a Vygotskian sociocultural perspective, individuals engage in social activities, and development takes place through social interaction. As Wenger (2020) notes, since ancient times, humans have “formed communities that share cultural practices reflecting their collective learning” (p.5). This phenomenon has evolved among professionals and school communities, aimed at professional growth, into Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs) or Communities of Practice (COPs), which foster social interaction and reflection for teacher learning, either through in-person meetings or online platforms. According to Wenger (2020), a COP consists of three key elements: a mutual bond and shared understanding of a common goal, reciprocal and trusted interactions, and the ability of individuals to effectively use a range of resources such as language, tools, sensitivity, and shared emotions. Moreover, community members can expand their repertoire from local to global contexts.

As discussed in section 3.9.2.4, after the iTESL programme in Sri Lanka, a form of COP emerged among iTESL participants, trainers, and British Council consultants. They created WhatsApp groups to offer and receive support even after the foreign consultants returned to their respective countries. Similarly, Borg (2018) reports that online COPs, formed by teachers after attending CPD programmes, fostered collaborative reflection and interaction. Thus, in the modern world, technology facilitates social interaction and the formation of communities both locally and globally.

3.9.2.7 Self/Peer Evaluation and CPD through Teacher-led Top Tips

The British Council, Sri Lanka, conducted a 30-hour Primary Teacher Training Programme in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Education in Uva Province, Sri Lanka. The programme aimed to develop teachers' knowledge of teaching methodologies and improve classroom practice. After completing the programme, an innovative "Top Tips" model emerged as an effective CPD strategy, despite initially being intended only to summarize the course. As Dick (2013) explains, this Top Tips model helped raise teacher awareness about best practices while eliminating negative attitudes from both teachers and trainers.

Teachers collaboratively shared their views on the tips they received from the trainers, which were linked to the course material. This activity involved reflecting on feedback from micro-teaching sessions, ranking tips by

importance, and creatively presenting them on posters to share with other groups, thereby expanding the list of tips. Dick (2023) identifies ten principles behind the Top Tips model that foster good practice: "Relevant and Timely, Concise, Practical, Personal and Self-Produced, Learning from Experience, Peer Learning, Positive, Low Resource, Adaptable and Applicable to Any Teaching/Training Situation, Self-Explanatory, Simple, and Straightforward" (pp. 140–141). Most notably, the innovator of the model incorporated it into various training programmes in other regions of the country.

3.10 Chapter summary and identifying gaps in literature

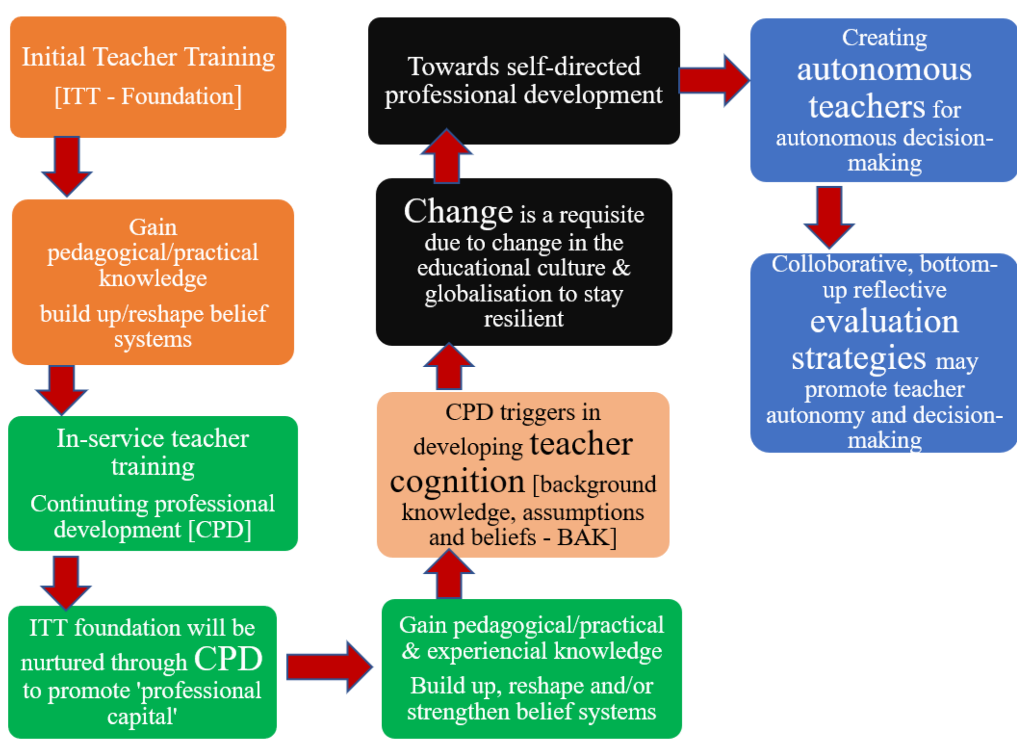
In the literature review chapter, I explored conceptualisations related to the main themes underpinning this study and presented my perceptions in relation to the process of teacher development examining related literature to understand the requirements of ESL teachers to reach autonomous status. The literature enabled me to identify the common barriers they might encounter throughout this journey and acknowledge possible remedial measures applicable to the Sri Lankan context for facilitating teacher change and achieving autonomisation, as illustrated in figure 3.3 below (see page 56), named ‘the professional development journey’.

This journey begins with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and progresses by acquiring expertise through the development of cognitive skills, embracing the inevitable changes inherent in their professional journey to become better practitioners, with the goal of attaining autonomous status rather than relying solely on external expertise. Moreover, consistent support and evaluation might trigger the promotion of teacher expertise and facilitate self-understanding.

To initiate my conceptualisations, I reviewed different dimensions and practices of SLTE, highlighting possible scenarios for continuing professional development. Considering teaching as a lucrative enterprise, I examined the concept of ‘professional capital’, teacher quality, and the societal demand for quality teaching. Next, I defined and examined the characteristics of three key aspects of teachers’ professional learning – teacher training, teacher education and teacher development – exploring the interconnectedness of these notions. Since teachers’ cognitive development is a prerequisite for teacher development, I conceptualised how teacher cognition, which comprises beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge, influences teachers’ classroom practices. I elucidated these concepts by referring to related literature and empirical evidence.

Considering the impact of well-organised CPD opportunities on teacher change, I examined why change is necessary, what changes are paramount, how teacher change takes place, and what practices support teacher change. Exploration of Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective as a foundation for professional development unveiled how social interaction and mediation impact on creating autonomous teacher professionals by developing the higher mental functions required for making autonomous decisions in the classrooms. Furthermore, by providing practical examples, I conceptualised collaborative, bottom-up reflective practices and teacher evaluation strategies that promote autonomous teaching and teacher change as requisites for the future professional development of in-service ESL teachers.

Figure 3-3 Professional development journey



The review of the literature helped elucidate the contextual specifics that significantly influence teacher development and teacher change. Furthermore, examination of influential CPD programmes in this context revealed the attempts made to develop the CPD process. However, it demonstrated that further investigations seeking to identify teacher perceptions of CPD experiences and what might influence the application of gained knowledge and skills are paramount in shedding light on CPD processes and practices. This

exploration further acknowledges that how teachers gain CPD and change their classroom practice in Sri Lanka has been under-researched. In fact, the insights and realisations gained through reviewing the literature highlight the need for an in-depth study, as investigations related to CPD in Sri Lanka are few and far between. Fulfilling this need might be achieved through an in-depth qualitative inquiry aimed at addressing the theoretical, conceptual, and practical gaps discussed above. Moreover, the findings of this study might provide valuable insights for the development of CPD in Sri Lanka, supporting the ESL teacher community by

- gaining a thorough understanding of teacher perceptions on current CPD opportunities
- unveiling the gaps between prevailing classroom practices and intended developments after attending CPD programmes to fulfil the needs of the system
- bringing forth insights for possible changes required for future CPD development in Sri Lanka.

Consequently, these identified gaps and potential implications motivated me to explore this research area further by reviewing literature, and ultimately, the following research questions emerged.

RQ1. What are the ESL state schoolteacher participants' perceptions regarding the provision of CPD in Sri Lanka?

a. What do participants think they have gained from CPD?
b. How have participants' classroom practices changed after undergoing CPD?
c. What factors have influenced participants' implementation of acquired knowledge from CPD?

RQ2. How do participants perceive the support for CPD?

a. What do participants think about the support they received for acquiring new knowledge?
b. What support do participants expect for the implementation of new knowledge?
c. What factors impeded participants' receipt of the expected support?

In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodological approaches I adopted to address these research questions.

Chapter 4 Methodology

> *The strangeness it invokes gives credence to the notions that things may not be as they seem and that there is a mysterious element in human behaviour. It is, however, a major tenet of qualitative research that all scenarios, even the most familiar, should be seen as strange, with layers of mystery that are always beyond the control of the researcher, which need always to be discovered.*
>
> (Holliday, 2016, p.4)

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter aims to establish the rationale behind my research design. Firstly, I will clarify my paradigmatic stance, outlining the ontological and epistemological decisions guiding my work. Subsequently, I will introduce the research design I adopted: the qualitative multiple case study approach. This will be followed by a detailed description of the research methodology, which encompass the sampling strategy, recruitment process, participant demographics, ethical considerations, and the chosen data generation strategies. These include semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and post-observation interviews, all tailored to align with my research approach. Additionally, I will include separate sections on the pilot study and my researcher positionality. The subsequent section will be devoted to elaborating on the data collection process, elucidating the specific challenges encountered during the pandemic in 2021, and the strategies incorporated for data analysis and member checking. Lastly, I will explain the measures taken to ensure the validity of this study.

4.2 My paradigmatic stance

Educational research projects, in particular, are based on a unique set of beliefs and assumptions through which the educational world can be perceived. In other words, different paradigms are adopted depending on the nature of the research process. Cohen et al. (2018) define a paradigm as “a way of looking at or researching phenomena, a world view” (p.8) or as the philosophical underpinning of a research project embraced by a research community to explore knowledge. More than half a century ago, Kuhn (1962) defined a paradigm as “an accepted model or pattern” (p.23) within the realm of natural sciences. Later, Kuhn (2012) expanded his view:

> a paradigm or worldview refers to a connected set of beliefs or basic assumptions, or a dispositional stance about the nature and

> organization of the world, together with beliefs about how best to investigate it. (p.156)

Consequently, paradigmatic assumptions shape how we perceive the social world or social reality. Scholars have identified four primary types of assumptions: "ethics (axiology or value), epistemology, ontology and methodology" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.183).

In the subsequent section, the three stances of ontology, epistemology, and methodology will be discussed in detail in order to elucidate my worldview, while the ethics will be explained in section 4.4.5,

It is important to understand the ontological perspective of the research by addressing the ontological question, 'What is the nature of reality?' Guba and Lincoln (1989) conceptualise social reality or realities as "social constructions of the mind" (p.43). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) further explore this by posing two questions, "How is the social world perceived and understood?" and "What is the human being?" with the aim to understand the nature of reality within the social world (p.19). Hammersley (2013) claims that ontological assumptions are linked to "the nature of the social world" (p.21). Consequently, examining the core characteristics of social phenomena necessitates consideration of ontological assumptions (Cohen et al., 2018).

In this study, I embrace the assumptions of constructivism to address the aforementioned ontological questions. Constructivists believe relativist ontology acknowledging the existence of "multiple, socially constructed realities" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.43), and defining constructivist view Creswell and Creswell (2023) explain that,

> [Individuals] seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. (p.9)

Furthermore, the process of constructing meanings of the world occurs through interactions with others, based on their engagement with society, which also influences "personal, cultural and historical backgrounds and situations" (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). In relativist ontology, realities are formulated through the interactions of individuals or social beings based on their prior knowledge, and experiences. In line with this argument, within the context of this study, the ontological questions revolve around, '[w]hat constitutes the nature of reality in second language teacher learning and teaching?' and further

explore ‘How these ontological assumptions are applicable within the Sri Lankan context, in which this study originates?’

In addressing these specific questions, the ontological stance adopted by this study is based on the sociocultural theoretical perspective of ESL teacher development. Embracing the Vygotskian perception that “all higher-level cognition is inherently social” (Vygotsky, 1997, p.67), this study recognises that internalisation by teachers, when involved in social activities, transforms interpsychological processes into intrapsychological processes through mediation (Vygotsky, 1978; Johnson and Golombek, 2011). Sociocultural views highlight that individuals construct meaning by engaging in social activities (Freeman, 2016), and from this ontological perspective, this study explores the processes of professional learning and development among teachers, focusing on how teachers within the Sri Lankan SLTE context perceive and engage with these opportunities. In particular, this study examines how teachers achieve autonomous decision-making by participating in socially constructed CPD programmes, facilitated by expert and collegial mediation to stimulate internalisation of new knowledge.

The second set of assumptions pertains to epistemology, concerning “the very bases of knowledge, its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how communicated to other human beings” (Cohen et al., 2018, p.5). Guba and Lincoln (1989) form the epistemological question differently, asking, “How can we be sure that we know what we know?” (p.83). Different belief systems or paradigms embrace different viewpoints aimed at addressing these epistemological questions.

As this study primarily focuses on teacher beliefs and perceptions, relying solely on observable data is insufficient when trying to comprehend the behaviours and intentions of the participants. Considering the scope of this study, I adopt a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, aligning with principles consistent with this study. Constructivists assert that data emerging through interactions between the inquirer and participants are socially constructed through continual review (Bryman, 2008). Embracing this constructivist-interpretivist position, this study delves into how participants interpret their perceptions, beliefs and assumptions when reflecting on their CPD experiences, as well as the application of acquired knowledge and skills in classroom practice while mitigating contextual challenges. Consequently, this study incorporates interactive data collection methods to gather in-depth information.

All the aforementioned assumptions significantly influence methodological approaches within this study. The methodology of the study is generated and

shaped by the researcher’s ontological, and epistemological stances, and ethical considerations. Drawing upon these philosophical underpinnings and aligning with the research paradigm examined in this section, I aim to address the research questions by focusing on generating in-depth, value-based qualitative data. This will be achieved by adhering to the research design discussed in the following section.

In conducting social research, factors such as the research area, nature of participants, and anticipated challenges often heavily influence the researcher’s decisions to move forward in the research process efficiently (Bryman, 2008), and this process of inquiry begins with paradigmatic assumptions (Creswell et al., 2007). Accordingly, in this study, adherence to constructivist-interpretivist ontological and epistemological assumptions, aligned with the research questions, leads to an understanding of the social world by interpreting and attributing meaning to people’s lives, embracing a qualitative approach. According to Yin (2016), qualitative research “involves studying the meaning of people’s lives, as experienced under real-world conditions” (p.42). Given that this study primarily focuses on the beliefs and perceptions of teachers on CPD opportunities, it encompasses qualitative inquiry aiming at understanding the professional world of teachers.

4.3 Qualitative approach

As qualitative researchers interpret the nature of qualitative strategy from diverse perspectives and specify varied characteristics, flexibility becomes crucial in employing a qualitative strand for data generation and analysis (Bryman, 2008). Sandelowski (2004) succinctly defines the process of qualitative research as “discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret, and produce the social world” (p.893), and within the realm of qualitative strategy, Bryman (2008) suggests that researchers explore the world and gain insight by “seeing through the eyes of research participants” (p.366).

Yin (2016) conceptualises five characteristics that encompass various aspects of qualitative strand, including understanding participants’ specific roles in the real world, depicting their viewpoints, and drawing connections with established or emerging insights to unveil behavioural and thought processes, incorporating triangulation with diverse sources to provide evidence. Thus, qualitative research involves exploring individuals’ perceptions within existing societies, meeting participants to understand and examine their lives within their actual research contexts, and employing prevalent ideologies to establish new visions applicable to diverse contexts (Yin, 2016). Building on scholarly insights, Stake (2010) acknowledges that making interpretations is paramount in qualitative

research. Extending this, Stake (2010) further asserts that "[q]ualitative research is experiential, using personal judgement as the main basis for assertions about how something works (p.62), and that researchers have an "ongoing, subjective, interpretative role" (p.55) in qualitative research, relying on their own viewpoints.

In line with the constructivist-interpretivist assumptions discussed above in section 4.2, this study interacts with participants in their natural settings to address research questions focused on understanding and interpreting participants' perceptions of their CPD experiences in Sri Lanka. In addition, Cohen et al. (2018) explain how a qualitative research approach enables interaction between the researcher and the participants for constructing multiple interpretations. The researcher sets up diverse strategies to unveil the insights of participants in relation to the research purposes. Similarly, this study attempts to understand teacher perceptions on the nature of CPD, how participants interpret the knowledge and experience they gain through CPD and apply gained knowledge and skills in their own classrooms. Thus, a qualitative research approach is well suited for this study in this regard and for addressing the research questions. As a value-based educational research project, this study specifically adopts a qualitative multiple case study approach in order to address the research questions presented in section 3.9, in congruence with philosophical underpinnings elaborated in section 4.2.

4.3.1 The qualitative multiple case study design

The case study primarily serves as a qualitative mode of research, unfolding the diverse perspectives or interpretations of participants (Bassey, 1999). Stake (1995) states that the "[q]ualitative case study was developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations" (p.30) and identifies researchers' prolonged personal intervention for understanding situations or activities through constant interaction, reflection, and iteration as requisites for case study research. In fact, subjectivity is inevitable due to researchers' reliance on personal experiences (Stake, 2006; Creswell and Poth, 2018), especially when researchers engage in interactions with participants over an extended period. Duff (2008) identifies "boundedness or singularity, in-depth study, multiple perspectives or triangulation, particularity, contextualization and interpretation" as key aspects of case study (p.23), which suggests that case study enables researchers to "develop an in-depth analysis" (Creswell and Creswell, 2023, p.15) of one or more cases examining the interwoven features of multiple cases and the specificities of a single case and making connections with participants' specific contexts before interpreting the gathered data using

multiple sources. Yin (2014) perceives case study research in relation to a positivist view of objectivity and single reality, but Stake (2013), based on the constructivist stance, highlights that “there is no true meaning of an event; there is only the event as experienced or interpreted by people” (p.66). Taking into account the constructivist view and the concept of “multiple realities” (Stake, 2013, p.66), which acknowledges that each participant perceives experiences differently, I choose to adopt a multiple case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the diverse views of participants’ CPD experiences.

As Stake (2013) describes, in a multiple case study design, researchers focus on each case in depth to explore its unique features, while also identifying the commonalities across all cases to understand how these features interweave. Multiple case study design enables researchers to delve deeply into situations or ideologies with multiple participants. Similarly, in this study, the three school settings – rural, semi-urban and urban (see section 2.1.) – have their own unique characteristics and commonalities that require an in-depth understanding in order to gain insights into the influence of geographical setting, infrastructure facilities, stakeholder needs and the school categorisation on CPD processes and practices. Thus, this study embraces a qualitative multiple case study design, considering the three school settings where participants work as three distinctive yet interwoven cases. Consequently, this study aims to comprehend participants’ unique perceptions and individual behaviours, while also examining how ESL teacher participants from these distinct school settings (urban, semi-urban and rural) commonly perceive their CPD processes, the application of new knowledge, and the external support they receive for classroom practice. Additionally, considering the geographical challenges, distribution of infrastructure facilities and human resources, this study aims to understand how differences in these three school settings influence CPD provision, processes and practices. In the following section, I will discuss the methodological decisions concerning the various stages of the data generation process, followed by an elaboration on the recruitment process of participants.

4.4 Participants and the recruitment process

In this section, I will elaborate on the decisions behind deriving a representative sample population for the study. This will involve an in-depth exploration of the sampling strategy, recruitment process, encountered challenges and participants’ information. Considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria aligned with the aims of the study, I made important decisions in selecting the sample population. One crucial decision was the adoption of an appropriate

sample strategy to enhance representativeness, a discussion of which follows next.

4.4.1 Sampling

Sampling is one of the fundamental aspects in the research process. Incorporating appropriate sampling strategies and the researcher's decisions for selecting the sample population influences the consistency and richness of data (Creswell, 2007). As I employed a qualitative approach, I considered purposive sampling to be the most appropriate strategy for selecting the sample population, considering the advantage of selecting the most representative sample that could contribute to generating rich information for the chosen stratifications (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). Purposive sampling enables the researchers to utilise their understanding of the research conventions to choose the right sample, considering their uniqueness (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Consequently, I intended to recruit a sample population consisted of six ESL teachers, anticipating one or two dropouts. This sample size was chosen because qualitative inquiry aims to generate in-depth insights from diverse perspectives within the sample population.

All participants were selected from the Balangoda education zone in Sri Lanka, where I worked as a teacher trainer. Consequently, conducting fieldwork in a familiar environment helped mitigate potential risks and facilitated participant recruitment, conducting the fieldwork smoothly and the establishment of positive relationships with participants. According to Campbell et al. (2020), purposive sampling enables researchers to diversify the sample and capture a wide range of perspectives from individuals based on chosen stratifications. As Campbell et al. (2020) explain, stratifying the sample further allows for the recruitment of a unique set of participants and for group participants under different strata to enhance the richness and diversity of the data.

Accordingly, for this study, participation in the iTESL (Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka) three-day programme was mandatory. Other selected stratifications encompassed teaching experience, school setting, gender, school type, and teacher category. Since the iTESL programme focused on teaching English to secondary grades, it excluded the Type 3 category of schools (detailed in Table 2.1) as indicated in Table 4.1 (see page 65), which outlines the additional requirements expected from participants.

As depicted in Table 4.1 below, participant recruitment was considered in terms of various factors that could affect the research outcomes. As Cohen et al. (2018) highlight, qualitative researchers acknowledge significant differences among participants, the "social, cultural, situational and contextual" aspects that

influence their actions (p.452). Considering these differences among the six participants initially selected in this study, two were chosen from the same or nearby schools to explore collegiality and collaborative teacher learning during the CPD process. However, one participant dropped out after the first interview, resulting in the continuation of the study with five people. Since participants had the right to withdraw at any point during data collection, the data from the withdrawn participant's first interview were excluded.

Table 4-1. Stratifications for selecting sample population

Teaching experience	School setting	Gender	School Types	Teacher category	iTESL participation
00 – 05 05 – 10 10 – 20 Over 20	Rural Semi-urban Urban	Male Female	1AB 1C Type 2	NCOE teaching diploma Graduate Trained	All participants should be iTESL attendees

The participants were categorised into four career stages – 0-05, 05-10, 10-20 and over 20 year – based on their diverse strengths as they related to their teaching experience, with the anticipation that this categorisation would reflect participants' levels of enthusiasm, confidence, commitment, teaching expertise and maturity. I also considered gender difference as a stratum, anticipating that male and female teachers might exhibit significant variability in CPD experiences and practices due to differences in their family commitments. Moreover, the diversification into rural, semi-urban and urban categories was considered, recognising the social, cultural, situational, and contextual differences that influence teachers' thinking process, CPD opportunities, collaborative learning, and classroom practices. Additionally, the teacher category was taken into account to assess the impact of initial training, knowledge, and belief systems brought into the classroom. Furthermore, the participation in the iTESL programme served as a specific category within the sample selection. Consequently, schools with teachers who attended the iTESL programme were targeted for inclusion in the study.

As an insider researcher, I had several avenues to gather information about the schools where iTESL participants were employed. I reached out to the Additional Director of English (ADE) in the Balangoda education zone and obtained details about the number of iTESL participants in the zone, their respective schools, and the contact information of the principals. Additionally, I

received statistics of the iTESL programmes. Initially, the three-day iTESL programme was organised for 90 teachers out of the 258 ESL teachers in the Balangoda education zone. Three programmes were scheduled to take place within a two-month period, in September and October 2019, and invitations were sent to 30 ESL teachers for each programme. However, out of the 90 invitees, only 81 teachers attended all three programmes.

Based on the above information, I planned my sampling process to utilise a survey questionnaire to gather information about ESL teachers, initially selecting 10 schools within the Balangoda education zone where there were attendees of the iTESL programme. I then further categorised these schools, based on their geographical settings: three in urban areas, three in semi-urban locales, and four in rural settings (considering the lower concentration of ESL teachers in rural settings). From the 10 selected schools, I expected 30 to 40 ESL teachers would receive my survey questionnaire. As some teachers had shared the questionnaire with their colleagues and I had additionally sent some hard copies to some teachers who expressed interest, I anticipated more than 30 responses. However, I guessed that, realistically, I would find less than 20 iTESL attendees. Consequently, considering the varying participation rates of ESL teachers in the iTESL training across these schools, I adjusted my target to receive responses from 15-20 iTESL attendees out of the expected 30-40 ESL teachers.

4.4.1.1 Administering the survey questionnaire

Questionnaires serve as a tool for researchers to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. In this study, a survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was employed to select the sample population through purposive sampling. Utilising six stratifications outlined in Table 4.1, I aimed to select six participants by matching as many strata as possible based on the information provided in the questionnaire.

I reached out to the principals of selected schools via email, providing them with relevant information about the research. Along with the email, I attached the survey questionnaire, information sheet for principals (Appendix G) and participant information sheet (Appendix B). I requested the principals to distribute the survey questionnaire (Appendix A) and the participant information sheet among ESL teachers at their respective schools, with an additional request to send the completed survey questionnaire to my email address. Utilising the six stratifications, I aimed to create a heterogeneous sample of six teachers. Initially, I anticipated receiving 15-20 responses, but I only received 11, which still constituted a significant number of survey questionnaires

returned. However, it is important to acknowledge practical challenges during the sampling process, which I will discuss next.

4.4.1.2 Sampling challenges

The primary issue was technological, as I did not receive the expected number of responses within the designated timeframe. This experience highlighted the challenges of remotely selecting a sample population. Some teachers reached out, citing reasons such as technological constraints, or requested alternative survey formats. For instance, one teacher mentioned being unable to open the documents due to limited phone storage. Additionally, three teachers requested hard copies. It became evident that technological barriers, lack of proficiency in using technology, inadequate facilities and prevailing apprehensions would continue to hinder participation within this context. However, selecting six participants out of the 11 responses from ESL teachers enabled the inclusion of a diverse sample, consisting of enthusiastic, positive participants, as well as those who might be critical of innovations and wish to voice their concerns.

In addition to encountering technological barriers, conducting fieldwork posed further challenges, particularly when engaging with human participants who were balancing social and personal responsibilities. As Punch (1994) describes, “field work is definitely not a soft option, but, rather, represents a demanding craft that involves both coping with multiple negotiations and continually dealing with ethical dilemmas” (p.85). Similarly, while many teachers expressed interest in participating in the research study, several requested additional time to review the information sheet and complete the survey questionnaire. In response to their requests, I extended the submission deadline by two weeks in an attempt to ensure a more comprehensive sample representing the various strata initially selected. Furthermore, I implemented specific remedial measures, detailed below, to refine the selection process for the sample population.

4.4.1.3 How I coped with sampling challenges

During the recruitment stage, I engaged in informal discussions with two colleagues to gain insights into my research process and to deepen my understanding of contextual specifics. These conversations revealed a prevalent lack of facilities and technological proficiency among teachers, particularly among conventional teachers who were averse to using technology. This finding aligns with Clark et al.’s (2021) assertion that exclusively targeting internet users might result in a biased sample by excluding certain participant categories. Clark et al. (2021) suggest that providing participants with multiple options for completing the questionnaire would increase the response rate, and

recognising the potential limitation this would pose to the diversity of my sample, especially noting the absence of responses from teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience, I took measures to address this issue. I facilitated the process by sending hard copies of the questionnaire to accommodate these teachers, seeking support from former colleagues who kindly assisted in distributing hard copies of the informed consent form and survey questionnaire. This endeavour enabled me to encompass most of the initially specified stratifications (Table 4.2, see page 69) within the sample population.

Through this effort, I successfully identified and included a participant with over 20 years' teaching experience in my sample. Sampling, as defined by Miles and Huberman (1994), involves "taking a smaller chunk of a larger universe" (p.31). However, individuals within this smaller subset might possess some, but not necessarily all, of the characteristics found in the broader community (Miles et al., 2014). In the realm of multiple case study research, the selected cases often exhibit variations in their understanding, perceptions, practices and many other characteristics, and given this perspective, I carefully considered the information gathered from the survey questionnaire to choose my sample population. In addition to the demographic information, I examined participants' responses to question 8 in the survey questionnaire (Appendix A), which inquired about their CPD experiences, as part of the selection process. As anticipated, their responses revealed diverse perceptions of the same CPD experience. I found that these varied perspectives among teachers were important properties to consider when selecting the sample population. My aim was to include as many properties as possible depicted in Table 4.2 below, thereby representing a more comprehensive subset within the ESL teacher community.

4.4.2 Recruitment

I utilised the data from the survey questionnaire to select participants according to my predetermined stratifications. Subsequently, I sent emails with the participant information sheet (Appendix B) and the participant consent form (Appendix C) attached to the six chosen teachers, inviting them to participate in this research project. In the email, I requested them to reach out to me through platforms like WhatsApp, Viber, or Messenger, and through these channels, I provided explanations about the study, data collection tools, aims of the research project and the potential impact of the research findings. Moreover, I extended an invitation to the teachers, urging them to ask any questions they might have for clarification regarding the research process. Prior to recruitment, a few teachers reached out seeking further information about the research project, and I provided them with details about the research activities

emphasising the requirement for participants to engage in three online interviews should they choose to take part. This clarification was to ensure the feasibility of conducting online interviews. Consequently, I recruited the six participants, and the subsequent section is dedicated to providing information about them.

4.4.3 Teacher participants

The sample population comprised two males and four females from four distinct schools based on specific stratifications, including participation in an iTESL programme, teaching experience, school categorisation, qualifications, gender, and their attitudes towards available CPD opportunities. The following chart shows information about participants. I assigned a pseudonym for each participant to protect confidentiality.

Table 4-2. Participant Information

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Teaching experience	Qualifications/Teacher category	School setting
1.Krishan	male	10-20 years	NCOE teaching diploma	Urban
2.Nirmal	male	5-10 years	Graduate teacher	Urban
3.Nadee	female	0-5 years	NCOE teaching diploma	Rural
4.Chathu	female	10-20 years	NCOE teaching diploma	Semi-Urban (dropped out)
5.Anjalee	female	5-10 years	Graduate teacher	Semi-Urban
6.Tharu	female	Over 20 years	Trained teacher of English	Semi- Urban (Similar to rural)

In Sri Lanka, the male teacher population is lower than the female teacher population. According to the census report of 2022, the number of female teachers (179,921) far exceeds the number of male teachers (56,817) in the state school system (MOE, 2022). Considering this demographic, I chose to recruit a sample consisting of two male and four female teachers. Additionally, I accounted for four teaching experience categories to capture diverse perspectives influenced by maturity and various other considerations. As Creswell (2003) states, a purposively selected sample "will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p.185). Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasise the significance of ensuring that the

selected sample reflects a certain percentage of expected characteristics from the overall population. While I acknowledge that this small sample realistically cannot fully represent the entire ESL teacher population nationwide, this diverse sample offered a considerable representation of the ESL teacher population within the Balangoda education zone.

Drawing on the experience of teacher researchers in China, Hanks (2019b) reports that participants cannot be treated merely as "objects", "but rather as individuals with insights of their own" (p.10), as participants demonstrate their experiences and reflexivity. My personal experience as an insider researcher runs parallels with this particular ideology, as my research participants were the teachers I had previously trained while working as a teacher trainer. Consequently, I considered the emotions, insights and personalities of my participants as assets for this study. Furthermore, I categorised my sample population based on the teacher recruitment procedures available in the country. Within my sample, three distinct recruitment categories were represented, with three participants having undergone the three-year pre-service training at NCOE, which was the predominant method. Among the six participants, five different schools were represented, with two teachers from the same school. This intentional selection was intended to explore the collegial support among participants within the same or neighbouring schools.

Considering the school categories in terms of their locations, the sample consisted of one urban school (with two participants), one rural school, and three semi-urban schools. Notably, one of the semi-urban schools, despite its close proximity to the city, bore similarities to the rural context in terms of student numbers, facilities, opportunities and academic achievement levels. In addition, there might have been vast differences in school cultures among the various schools, which I aimed to better understand during my fieldwork. Because of the limited word count, and to avoid redundancy across the chapters, I made important decisions regarding the presentation of cases, opting to develop three distinct cases – urban, semi-urban and rural – by exploring participants' perceptions. In delineating the cases, I categorised the participants, accordingly. Krishan and Nirmal both worked in the same school, categorised under Case 1 and representing an urban setting. Anjalee and Chathu, grouped under Case 2, worked in semi-urban settings, while Tharu and Nadee, worked in similar settings, were grouped under Case 3, symbolising the rural setting. I will next provide information about each participant in my sample population to represent the three cases.

Case 1 (Urban setting) Teacher 1 - Krishan

Krishan is a male ESL teacher with 12 years of teaching experience. Following his secondary education, Krishan sought admission to a NCOE to pursue a three-year teaching diploma in Arts subjects, driven by his inherent talent and family encouragement for studying the Arts. Despite passing a competitive selection test for admission, Krishan's interest in improving his English skills prompted him to undergo another selection test for an English teaching diploma course. Commencing his teaching career in 2010 as an ESL teacher, Krishan has previously worked in two different schools across various regions before transferring to his school, situated in an urban area at the time of the study. Throughout his tenure as an ESL teacher, Krishan continued his higher education, acquiring additional educational and professional qualifications, and driven by his aspiration to enhance his professional standing, he applied for the state school principal examination. Notably, a year after the conclusion of the data collection process for this study, Krishan achieved the position of principal in the state school sector.

Case 1 (Urban setting) Teacher 2 - Nirmal

Nirmal, a graduate ESL teacher, began his career while in his final year at university by volunteering at a Tamil medium government school, dedicating a year as part of his degree programme under university supervision. Following graduation, he transitioned to an international school (English-medium private school) before joining the government sector in 2016. He underwent a 21-day pre-service training course and was initially appointed to a government school in a remote area with limited facilities. Nirmal expressed his willingness to join the teaching profession, viewing teaching to different first language speakers (Sinhala, English and Tamil) as a valuable opportunity to enhance his professional skills, as the three contexts were very different from one another. Nirmal considered his initial teaching and training experience working in the international school beneficial. Nirmal and Krishan worked together in the same school in an urban setting.

Case 2 (Semi-Urban setting) Teacher 1 - Anjalee

Anjalee is a female ESL teacher who was working in her second school, which was located in a semi-urban setting. She holds a three-year NCOE teaching diploma, and she completed her internship at a prestigious school in the capital city, an experience she highly valued as an asset for her professional growth. Following her internship, Anjalee spent five years teaching in a remote school before transferring to her current semi-urban placement. I first met Anjalee while she was teaching at the remote school, to which she commuted daily, facing

numerous hardships due to its remoteness and the distance. Shortly after becoming a teacher, she efficiently pursued and completed both her bachelor's and master's degrees with a merit pass. Anjalee also volunteered to conduct English camps in different schools alongside a group of other ESL teachers. Additionally, she received invitations from the authorities to conduct teacher-training programmes in the zone, and apart from this research work, she contacted me for information regarding foreign scholarships for higher education. Notably, one of my research participants acknowledged Anjalee as a role model, admiring her teaching methodologies.

Case 2 (Semi-Urban setting) Teacher 2 - Chathu

Chathu is a female ESL teacher that holds an NCOE teaching diploma. She worked at a remote school for two years, starting in 2004, and had accumulated 18 years of teaching experience. Additionally, she successfully completed a university diploma with a merit pass while pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree at a private university, and throughout her tenure, she taught English to both primary and secondary grades alongside four other ESL teachers at her school. Despite her commitment to higher education examinations, she agreed to participate in this research. Initially, Chathu attended the first interview and requested a research proposal to help her write a research proposal for her bachelor's degree, and I provided my PhD research proposal. Although I scheduled the second interview, she requested to cancel it and proposed another date. Upon my arrival in Sri Lanka for data collection, I attempted to reschedule the second interview and arrange classroom observations with her. She did not respond to any of my emails or phone calls. I interpreted her lack of responsiveness as an unwillingness to take part. I therefore decided to respect her silence and not contact her further. Instead, I proceeded with the other five participants.

Case 3 (Rural setting) Teacher 1 – Nadee

Nadee, a young female ESL teacher, entered the teaching profession in 2017, accumulating five years of teaching experience after completing a three-year teaching diploma course at a NCOE. Her initial teaching context was situated in a rural setting, where she was the only ESL teacher responsible for teaching English to students from grades 3 to 11. She obtained an extra qualification by completing the Teaching Knowledge Test programme administered by the British Council, and at the time of the study, she was following a university teaching diploma course. She admired one of her relatives, an experienced ESL teacher, for providing support and encouragement in her pursuit of higher educational qualifications. Initially, despite her school being situated in a remote

village, approximately 50 miles from the main city, Nadee commuted around 100 miles daily from her home. However, after getting married she relocated to another city and travelled around 150 miles daily from her new residence. She expressed positive feelings towards participating in this research project, viewing it as a rare and valuable opportunity to further develop her professionalism, and before the completion of the data collection phase for this study, Nadee migrated to Dubai and participated in the third online interview from there. She obtained an opportunity to work at a school in Dubai.

Case 3 (Rural setting) Teacher 2 – Tharu

Tharu is a female ESL teacher with 23 years of teaching experience. After completing a university diploma course, she entered the teaching profession, and over the 23-year span of her career, she has worked in three different schools, including a six-year period in a very remote school. At the time of the study, she was working at a semi-urban school, which, despite its classification, closely resembled a rural setting in terms of facilities, number of students, and their proficiency levels. Tharu highlighted that, despite its proximity to the city, well-to-do parents often opted for nearby popular schools, leaving only students facing financial difficulties remaining at her school. She made constant efforts to contact parents of students who were neglecting their education, addressing their concerns and encouraging regular school attendance, and taught English to both primary and secondary grades, assuming administrative responsibilities within the school. Fifteen years ago, Tharu and I were colleagues at the same school. She is a mother of three children with caring responsibilities.

As discussed in Chapter 2, it is worth taking into account that the six participants and the school settings described in Cases 1, 2 and 3 were closely associated with me as a teacher trainer two years prior to the start of the sampling and recruitment process. I fully acknowledge that this familiarity and the existing human relationships might have an influence on both the researcher and the research itself. The following section will focus on my specific researcher positionality in detail.

4.5 My positionality as an 'inbetweener'

Positionality encompasses various aspects that position the researcher within the research domain, including their relationship with participants, context, culture or participant demographics (Holmes, 2020). Therefore, the debate surrounding researcher positionality revolves around "where the researcher is coming from" and what beliefs, attitudes and assumptions the researcher brings to the study (Holmes, 2020, p.1). The impacts of positionality are not only

confined to the outcome but also extend throughout the entire research journey. This argument is tied to the ethical stance of the study, when investigating a familiar discipline or people, and the validity of data and interpretations, as it is impossible for researchers to fully exclude or detach themselves from their own life experiences, belief systems and thought processes. Holmes (2020) elucidates the requirements of researcher positionality as follows.

> It requires an explicit self-consciousness and self-assessment by the researcher about their views and positions and how these might, may, or have, directly or indirectly influenced the design, execution and interpretation of the research data findings. (p.2)

Therefore, researchers are accountable for maintaining their multiple positions in a balanced manner, acknowledging the strengths and limitations of their own positionality. For instance, Vulliamy et al.'s (1990) experience shows the limitations of conducting research in a foreign country, as researchers' acculturation to the new environment and social conventions is far-reaching.

It is important to take the evolving nature of positionality into account in the domain of qualitative research as the positionality of the researcher influences the research process from beginning to end on distinct levels. In the past, researcher positionality was confined to the distinction between insider and outsider identities. However, a more nuanced perspective that acknowledges a third position who are neither insiders nor outsiders appeared recently, placing them as "in-betweeners" (Chhabra, 2020; Wilson et al., 2022). As Chhabra (2020) recognises, his positionality is connected to his own impairment status, stating that "researchers seem to be insiders in some aspects and outsiders in others" (p.315). This insight led me to acknowledge my positionality differently, as a Sri Lankan teacher trainer from one perspective and as a person detached from the previous status from another. It made me consider the degree of in-siderness and out-siderness in relation to my position, placing me in the "inbetweener" position (Chhabra, 2020, p.315). Apart from this, I was motivated to explore my positionality further when I started disseminating my research experience to academic audiences. I presented at the School of Education, University of Leeds and attended conferences such as the Japan Association for Language Education (JALT) PanSIG conference in Kyoto, Japan; the Centre for Research in Language Learning and Use (CReLLU); a PGR conference at University of York; and a PGR conference at University of Leeds. The questions posed by the audience prompted me to reflect on whether I truly identified myself as an insider, outsider or somewhere in-between. Ultimately, I realised the most appropriate descriptor for my positionality is "in-betweener".

Working as a teacher trainer, I began to perceive the issues, challenges, success stories and feasible strategies to enhance the CPD process while I was planning and conducting CPD programmes. Initially, I fully immersed myself as a practitioner researcher, functioning as an insider to make sense of what is happening in that context as I planned to investigate while writing the PhD research proposal. Later, as I began planning how to conduct my investigations, two years after leaving the job and Sri Lanka, I found myself in a position of neither insider nor outsider. However, I found myself in a constant search for my positionality and realised my true positionality in relation to my professional experience as an "inbetweener" (Chhabra, 2020, p.315). The inbetweener position lies between the two ends of the insider–outsider continuum (Chhabra, 2020), and in this role, I constantly sought to set aside my previous role as a teacher trainer to perceive things with an open mind. When considering the culture and context, I positioned myself as an insider who shares the same cultural norms and values with the participants of the study.

I understand that there is no fixed positionality for an insider researcher. Instead, there are different levels of positions and relationships with participants and the context. According to Holliday (2016), it is unrealistic to try to eliminate the influence of researcher subjectivity due to familiarity with the context and participants. Instead, acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher and enabling reflexivity by being self-critical is essential. Holliday (2016) further explains the importance of researcher reflexivity.

> The researcher acknowledges the unavoidability of interacting with, and perhaps changing the culture she is investigating, but opens all channels of perception to capitalize on what is revealed about the culture, during the process. The researcher thus, uses her presence as a catalyst that effects revealing change… (p.146)

Accordingly, what researchers need to consider most is acknowledging possible dangers such as misinterpretations and biases and activating their reflexivity to understand when, where and how their positionality might influence the research process so that they can conduct ethically sound research. In line with this argument, I will next discuss the ethical considerations embedded in this study.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) emphasises the importance of researchers adhering to ethical guidelines to ensure that their research activities are "ethical, justifiable and sound" (BERA guidelines, 2018, p.1), and these guidelines encompass researchers' responsibilities toward safeguarding the rights of participants. BERA (2018) explicitly states that,

> Individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice, in recognition of both their rights and of differences arising from age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant characteristic (p.6).

Ethical challenges can arise at different stages of a study, from the planning phase to the dissemination of results (BERA, 2018). The primary duty of the researcher is to uphold participants' "confidentiality, privacy, safety, and other legal and human rights. The 'do no harm' (or 'minimize risk') principle should be observed", not solely to avert potential legal action against the researcher (Duff, 2008, p.146) but fundamentally to prioritise the ethical rights of participants as a principle in the research realm. Diener and Crandall (1978) categorise four types of ethical dilemmas in social research – "harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception" – all of which need necessitate careful consideration (Diener and Crandall, 1978 cited in Bryman, 2008, p.118). In this study, ethical concerns were meticulously addressed in adherence to the University of Leeds ethical guidelines and BERA (2018) guidelines, and I obtained ethical approval (Appendix Q) from the University of Leeds ethical approval committee (reference number - AREA 20-149).

Regarding the ethical considerations within this study, I identified four types of primary ethical dilemmas that require attention. To effectively address these and mitigate potential harm to participants throughout the research process, I delved into the following four domains to safeguard the ethical rights of participants:

- **a.** Obtaining participants' informed consent
- **b.** Protecting identities
- **c.** Protecting confidentiality
- **d.** Mitigating the power relationship

Next, I will explain in detail the measures I took to safeguard the ethical rights of my participants within each of these domains.

4.6.1 Obtaining participants' informed consent

The researcher carries the responsibility of securing informed consent from participants, respecting their autonomous decision to partake in the research. Participants must also be assured of their right to terminate participation and withdraw their data at any point (Lincoln and Guba, 1989). In this study, I obtained informed consent from participants for various research activities, including interviews, classroom observations, post-observation interviews and audio/video recordings of these activities.

According to Bryman (2008), participants should have the opportunity to make an "informed decision" regarding their involvement in the study and understanding the research process (p.121). To ensure their understanding of how they are involved in the research, I emailed the participant information sheet (Appendix B) and the informed consent forms (Appendix C) to the teachers to obtain their informed consent, and I also secured permission from the relevant authorities (Appendices I, J, K). The informed consent process involved obtaining approval from the principals of selected schools, which was obtained by sending the cover letter (Appendix F), information sheet (Appendix G) and informed consent form (Appendix H). In addition, as secondary participants, both students and their parents provided informed consent for the video recording of the lessons. During my initial online briefing with each participant prior to the first interview, I requested their support in obtaining consent from both students and parents. I emailed the parents' information sheet (Appendix D) and consent form (Appendix E) to the participants. Additionally, for participants working with primary grade students, I introduced a strategy using smiley, neutral, and sad face visuals to obtain students' consent. This visual method was designed to ensure clarity and simplicity when seeking consent from younger students.

4.6.2 Protecting participants' identities and confidentiality

In this study, I prioritised participant protection by employing pseudonyms on their signed informed consent forms, completed survey questionnaires and when saving recordings of lesson observations in my computer. I ensured protecting participants' identities by substituting most of the identifying features with alternative descriptors to prevent potential harm from being traced. Additionally, in reporting, participant identities were safeguarded using pseudonyms instead of their actual names or any identifiable markers. Lincoln and Guba (1989) assert that individuals have a legal entitlement to privacy and confidentiality of their personal information. Consequently, researchers bear the responsibility of ensuring information confidentiality to safeguard participants' privacy. Cohen et al. (2018) suggest one method of safeguarding participants' privacy is through guaranteeing confidentiality by refraining from disclosing any information that could identify or be traced back to an individual. For instance, in this study, to mitigate the risk of inadvertently disclosing identities, I anticipated that participants might reference specific iTESL consultants or trainers or their positions, schools or divisions. Consequently, I meticulously traced and replaced most of the identifiers with alternative descriptors to ensure protecting the participants' identities. This approach was consistently maintained

throughout the data generation process, aligning with the aforementioned ethical considerations during the administration of data generation instruments.

4.6.3 Mitigating the power relationship

As an inbetweener, I had concerns regarding the power relationship I had with my participants during my previous role as a teacher trainer. With regard to my decision to video record online interviews, I had concerns about participants' consent, whether they agreed willingly or under the influence of our previous hierarchical relationship. Dörnyei (2007) points out that some participants might be hesitant to consent to video-record the interviews. Therefore, researchers need to build up a trusting relationship with participants, fostering an environment where they feel comfortable and secure (Dörnyei, 2007). However, the positive relationship I had previously established with my participants as a teacher trainer became a strength when obtaining consent by exerting influence in a gentle and persuasive manner without coercion.

My discussions with participants ensured that their consent was not born out of respect; rather, participants viewed their involvement in this study as a privilege, an opportunity to explore their own puzzles collaboratively within this research project. Lincoln and Guba (1989) explain that "participants are relatively powerless compared to the inquirers themselves" (p.222). Acknowledging this established norm, I endeavoured to transfer the researcher's authority to participants whenever possible, which involved being flexible in scheduling online interviews, arranging school visits and classroom observations, and organising post-observation interviews, all tailored to their convenience. Consequently, there were numerous instances where I perceived myself as having less power than the participants, particularly when striving to complete my research activities within the specified timeframe while facing the post-COVID crisis and struggles in the country. By remaining fully flexible, I intentionally transferred the power to the participants to decide the dates and times for the interviews and observations. I arranged my travel plans to visit schools with the support of my participants, some of whom invited me for a cup of tea during the interval, and I made use of these opportunities to put participants at ease by building positive friendly relationships. To build rapport, I leveraged cultural practices by accepting participants' invitations to join them for tea at a nearby restaurant and by sharing my breakfast with them during my school visits. I acknowledged that these informal meetings, where we shared gossip and jokes, were instrumental in establishing trust. During such occasions, we had some informal chats reflecting on our good old days in the training programmes, and they were eager to inquire about my life in the UK,

higher education opportunities and applying for foreign scholarships. These negotiations served to diminish my power and foster a positive relationship.

4.7 Data generation instruments

In qualitative research, employing multiple methods is standard practice as no single method can comprehensively capture the multifaceted aspects of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Depending on the type of qualitative design researchers choose, they select the most appropriate research methods for data gathering, aiming to generate in-depth, value-based data that address the issue or research questions. With regard to case study design, Creswell et al. (2007) explain that,

> Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. (p.225)

As Creswell et al. (2007) describe, researchers tend to utilise multiple methods for data generation with interviews and observations standing out in particular as prominent tools employed in case study design because of their comprehensive investigative scope (Creswell et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008). However, in any research design, including case studies, there exist both strengths and limitations (Duff, 2008). Case studies, particularly those involving a limited number of participants, might yield limited data. Moreover, the selection of data collection instruments in any research is contingent upon various purposes. Cohen et al. (2018) identify this process as “fitness for purpose” (p.469). In this study, I integrated multiple data collection methods, a choice driven by specific purposes: triangulation, complementarity, and expansion.

The purpose of employing triangulation is to mitigate flaws and potential misinterpretations in the data. Stake (2005) defines triangulation as “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (p.454). In qualitative research, the exploration of “multiple perceptions” and “multiple realities” serves to understand the situation better (Stake, 2005, p.454). However, as Duff (2008) suggests, researchers might be able to “conduct a very thorough analysis (a “thick” or “rich” description) of the case …” (p.43) by incorporating triangulation. Therefore, in this case study, I utilised qualitative semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and post-observation interviews, employing triangulation to diversify perceptions, strengthen interpretations and enhance overall credibility.

Additionally, I employed multiple methods in line with the purposes of complementarity and expansion for a better, in-depth understanding of teacher perceptions. Greene (2007) characterises complementarity as a purpose wherein the use of multiple methods contributes to expanding, enriching, inferring deeper meanings and deriving in-depth interpretations from the study. Therefore, I integrated interview data, with evidence from classroom observations and post-observation interviews for the purpose of complementarity and to gain a better understanding. Expanding the scope of perspectives is articulated as the aim of the expansion purpose (Greene, 2007).

In practice, this study incorporated three interviews, two classroom observations, and post-observation interviews for data collection, strategically aligned with the objectives of triangulation, complementarity and expansion. The semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and post-observation interviews are elaborated upon in the following section.

4.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Kvale (1996), the metaphor of interviewer as a miner illustrates that "knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer is a miner who unearths the valuable metal" (p.3). In this analogy, interview questions and questioning techniques employed by researchers serve as tools to disclose hidden information. Kvale (1996) highlights that the effectiveness of qualitative data hinges on the nature of the questions posed and the techniques of questioning employed.

> The knowledge is waiting in the subjects' interior to be uncovered, uncontaminated by the miner. The interviewer digs nuggets of data or meanings out of the subject's pure experiences, unpolluted by any leading questions. (p.3)

Hence, the researcher's skill in crafting unbiased questions is pivotal to unveiling unspoiled data. Similar to everyday conversations, in research, the "professional conversations" enable the researcher to understand the feelings and thought processes of participants through carefully designed interview questions during qualitative data generation (Kvale, 1996, p.5).

Additionally, the researcher participant relationship is another crucial factor to consider regarding the effectiveness of interviews. Yin (2014) explains this as "putting forth [a] friendly, non-threatening" (p.118) interview atmosphere. Conversely, a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and participant might lead to fabricated answers that align with the researcher's expectations (Kvale, 1996). Participants might attempt to discern the researcher's mind and adjust their responses accordingly, potentially skewing the data. Overall, these

elements underscore the intricate nature of qualitative data collection, where the interviewer's approach and question design and the researcher-participant relationship all influence the authenticity and richness of the information gathered. As Mann (2011) explains,

> [A]ll interviews are already sites of social interaction, where ideas, facts, views, details, and stories are collaboratively produced by interviewee and interviewer (p.8).

The interviewer-interviewee relationship is fundamental in creating a natural environment for the interview, enabling spontaneous interaction. Therefore, minimizing the power dynamic between the researcher and the participants was a key concern, given my positionality as their former teacher trainer. To address this, I employed specific strategies both prior to and during the interview process. During the briefing, I requested participants to call me by my name, as they had previously addressed me as "madam," which created a sense of distance between us. However, I found this attempt ineffective, as they felt uncomfortable addressing me by my name. Realizing this, I chose to overlook how they addressed me and allowed them to continue using their usual form of address.

However, interviewing comes with its own set of advantages and limitations. Creswell (2003) argues that interviews yield "indirect" data inherently shaped by participants' perceptions (p.186). Consequently, individual differences in how participants perceive and articulate responses can influence the data they produce. Creswell (2003) considers these features as the limitations of the interview approach. Conversely, Yin (2014) perceives "personal views (e.g. perceptions, attitudes and meanings)" as a strength with interviews, as participants' perspectives can significantly enrich an in-depth qualitative study. Simons (2009) emphasises the potential of in-depth interviewing in elucidating participants' perceptions, enabling the explicit expression of their views rather than relying solely on the researcher's observations, noticing and assumptions. Nevertheless, in my view, the efficacy of interviewing largely hinges on the experience and skills of the researcher.

Moreover, the semi-structured interview model has the potential to persuade participants in "eliciting narratives" (Mann, 2016, p.48). As Mann (2016) emphasises, semi-structured an interview "often relies on a guide" and needs "room for deviation from the guide" (p.91), and this flexibility enabled me to utilise semi-structured interviews to make use of the responses of one participant (anonymously) to elicit comments from others. Additionally, semi-structured interviews offer greater flexibility for both the researcher and

participant to establish a conductive relationship, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the interview process compared to structured interviews. Furthermore, researchers can better keep participants on the right track during semi-structured interviews compared to unstructured ones.

Considering these strengths and acknowledging the limitations, I conducted semi-structured interviews (Appendix L) as one of the main data generation instruments in this study, aiming to generate more in-depth data on teacher perceptions. Seidman (2006) introduces the "three-interview structure" process, with each interview serving a specific purpose: reflecting on experiences, elucidating the present situation, and focusing on future directions. In this way, these interviews logically connect and mutually enrich one another. Adhering to this "three-interview structure" model, I conducted three online interviews with each participant. The initial interview centred on participants sharing their past CPD experiences. After one month, the second interview then focused on the types of support participants received for implementing new knowledge in the classroom. Interview 3 directed participants' attention towards any recent improvements in CPD opportunities, iTESL experience and application of iTESL techniques, as it was the most recent major CPD opportunity, and their expectations for future CPD initiatives. Moreover, interview 3 served the purpose of delving deeper into the valuable opinions participants expressed in interviews 1 and 2, while also seeking additional perspectives on the observed lessons. All three interviews were video recorded with participants' consent in order to draw diverse interpretations by replaying and repeated listening. Alternatively, I developed interview protocols (Appendix M) for the three interviews, with each including essential information, introductions, interview questions, probes, space for on-the-spot notetaking and instructions on how to conclude the interviews. This was done after considering the benefits such as the need to remember important procedures in the interview that I might forget and to have a means to record information in case of interruptions during the interview (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). The design of the interview protocol involved leaving space below each question to capture responses, quotes, and nonverbal clues.

4.7.2 Classroom observation

Classroom observation stands as a fundamental data-gathering tool in case studies, offering insights into the social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds against which teaching takes place (Duff, 2008). As Creswell and Creswell (2018) highlight, semi-structured observations enable the use of flexible observation schedules with pre-planned questions used to record observations,

and this study adopted a semi-structured observation process in order to concentrate on diverse facets of participants' classroom practices after witnessing two lessons. Malderez and Wedell (2007) state that,

> Classroom observation, in which observers are using both their eyes and their ears to gather evidence which they can subsequently use via interpretations … (p.159)

This process distinguishes between "see noticing", observing teacher behaviour, and "hear noticing", listening to teachers' speech (Malderez and Wedell, 2007, p.157). Malderez and Wedell (2007) identify inherent issues in the concepts of "see noticing" and "hear noticing", noting a human habit of focusing on faults rather than "the detail of fluent, seemingly effortless, expert demonstrations of integrated teacher knowledge" (p.157). According to Simpson and Tuson (2003),

> It is also necessary, particularly when observing in your own familiar area of work, to 'make the familiar strange', that is, to try to detach yourself from your own personal automatic interpretation of what is going on, and to try to see events from different perspectives. (p.3)

Acknowledging the strengths, limitations and nuances associated with classroom observation, I integrated the 'make the familiar strange' strategy throughout my observation process, taking measures to mitigate potential constraints. In light of the potential impact of insider influence, I made a conscious effort to observe lessons with an open mind. Additionally, prior to initiating my observations, I reminded participants of my non-judgemental role as a researcher in order to foster a relaxed environment, allowing them to behave naturally in the classroom.

I had concerns about maintaining a non-threating atmosphere for video recording the lessons, acknowledging the benefits of video recording, which Duff (2008) outlines for classroom observations in the following quote.

> Audiotaping and videotaping observations, as opposed to field note taking alone, helps preserve the linguistic character of interactions, and videotaping in particular allows researchers to better attend to nonverbal aspects of language interaction. (p.139)

Accordingly, video recording allows for repeated examination of the lesson, enabling a deeper understanding of teacher behaviour and interaction patterns. As Simpson and Tuson (2003) suggest, analysis can be conducted in three stages, by noticing, coding and interpreting using the video recordings. Therefore, as a strategy, I video recorded the lessons, obtaining the consent of all participants, and in anticipation of any participants refusing to appear in the

video, I planned to use audio recording as an alternative. My objective was meticulous observation, aiming to capture minute details and prevent misinterpretation of teacher behaviour specifically by noticing participant's utilisation of iTESL techniques, their adjustments to suit the level of students (if any) and students' reactions to new methodologies. Following the recommendations of Creswell (2003) and Creswell and Creswell (2018), I utilised a semi-structured observational protocol (Appendix N) to document the field notes. This protocol included recording the observation time, date and location, along with on-the-spot descriptive notes outlining classroom occurrences and background details and reflective notes capturing the researcher's thoughts and perceptions. These notes were systematically organised into two columns within the same sheet of paper.

4.7.3 Post-observation interviews

In order to strengthen classroom observation outcomes, I invited participants for 10- to 15-minute post-observation interviews, which were aimed to reflect on the lesson and gain insights into the participants' actions and decisions in the classroom. I gave participants authority to arrange a time and a quiet place, as I audio recorded the interviews to replay when analysing data for triangulation purposes. Post-observation interviews revealed the reasons behind their attempts to change their practices, how changes occurred or even the reasons for not trying to implement new practices. Considering the scope of the semi-structured interview format, as discussed in section 4.5.2, I incorporated the observation protocol that I used while observing the lessons. This served as a guide to reflect on specific moments in the lessons, prompting participants to provide in-depth information.

Despite initially reminding participants of my non-judgemental role as a researcher before commencing the interviews, many of them attempted to steer the interviews towards "conversation-like" (Mann, 2016, p.97), because of their anticipation of receiving feedback on their lessons. However, in such instances, I strategically balanced these conversational segments without letting the interviews deviate from research conventions. As Mann (2016) suggests, I acknowledged that allowing participants to turn interviews into brief conversational talks rather than avoiding their attempts would contribute to fostering positive relationships. Consequently, these brief conversations made participants comfortable about sharing their true feelings. As Simpson and Tuson (2003) explain, "teachers will give a very rich and detailed account of what they were thinking, anticipating, intending etc. if they are questioned in a non-threatening and open way" (p.51). Accordingly, the classroom observation

process with post-observation interviews provided me a valuable opportunity to gather evidence on CPD practices and the changes that occurred after attending CPD programmes. As I conducted a pilot study prior to starting the main study data-gathering process, I gained hands-on experience in using the data-gathering instruments discussed above efficiently and confidently for the main study. I will detail the pilot study process in the next section.

4.8 Pilot study

This section presents an account of the pilot study initiated in October 2021, while I was residing in the UK during the COVID-19 lockdown, unable to travel to Sri Lanka. It was conducted as a preparatory phase before commencing the main data collection for this qualitative research study. According to Yin (2010), all the stages of data gathering and analysis, including initial designing and planning the whole process of conducting fieldwork of the research and analysis, can be trialled through a pilot study to gain insights essential for the success of future work. Hence, the primary objectives of this pilot study were multifaceted: familiarising myself with the research process by gaining prior experience in using data collection instruments, trialling technological devices, identifying any flaws in questioning techniques or questions, refining them accordingly, and utilising this experience of developing and refining the overall data collection procedures for the main study.

The pilot study process was started by inviting two of my former colleagues who work in the Balangoda education zone for an informal chat to gather information about the current situation in the school system and to select teachers for the pilot study. I explained my research study to my colleagues and discussed the possibilities of selecting teachers, and this discussion led me to select my pilot participants.

This pilot study was set in my research context, the Balangoda education zone in Sri Lanka, so that I could familiarise myself with the contextual specifics. Initially, I invited two iTESL participants, one female and one male, Chami and Shane, who belonged to two teaching experience categories (4 and 8 respectively), with the aim of diversifying the pilot study sample as much as possible. As I was living in the UK and unable to travel to Sri Lanka due to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, I had to take certain flexibility measures when conducting this pilot study. I contacted both Shane and Chami over the phone and invited them to complete the survey questionnaire via email. My aim was to find whether I would receive the expected information from participants through the survey questionnaire. Following this, I conducted three semi-structured interviews with Shane only via the Zoom app. Due to time

constraints and practical considerations regarding conducting online interviews, I did not interview Chami. The insights gained from the three interviews with Shane were used to refine the interview questions. Since I video recorded the three interviews, I had the opportunity to review them, paying attention to my voice projection and the clarity of my questioning. I noted areas for improvement to make the interviews more effective. Additionally, this piloting experience underscored the importance of the process, as it provided insights into certain unanticipated circumstances, such as long power cuts, internet failures and time zone differences between the two countries affecting the interview process. As Oppenheim (1992) states,

> It is dangerous to assume that we know in advance how respondents or fieldworkers will react, and it is a mistake to ask an 'expert' […] When in doubt – and especially when not in doubt! – do a pilot run. (p.48)

Consequently, I considered extending the pilot study into a second stage to include classroom observations and invited Ama to participate. Ama was another female iTESL participant with 10–15 years of teaching experience. After piloting and refining the survey questionnaire and the semi-structured interview questions with Shane and Chami, I used the refined questionnaires with Ama to develop it further. However, before conducting the pilot study observations, I selected participants for the main study and conducted interview 1 with five participants while I was in the UK. I then travelled to Sri Lanka for the second phase of data collection, during which I piloted classroom observations and post-observation interviews by observing two of Ama's lessons, video recording them and conducting post-observation interviews with audio recordings before proceeding with the main study interview 2 and the classroom observations.

This entire piloting experience provided insights into how to conduct the main study efficiently and with confidence. After piloting the survey questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations, I discussed the experience with participants and received feedback, then utilizing the insights gained throughout the process and participant feedback, I refined the questionnaires by rephrasing and adding new questions to gather richer data. I also reflected on the piloting experience and improved my interviewing and observation mechanisms, including consideration of how to use probing questions effectively, the optimal placement for the laptop for video recording, where I should place myself in the classroom and using the audio recorder, as this was the first time I incorporated an audio recorder. These adjustments and new skills were intended to enhance the effectiveness of the data-gathering process. Subsequently, I commenced the main study data gathering, which I will detail in the next section.

4.9 Data generation and analysis

Throughout my career journey, I have informally accumulated data from personal experiences. As Stake (1995) points out, "[T]here is no particular moment when data gathering begins. It begins before there is commitment to do the study: backgrounding, acquaintance with other cases, first impressions" (p.49). This statement is particularly pertinent to my study, which focuses on my recent workplace context and ESL teachers. The sample population comprises professionals striving to achieve the same CPD goal, including acquaintances and former colleagues.

Stake (1995) further explains that researchers gather most of the data for their research from personal perceptions and the impressions they form when initially familiarising themselves with the case. This informally acquired pool of data, alongside the contextual experience, influenced the study at different stages in the research. However, in addition to these initial impressions, specific data collection instruments pertinent to my research questions were also employed. Next, I will discuss the data generation process, beginning with the briefing session.

4.9.1 Briefing

I initiated contact with participants via WhatsApp, inviting them to a 10- to 15-minute conversation, during which I explained the data generation process and confirmed their familiarity with using TEAMs for interviews. This briefing session served a dual purpose: providing additional information and establishing a friendly rapport with participants before the interviews. It also allowed me to schedule the first interview, while considering our time zones and the convenience of the participants, as I was based in the UK. During the school vacation, I arranged interviews with four participants without much difficulty; however, Tharu requested more time as she was invigilating an A/L examination.

4.9.2 Data generation

As illustrated in the table 4.3 below (see pages 89), data generation commenced on 8 February 2022 and lasted for seven months and 17 days until 25 September 2022. Initially, I planned to conduct three face-to-face interviews, two classroom observations, and post-observation interviews with each participant. However, due to COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions, I was unable to travel to Sri Lanka. Consequently, I conducted the three interviews online using the Teams app. The interviews had the aim to gather information regarding participants' entries into the profession, their pre-service training, their

previous experiences with CPD, their perceptions and beliefs about CPD opportunities, the support available for CPD within the system, and their expectations for an enhanced CPD process. I completed interview 1 with five participants; however, Tharu was unavailable due to exam invigilation. I then travelled to Sri Lanka and completed interview 1 with Tharu. As all participants preferred online interviews, I conducted all three interviews online. One participant (Chathu) dropped out after the first interview.

My next step was to conduct classroom observations in schools. After obtaining permission from higher authorities and securing the principals' consent, I visited four selected schools situated in three different settings: urban, semi-urban and rural. At each school, I observed one lesson from each participant. During the observation, I positioned the laptop on the teachers' tables and sat at the back of the class to avoid interfering with their work, and participants offered assistance with operating the laptop for recording. After each lesson, I arranged post-observation interviews in a quiet location suitable for audio recording. The 10- to 15-minute post-observation interviews took place immediately after the lesson, if the teachers were free during the following period. On some occasions, teachers joined the interview after assigning work to the next class. Following the completion of the first round of observations, I scheduled interview 2 via Teams, prioritising the participants' convenience. Subsequently, I began the second round of classroom observations and post-observation interviews, and finally completed the third round of interviews. While the duration was scheduled for one hour, Nirmal engaged in informal chat and diverted from the interview topic, leading to longer sessions. Interview 3 with Anjalee exceeded the allocated time as she enthusiastically shared her views on the research experience and her students' positive perceptions regarding the observation experience.

I encountered unanticipated situations during fieldwork. Due to Nadee's relocation to Dubai, I missed the second classroom observation with her. She expressed feelings of guilt and offered to record a lesson and send the video, but I politely declined her offer, not wanting to burden her further while she was dealing with personal challenges. Instead, we agreed to conduct the third interview after she had settled down in Dubai.

The next challenge arose from the influence of COVID-19 restrictions in the country. Unexpectedly, schools closed, resulting in the cancellation of classroom observations several times. However, one positive impact of the pandemic was that students and teachers were not hesitant about placing the laptop on the teacher's table and recording, contrary to what I anticipated based on my previous experiences. They treated it as a routine task, demonstrating

their increased familiarity with technology. Participants confirmed that this change occurred after the pandemic.

Table 4-3 Details of the data generation

	Nadee	Anjalee	Krishan	Nirmal	Chathu	Tharu
Online interview 1	**Date** 08/02/2022 **Duration** 44 min.	**Date** 10/02/2022 **Duration** 46 min.	**Date** 10/02/2022 **Duration** 59 min.	**Date** 12/02/2022 **Duration** 1 hour 33min.	**Date** 12/02/2022 **Duration** 51 min.	**Date** 12/03/2022 **Duration** 40 min.
	Nadee	**Anjalee**	**Krishan**	**Nirmal**	**Chathu**	**Tharu**
Classroom observation 1	**Date** 07/06/2022 **Duration** 25 min.	**Date** 19/05/2022 **Duration** 40 min.	**Date** 17/05/2022 **Duration** 40 min.	**Date** 17/05/2022 **Duration** 40 min.	**Date (Didn't respond)**	**Date** 18/05/2022 **Duration** 40 min.
F2F post-observation interview 1	**Nadee**	**Anjalee**	**Krishan**	**Nirmal**	**Chathu**	**Tharu**
	Duration 10min.	**Duration** 10 min.	**Duration** 15 min.	**Duration** 15 min.		**Duration** 10 min.
	Nadee	**Anjalee**	**Krishan**	**Nirmal**	**Chathu**	**Tharu**
Online interview 2	**Date** 27/06/2022	**Date** 10/06/2022 **Duration** 52 min.	**Date** 09/06/2022 **Duration** 53 min.	**Date** 14/06/2022 **Duration** 1 hour 27 min.	**(Dropped)**	**Date** 16/06/2022 **Duration** 51 min.
Classroom observation 2	**Date** 29/07/2022 Missed	**Date** 28/07/2022 **Duration** 30 min.	**Date** 16/06/2022 **Duration** 40 min.	**Date** 16/06/2022 **Duration** 40 min.		Date 01/08/2022 **Duration** 40 min.
F2F post observation interview 2	**Nadee**	**Anjalee**	**Krishan**	**Nirmal**	**Chathu**	**Tharu**
		Duration 10 min.	**Duration** 10 min.	**Duration** 10 min.		**Duration** 10 min.
Online interview 3	**Nadee**	**Anjalee**	**Krishan**	**Nirmal**	**Chathu**	**Tharu**
	Date 25/09/2022 **Duration** 1 hour	**Date** 09/09/2022 **Duration** 1h 26 min.	**Date** 09/09/2022 **Duration** 45 min.	**Date** 18/09/2022 **Duration** 1h 41 min.		**Date** 16/09/2022 **Duration** 53min.

4.9.3 Data analysis

In this study, I followed a "bottom up … date-driven" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.7) inductive aspect of thematic analysis (TA) as the tool for analysing data. As Braun and Clarke (2006) define, "[T]hematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p.79). Aligning with this view, Creswell and Clark (2011) state that data analysis involves different stages including "preparing the data for analysis, exploring […] , analysing […] , representing the analysis, interpreting […] , and validating the data and interpretations" (p.204). Later, Braun and Clarke (2022) shifted to a developed version of TA, which was recognised as "Reflexive TA" that involves "critical reflection" (p.5). According to Braun and Clarke (2022), "[R]eflexivity involves a disciplined practice of criticality interrogating what we do, how and why we do it, and the impacts and influences of this on our research" (p.5). Following this framework, I initially prepared my qualitative data by transcribing the interviews and post-observation interviews. Braun and Clarke (2022) recognise two stages of data familiarisation: "immersion and critical engagement" (p.5). Immersion involves gaining a deeper understanding of the data, while critical engagement entails making meaning of the data rather than treating data as mere information. Subsequently, I reviewed the transcripts and observation notes, identifying trends, writing memos, and codifying in order to organise the data exploring recurring themes and their relationships. During this process of analysis, my familiarisation involved both stages mentioned above: immersion and critical engagement. I achieved this by reading and rereading the data, attempting to understand the meanings expressed by participants through self-questioning "to make meaning of the world" (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p.43) in order to unveil hidden nuances. My initial analysis included creating two types of visual representations. One is to illustrate the CPD process (Figure 4.1) and the other type to represent each participant (Appendix P). Subsequently, I further developed the visual representations during final analysis. I will discuss the processes of initial analysis and final analysis in subsequent sections.

4.9.3.1 Initial analysis

As Bassey (1999) highlights, it is pivotal to start analysing data while data collection is ongoing rather than delaying until all data has been gathered to begin analysis. Adhering to this view, I initiated the analysis process by creating initial codes and categories as data arrived after the first interview.

Upon completing interview 1 with all participants, I began classroom observations, maintaining a continuous analysis process. This approach helped with refining questions in interviews 2 and 3 to delve deeper for comprehensive

insights. Bassey (1999) asserts that it is also fundamental to record and store data systematically to save time and effort.

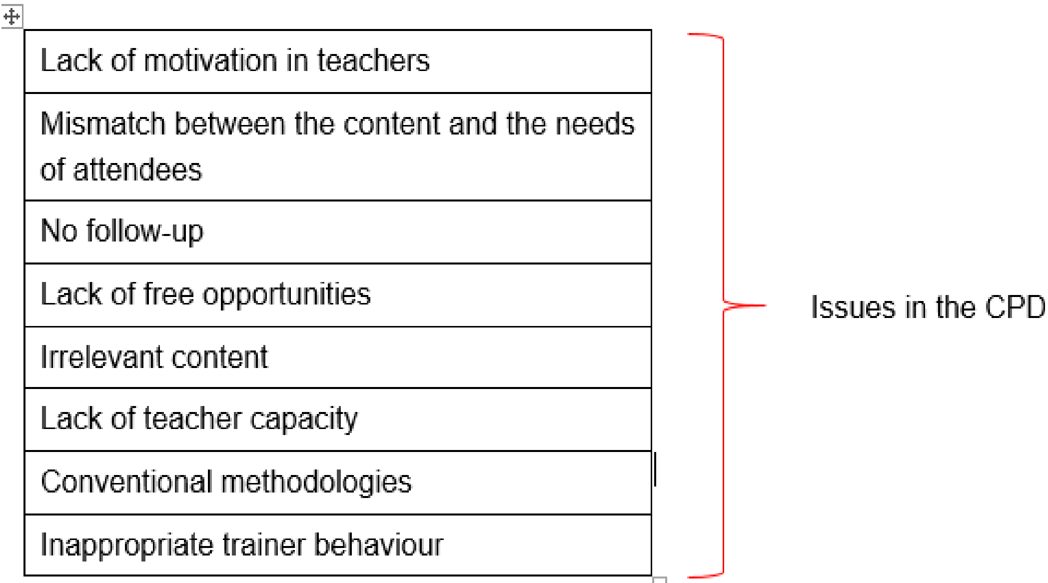
Initially, I considered both manual analysis and using NVivo software as potential options for analysis, and I incorporated both. Despite the software's capability to simplify the task, I recognised the possibility of the researcher analysing data effectively themselves, as the analysis process will build up enthusiasm and bring the researcher satisfaction after tedious work. Hanks (2013) shares a similar opinion regarding the use of software for data analysis, emphasising the advantage of harnessing the power of imagination inherent in the human mind rather than relying solely on a software programme to think on behalf of the researcher. Chick (2014) justifies not using software for analysing data in his PhD research, asserting that none of the software programmes can surpass the researcher in inferring and interpreting meaning of data, "[a]s I was living and breathing the research both in my work and personal time…" (p.144). Similarly, considering my familiarity with the context, I opted for manual analysis, which allowed me to engage intimately with the transcripts, identifying codes and creating themes that resonated with my personal understanding. As Braun and Clarke (2019) explain,

> Themes do not passively emerge from either data or coding; they are not 'in' the data, waiting to be identified and retrieved by the researcher. Themes are creative and interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves. (p.594)

Therefore, the combination of researcher's skills, creativity along with rich data, contributes to discover diverse stories from the participants. The subsequent section explains the stages of initial analysis.

I initiated this process by simultaneously undertaking three tasks: listening to interview recordings, rectifying transcriptions, and coding data. I read and reread transcripts, and creating mind maps using each participant's data to familiarise myself with the data. Appendix O and Table 4.4 below provide examples of my initial coding and categorising.

Table 4-4 Initial codes and categories of interview 1 with Anjalee



Initial codes	Category
Lack of motivation in teachers	Issues in the CPD
Mismatch between the content and the needs of attendees	
No follow-up	
Lack of free opportunities	
Irrelevant content	
Lack of teacher capacity	
Conventional methodologies	
Inappropriate trainer behaviour	

Following this, I incorporated the identified initial categorises and created visual representations (Sahakyan, 2023) by triangulating interview data with classroom observations and post-observation interviews and then presented the initial categories through two types of figures. Figure 4.1 (page 94) illustrates participants' perceptions of the CPD process and practices, including positive factors, negative factors, feasible scenarios for the improvement of CPD and general information, with each category differentiated using colour codes as shown in the key below. Next, I created images for each participant using initial codes and categories.

Appendix 16 portrays visual representations of the five participants in light of the themes discovered from analysing data. Initially, I formulated six images, designating each participant as an individual to explore their commonalities and differences, and then I categorised them into three cases. Accordingly, Krishan and Nirmal were categorised under case 1, representing the urban setting; Anjalee and Chathu were grouped under Case 2, the semi-urban setting (though Chathu's image was not included due to ethical considerations when she dropped out); and Nadee and Tharu were classified under Case 3, representing the rural setting.

Key for Figure 4.1. (Perceptions of CPD processes and practices)

Positives thoughts about CPD	
Negatives thoughts about CPD	
Feasible scenarios for the improvement of CPD	
General information	

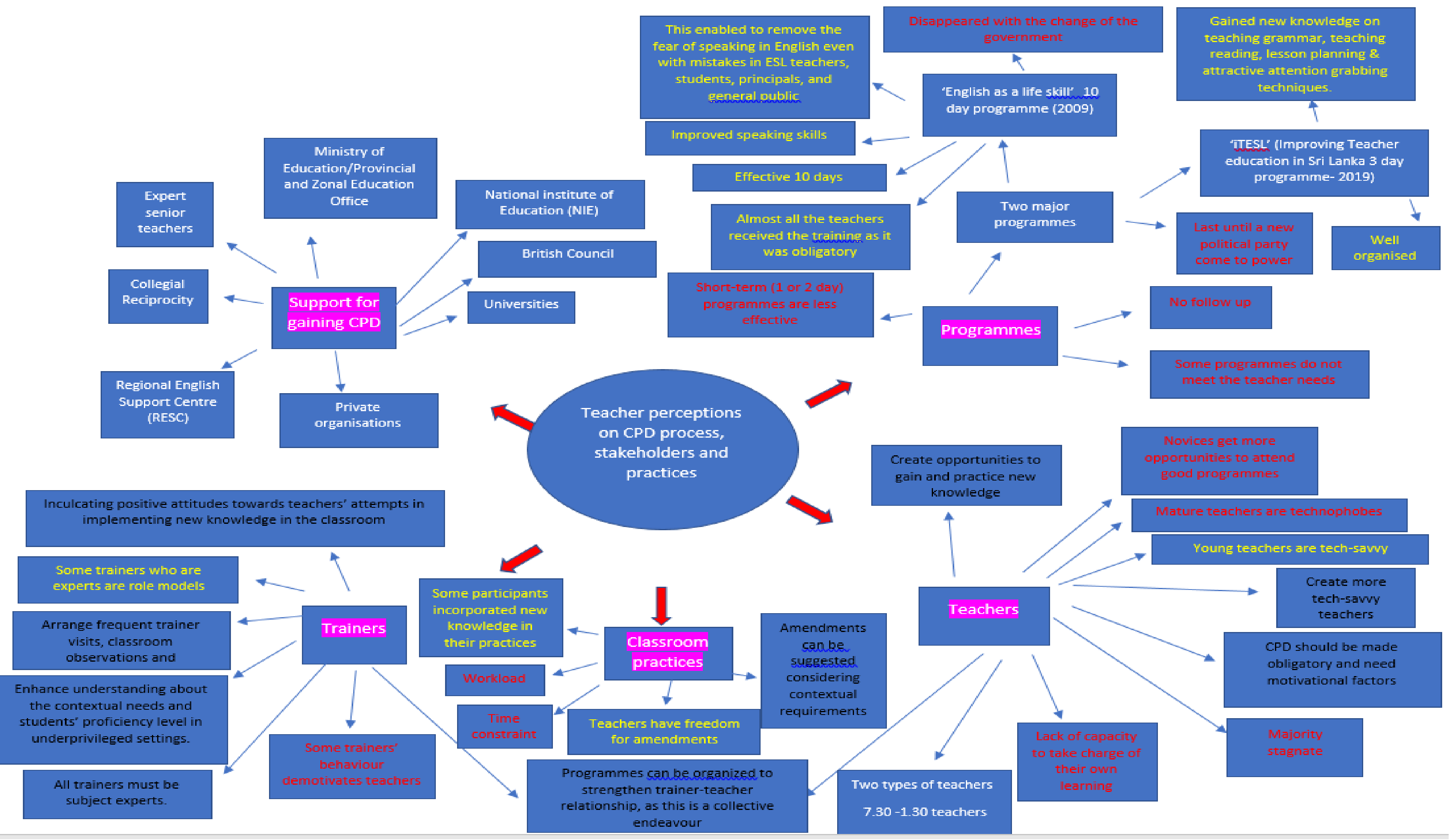
4.9.3.2 Stages of final analysis

The final analysis began after completing interview 2 and 3, along with both classroom observations, taking into account the outcomes of the initial analysis. I employed the member-checking strategy (Sahakyan, 2023) by using visual representations for each participant. Before conducting interview 3, I shared each participant's visual representation, providing them with the opportunity to review them at their convenience. At the start of the final interview, I shared the diagrams on my screen and invited the participants to supplement or revise their own perspectives. This process, identified more as member-reflection than mere member checking, aligns with Sahakyan, (2023) explanation:

> Member reflections, therefore, broaden the concept of member checking making it more participatory, which offers opportunities for richer data and reflexive collaboration balancing the power relationships between researchers and participants (p.688).

As a result, participants had another opportunity to reflect on their expressions from interviews 1 and 2, allowing them to further elaborate on their viewpoints and enrich the data. During final phase of the analysis process, I created themes and sub-themes. Additionally, I ensured the ethical rights of participants throughout the data collection process and in reporting the research findings in order to ensure trustworthiness in this study.

Figure 4-1 The CPD process and practices



4.10 Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness is of significant importance within any research endeavour. In qualitative research, due to the unavoidable nature of researcher biases, trustworthiness is paramount in managing subjectivity (Holliday, 2015). According to Holliday (2015), the researcher's decisions regarding the selection of methods for data collection and throughout the process of data analysis might be influenced by their beliefs and assumptions. Thus, in order to establish trustworthiness in research by managing biases, the actions and decisions of the researcher should be transparent. The following comment is directly related to my positionality, where I made every effort to emphasise my role as a researcher while suppressing my former teacher trainer role.

> While carrying out classroom research, the researcher must try as hard as possible to stop thinking like a teacher or a teacher trainer and try and see the classroom from a stranger's point of view. (Holliday, 2015, p.52)

Moreover, trustworthiness is measured by the reviewers of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider four criteria as requirements to establish trustworthiness from the readers' point of view: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

4.10.1 Credibility

In the constructivist-interpretivist stance within the qualitative paradigm, researchers attempt to accurately construct the realities of participants to establish credibility in their studies by incorporating validity procedures (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Credibility is a criterion that researchers use to establish trustworthiness ensuring the assurance of the research findings and the constructors' interpretations of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Connelly (2016) defines credibility as "the confidence in the truth of the study" and identifies five measures that enhance credibility including "prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer-debriefing, member-checking and reflective journaling" (p.435).

The expression posited by Lincoln and Guba (1985), "a stranger in a strange land" (p.302), regarding outsider researchers suggests that their interpretations might be influenced by a lack of understanding of contextual specifics. However, this comment does not align with my insider (or in-betweener) positionality as the researcher in this study. My extensive engagement with ESL teachers in the same context throughout my career journey, coupled with my in-depth background knowledge and familiarity with the context, played a crucial role in accurately interpreting the data and establishing the credibility of this study.

Furthermore, to ensure credibility, I incorporated peer debriefing at different stages of the study. For instance, when presenting the study to peers or at conferences, activating my reflexivity as a researcher further ascertained the credibility of the findings. As discussed in section 4.7.4.1, I engaged in member checking with my participants by sharing the images I created and inviting them to reflect on their responses to ensure the credibility of my interpretations. Moreover, throughout the research process I maintained a reflective journal keeping records of specific incidents and decisions I made related to the research journey, as well as my feelings and insights gained throughout the process. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), triangulation is another validity procedure and I incorporated it by integrating evidence gathered from semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and post-observation interview data in this study to ensure credibility.

4.10.2 Transferability

Transferability, generalisability, external validity (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) and comparability (Yin, 2014) are terms that share closely related meanings. Transferability assesses the extent to which study findings are pertinent to people in different contexts (Connelly, 2016) with Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggesting that transferability remains an unattainable goal. However, researchers can enhance transferability by providing a “thick description” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.317) or detailed contextual information to enable readers to assess transferability, as it relies on the contextual nuances and characteristics (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

In this study, purposive sampling and detailed descriptions facilitate readers to evaluate transferability. Additionally, readers can draw naturalistic generalisations by connecting the findings with their personal experiences and learning from this secondary involvement. Stake (1995) explains naturalistic generalisations as “conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life’s affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves” (p.85). Essentially, this study actively encourages readers to make naturalistic generalisations.

4.10.3 Dependability

Conventionalists often used the term reliability alongside dependability (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Yin (2014) defines dependability within case studies as the ability to conduct an error-free study, ensuring that if another researcher replicates the same research, they arrive at the same conclusions. However, in line with this argument it is unrealistic to conduct an error-free study. Connelly (2016) defines dependability

differently, as consistency of the data across time and study conditions, and suggests trialling audits to ensure dependability.

Although an auditing process was not implemented in this study, I conducted all research activities and procedures meticulously to ensure greater accuracy. The study was maintained transparently, allowing any potential reviewer the opportunity to audit it.

4.10.4 Confirmability

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), confirmability refers to the authenticity of data and interpretations emerging from participants, while extracting researchers' viewpoints. Confirmability can be verified through the audit of data, constructions, and factual accuracy to ensure the integrity of the entire process. Confirmability audits, which are also a component of the larger dependability audit, can be performed concurrently (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). In alignment with the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985), I incorporated triangulation techniques and maintained a reflective journal for reviewers to inspect with the aim of providing reviewers with additional insights and a comprehensive understanding of the research process.

4.11 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I detailed the methodological decisions I made in conducting this study in order to address the research questions. First, I explained my ontological and epistemological stance as pertinent to this qualitative case study. Next, I discussed the sampling strategy, recruitment process and ethical considerations I made to ensure participants' rights. I also described the data generation and analysis process in detail.

To achieve my research aim of exploring participants' perceptions of their CPD experiences and the application of CPD knowledge in classroom practice, I conducted this study involving five ESL teacher participants in the Balangoda education zone in Sri Lanka. Participants were categorised into three distinct cases based on the geographical location of their schools – urban, semi-urban and rural – to understand the unique and common features influencing the acquisition and implementation of CPD in the classroom. Data were generated through three online semi-structured interviews, two classroom observations and post-observation interviews. Thematic analysis was then employed to derive key themes from the data. In the subsequent sections, I will present the main findings within the framework of these themes derived from across the three case studies.

Chapter 5 Findings – Case study 1 – Urban Setting

> *In moving schools, teachers believed that teaching was difficult, they always sought help, and they never stopped learning to teach. Support from and communication with colleagues led teachers to have greater confidence and certainty about what they were trying to achieve and the best ways to achieve it.*
>
> (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, p.111)

5.1 Introduction

While rural and semi-urban schools across the country share similar characteristics, urban schools in different cities vary significantly in terms of popularity, student proficiency levels, educational opportunities, social status, and family backgrounds. In the Balangoda Education Zone, there are seven state-sector urban schools. Despite some common features, such as teacher and student populations, facilities, and location, there are also huge differences in student proficiency levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and motivation among these urban schools.

Due to the popularity of certain schools, parents often prefer to enrol their children in specific urban schools over others. For instance, after the fifth-grade scholarship examination, students with higher scores tend to choose the most popular schools. A similar trend can be observed after the Ordinary Level examination, where students select a school based on their results and chosen stream. Students with higher grades commonly choose the science stream and seek out schools that offer this option, as not all urban schools provide the science stream for Advanced Level. However, currently, all urban schools in the Balangoda Education Zone offer the A/L science stream, except one, which is a primary school.

Teachers in urban schools have more opportunities for CPD, expert support, and collegiality, and they must constantly update their knowledge to work with comparatively higher-performing students. However, they also face pressure from parents, principals, and authorities to maintain the school's reputation by improving results in public examinations. Thus, while teachers in urban schools enjoy better facilities, reputation, and commuting convenience, they face distinct challenges in the teaching process.

In this chapter, I will discuss the stories of the two male ESL teachers, Krishan and Nirmal, who worked in the same school situated in an urban setting, though their paths to becoming ESL teachers differed. Krishan had 12 years of teaching

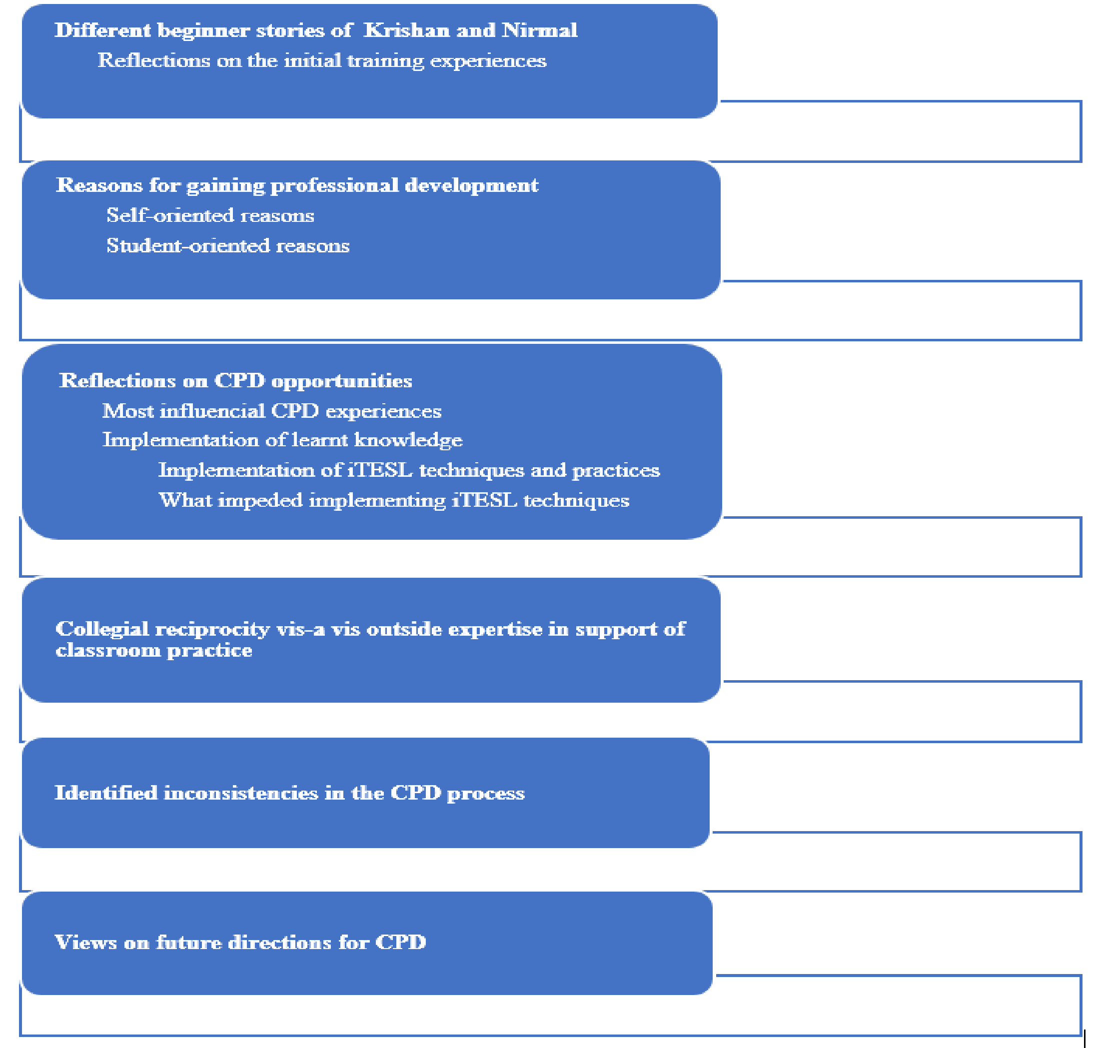
experience, beginning his teaching career in 2010 after completing his internship at one of the leading schools in the capital city, Colombo. Initially, he served as a permanent government ESL teacher in a remote school in a different province for one-and-a-half years before working in two other schools within the same province. He worked for two-and-a-half years in his second school and two years in the third, and then finally transferred to his current school, where he has been working since 2016, for six years at the time of the study, teaching English to grades 6 to 13.

Throughout his tenure as a teacher, Krishan pursued continuous education. In addition to short-term CPD programmes, he participated in two significant initiatives: a 10-day ‘English as a life skill’ programme in 2012 and the three-day iTESL programme in 2019. Moreover, while working as a teacher, he completed two BA degrees and a postgraduate diploma in education. I first met Krishan as an ESL teacher in the Balangoda education zone, and I acknowledged his capabilities in ESL teaching through the iTESL programme I conducted in 2019. He also had caring responsibilities as a father of three kids.

Nirmal, who had six years of teaching experience, entered the system as an ESL teacher after completing his university degree. Before securing a permanent position in the state sector, he initially worked as an ESL teacher in an international school, and this exposure led him to explore various CPD opportunities organised by private sector banks, foreign universities and educational organisations. Similar to Krishan, Nirmal began his teaching journey at a rural school, which is where I first met him. The urban school where he was employed during this study was his third school. Nirmal was teaching grades 6 to 13.

In this chapter, I explore the stories of Krishan and Nirmal, presenting them as a single case study on the basis of the uniqueness of the school setting and the inter-connectedness of identified themes and sub-themes within the urban context with the other two chosen cases: the semi-urban and rural settings. I will examine the urban setting in terms of six major themes, as illustrated in Figure 5.1. These themes encompass their journey as ESL teachers, the reasons behind pursuing CPD, reflections from Krishan and Nirmal on their CPD experiences, the impact of experts’ intervention in implementing CPD knowledge in the classroom, inconsistencies identified within the CPD process, and the future expectations Krishan and Nirmal have for CPD directions, which will be accompanied by corresponding sub-themes, as depicted in the following Figure 5.1.

Figure 5-1. Case study 1 (Urban setting)



5.2 Different beginner stories of Krishan and Nirmal

Krishan and Nirmal had different beginner stories with regard to the recruitment process, leading to variations in their pre-service training. Krishan entered the system through the primary teacher recruitment procedure, while Nirmal joined as a graduate teacher, which is less common. In the following sections, I will delve into each of their stories in detail.

5.2.1 How Krishan became a teacher of English

In this section, I explore how Krishan became a teacher of English and his perceptions of the pre-service training he underwent to qualify as teachers in the state-sector school system. Since 1985, the primary teacher recruitment system in

Sri Lanka has involved completing a three-year National Diploma in Teaching. Following their Advanced-Level studies, if students fail to secure admission to a government university, they may opt to apply to a National College of Education, which is considering the next best pathway to attain a secure and prestigious government job. The Advanced-Level Z-score serves as the fundamental qualification for admission to National Colleges of Education.

Krishan initially took an opportunity to enrol in a NCOE specialising in aesthetic subjects to train as an arts teacher, accepting this offer because of his parents' preference for government teaching, as it was a secured job and matched with the artistic talents of his family members. Reflecting on his career journey since entering the NCOE, Krishan elaborated on how he eventually transitioned into an ESL teaching role after initially undertaking and then giving up two pre-service courses for different subjects in two different colleges.

> *I started my career almost 12 years back after my A-Levels. I applied, and then, I had to sit for an exam. Through that exam, I was selected. I mean, first, not for English. Uh, another college of education for arts. However, as I had my childhood dream to become an English teacher, just after joining the aesthetic college of education, within three months, I joined the English stream.* (Krishan, interview 1)

As admission to a NCOE for a teaching diploma is competitive, Krishan accepted the initial offer to pursue a course in teaching arts subjects. While engaged in this teaching diploma course for arts subjects, he decided to switch to the ICT field since teacher trainees had the option to change subjects within a three-month period. Despite being selected for ICT teacher training, he gave it up due to the political turmoil prevailing in the country. His parents, concerned for his safety, opposed the idea of him living alone, especially because the ICT College was situated far from his hometown.

After a few months, Krishan reapplied and, because of his Advanced-Level results, particularly his grade in English, and along with an English proficiency test, he successfully received a place to undertake a three-year pre-service course for ESL teachers at a NCOE. This three-year programme comprised a two-year residential academic programme followed by a one-year internship, leading to the attainment of the National Diploma in Teaching, a pivotal qualification to become an ESL teacher in Sri Lanka. Upon completion of the two-year residential academic programme, Krishan was appointed to an esteemed school in Colombo for his internship year. Subsequently, Krishan became an ESL teacher after successfully passing the final examination administered by the NCOE.

At first, Krishan mentioned that his childhood dream was to become an English teacher though, during the member-checking phase, he corrected this statement by revealing that his initial aspiration was to become a doctor. He also acknowledged his desire to improve his English skills.

> *[laugh] Actually, my childhood dream was to become a doctor. As I missed it, I decided to accept this opportunity. But I had a desire to improve my English.* (Krishan, member-checking interview)

Consequently, Krishan's becoming a teacher was unintentional. He did not have a specific ambition to become a teacher. After receiving his Advanced-Level results and realising, he could not pursue his dream of becoming a doctor, he joined the NCOE with the goal of improving his English skills. However, during interview 1, he stated his desire to be a teacher. The reason for this contradiction might be because he did not take the interview seriously and spoke without much consideration or perhaps Krishan felt somewhat uncomfortable responding to my questions.

Alternatively, this discrepancy might be the influence of our previous hierarchical relationship where I served as a trainer and he, a teacher. Despite my initial request for him to perceive me solely as a researcher at the beginning of the interview, establishing the desired level of trust took longer than with the other participants, primarily due to Krishan's personal qualities. Nonetheless, I succeeded in conducting the interviews in a more dialogic manner by fostering a friendly atmosphere. Additionally, the interview environment and potential disturbances from his kids might have influenced his responses, particularly since he was at home with family members. However, I acknowledged that over time, Krishan gradually recalled more of his experiences, and the tone of his laughter and expressions when uttering the above words indicated he was more comfortable. I will return to this point in Chapter 8.

5.2.2 How Nirmal became a teacher of English

Nirmal had a different journey that led him to become a teacher of English, stressing in his interview that he willingly entered the teaching profession by volunteering during his final year as a university student, even before graduating. Upon completing his degree in ESL teaching, he joined a private sector (international) school where English served as the medium of instruction. He expressed contentment with his initial decision to work in an international school.

> *I was lucky to teach in international schools because their first language is English. The context I got there is totally different from the Tamil speakers, and it was smooth and even for me it was very easy to, uh, deal with students whose first language is English.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

After being appointed as a government English teacher in a Tamil-medium school, Nirmal noticed a substantial difference in students' motivation and proficiency levels between the international and state schools, coming to appreciate his initial experience as an ESL teacher in an international school. However, influenced by his family and considering the stability associated with being a state schoolteacher in the Sri Lankan context, he made the shift to the state schoolteacher.

Nirmal did not face a competitive selection test to become a teacher. As a graduate, he faced an interview and conducted a lesson demonstration instead. Nirmal was one of the 418 teachers selected out of 600 graduate competitors from the whole province.

In the next section, I will discuss how Krishan and Nirmal reflected on the impact of their initial training prior to begin their career as ESL teachers.

5.2.3 Reflections on the initial training experiences

Krishan completed a three-year pre-service training course at an NCOE to obtain a teaching diploma, while Nirmal underwent a 21-day residential pre-service training course as a graduate teacher trainee. Consequently, Krishan had more extensive pre-service training to share compared to Nirmal because of the longer duration of Krishan's training.

Krishan shared a mix of feelings, both positive and negative thoughts, about the pre-service training he underwent 12–15 years ago. Furthermore, he expressed satisfaction at being appointed to a prominent school for his internship year, as it provided opportunities for diverse experiences and facilitated his development.

> *I was satisfied about the pre-service training I got in the college and after that in the internship year. Uh, but at the same time I feel that I could have done more than that, and my training, and from the other side, from the lecturers' side (…), they could have done more than they did in terms of the practical situation, about the way that, or how could we feel in the practical situation in the classroom.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan highlighted the shortcomings of the pre-service programme for teacher trainees in terms of developing their classroom teaching skills before entering into the real classroom as teachers. He experienced during the two-year period that the lecturers leaned more towards imparting academic knowledge to the trainees. However, Krishan believed that, instead of focusing more on academic learning, the significance of gaining first-hand experience in classroom teaching, tackling challenges with students, and mastering the art of teaching was more important. In Krishan's perspective, inexperienced teachers often struggle, especially when

dealing with students who lack motivation to learn English, which leads to disciplinary issues in the classroom.

> *I have experienced, in some schools, that the students are not ready to learn. When we are new to the field, we face difficulties when they are not ready. We have to control students and that's the only thing we do, not teaching.* (Krishan, member-checking interview)

Therefore, Krishan acknowledged that teachers require specific strategies to manage disciplinary issues in the classroom as novices and the initial training should fulfil this requirement. Most ESL teachers typically enter the profession after completing their Advanced-Level education in their native language, leading to limited English proficiency. However, Krishan was determined to improve both his English language and professional skills upon entering the teaching profession. He ascertained that he gradually evolved as a teacher after joining the school system, through higher education courses and professional development programmes.

Nirmal pursued a degree programme related to English language teaching, engaging in practical teaching sessions in schools and observing lessons. Upon completing his degree and entering the teaching profession, Nirmal underwent a 21-day residential training programme, which had a positive impression of, as it equipped him with various methodologies for teaching diverse skills and designing lesson plans. Right after joining the system as an ESL teacher, Nirmal followed another 12-day training course, which gave him confidence in managing his teacher identity.

> *With the knowledge I gained through those two programmes conducted by the provincial department and zonal educational office, I managed somehow. I became one of the favourite, uh, teachers among the staff and the students also started learning and absorbing the language very soon and all the students in the classroom actively attended all the lessons.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

As Nirmal worked in an international school where English was the medium of instruction, he found a vast difference in students' English language proficiency between state sector schools and international schools. Nirmal found both the training courses were fundamental to work in a very remote school with students who had low proficiency levels.

5.3 Reasons for gaining professional development

The reasons that both Krishan and Nirmal had for gaining CPD were twofold, being both self-oriented and student-oriented. The self-oriented reasons were for them to build confidence, develop self-efficacy and establish a professional identity as ESL teachers, whereas the student-oriented reasons motivated them to become better teachers for their students, addressing recurring challenges they encountered when

teaching students who came from diverse backgrounds. In terms of dealing with the issues in the classroom, Krishan was particularly concerned about ensuring that no student would be left behind when working in noisy congested classrooms, and as part of his student-oriented approach, Nirmal aimed to maximise active participation, tailoring his teaching to accommodate all proficiency levels. The influence of these two primary reasons on Krishan and Nirmal's decisions to pursue CPD will be further explored under the sub-themes of self-oriented and student-oriented reasons.

5.3.1 Self-oriented reasons

Krishan's explanations revealed his enthusiasm for gaining professional development as a beginner teacher. He firmly believed in being accountable for his own professional development, although, while working in different schools, he encountered ESL teachers who lacked self-motivation to acquire new knowledge and skills and thus resisted attending CPD programmes.

> *Most of the teachers, I think, they, after being appointed, they stop their further studies. And some of the teachers like us... we like to continue in our field, and we need to be up-to-date.* (Krishan, interview 3)

Contrary to this particular teacher behaviour, Krishan expressed enthusiasm for learning new knowledge while expressing discontent with what he had learned so far in his career journey. On the other hand, Nirmal admired the opportunities he received as a teacher of English in an international school. Obviously, neither Krishan nor Nirmal fall into the aforementioned category of teachers who stagnate in the system, with Krishan's elucidations and classroom practices, in particular, demonstrating that he was an exception among teachers who stagnated in this context.

> *I feel that there are a lot of things that we have to learn in order to (…) I mean, develop in this field. Still, there are lot of things that I have to learn.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Additionally, Krishan's classroom practices were evident in his interest in experimenting with new practices adhering to personalised methodologies.

When analysing both Nirmal's and Krishan's responses, I identified three factors that had influenced them to pursue CPD to enhance their skills in teaching: self-motivation for autonomous learning, participation in professional development programmes, and reciprocal peer support. Krishan's self-motivation for self-learning, for instance, was explained as follows.

> *I am involved in self-study, self-study in the sense of following some grammar books, the Internet, YouTube, and some other modern technologies that support learning.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Furthermore, he tried to apply newly gained knowledge in the classroom using his personal technology devices despite the lack of facilities.

When I inquired about Nirmal's professional development experiences, he expressed appreciation for the new knowledge he gained through the iTESL programme, which helped him develop some essential skills as a teacher.

> *(Interview 1)*
>
> *Deepa: Can you explain your professional development experiences?*
>
> *Nirmal: The most recent experience was the iTESL programme. We were enriched and we were taught that there is something, not something, a lot of things beyond the knowledge once we deal, interact with students.*
>
> *Deepa: What do you mean by 'beyond the knowledge?'*
>
> *Nirmal: Personally, I had never experienced methods like scaffolding before, how to evaluate students during a lesson and after a lesson. What we previously did was, we just focussed on completing the lesson within a certain timeframe.*
>
> *Deepa: Ok, you learnt new techniques.*
>
> *Nirmal: Yes, certain techniques, hush hush baby that iTESL taught us. Uh, I managed to keep the students attracted to the lesson though the next class was a real disturb.*

Accordingly, Nirmal gained new insights for self-development through the iTESL programme, as anticipated. Apart from self-learning, and attending CPD programmes, he explained his enthusiasm for seeking support to clarify his doubts in teaching.

> *When I want to get certain things clarified, I go through them several times by myself, or I seek assistance from my colleagues.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

Nirmal was critical of the rigidity displayed by some novice teachers in seeking assistance from experienced colleagues. However, as an experienced teacher, Krishan expressed his willingness to attend CPD programmes and share his knowledge and experience with peers. He reiterated the fact while reflecting on his CPD journey.

> *Since then* [his beginnings as a teacher] *I had, some training, training in the sense of professional development programmes. (…) With my peers, I shared things and in this way, up to now, I have been trying to develop my professionalism. So, that is how up to now I developed my professional skills.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan expressed enthusiasm about consulting senior colleagues for his own growth without waiting to receive rare CPD opportunities from higher authorities. How he provided support and received collegial support for CPD will be discussed in detail in section 5.4. Krishan explained his thirst for seeking new knowledge to

develop his professional skills, believing that learning and developing professional skills are essential qualities every teacher should possess. Apart from his enthusiasm for self-growth, attending CPD programmes, and receiving collegial support, he was also eager to apply what he learned and developed through CPD to manage diverse issues in the classroom. He also seized every opportunity to engage in CPD by using the Internet and incorporating modern technologies in the classroom for experimental teaching. For example, I witnessed Krishan using his personal Bluetooth devices and a voice recorder during the second lesson. Krishan was one of the initiative-taking teachers who spent his comparatively low salary on professional purposes.

Apart from self-learning, Krishan gained new knowledge by investing in expensive higher educational courses. Although travelling to faraway universities for lectures posed a challenge, he prioritised his professional development even amidst caring responsibilities and expenses for his own children's education as a father of three. Generally, ESL teachers in the Sri Lankan context who engage in CPD through reading books or using technology for classroom practices need to spend their own money to purchase books, devices and data for internet use, as the authorities do not supply these facilities. At the time of the study, devices like smart boards and digital screens were only available in a few state-sector schools. Nirmal was among the few teachers in his school who utilised the only smart board available, and according to Nirmal, most teachers did not have the skills to operate it.

Nirmal and Krishan highlighted the reluctance of other teachers to develop their skills in using technology in the classroom. However, both Nirmal and Krishan established a new teacher identity among their colleagues by incorporating technology into their lessons. They believed that this new identity helped them attract their students' attention to their teaching. Although Nirmal stated that he was self-motivated to engage in self-learning and adopt new methodologies, he used conventional methodologies in both lessons I observed.

5.3.2 Student-oriented reasons

In response to my question about his professional development experiences, Krishan shared his thoughts on another aspect of what motivates him to pursue professional development.

(Interview 3)

> *Deepa: What do you think about what you have gained through the professional development opportunities in the system?*

Krishan: Do you mean within the system or specifically in the school?
Deepa: Either, in the school or in the system
Krishan: Oh… it depends. If I think about my school, I'm not entirely satisfied. I mean, we have some opportunities and certain facilities, but it really depends on the school we work in.

Deepa: Ok. Do you feel that the CPD opportunities in the system have helped with your improvement?

Krishan: Yes, absolutely. Compared to before, I think I've improved significantly. But I feel the opportunities have lessened now. In teaching, we have to understand many things—our environment, the classroom, the students, and other factors.

Deepa: Ok. So, are you saying that you gained more than just subject knowledge through CPD?

Krishan: Yes, I think so. By participating in these courses and CPD opportunities, I've enhanced my understanding of the teaching-learning process. This helps me believe that I'll be able to give my best to the students in the future.

Krishan believed that his enthusiasm for CPD laid a strong foundation for understanding critical aspects of the teaching-learning process beyond acquiring subject-specific skills.

As Krishan stated, different strategies were used to grab students' attention in noisy classroom environments. During my visits to the urban school where Krishan and Nirmal worked, I observed that most classes were noisy, congested and overcrowded, with 40–50 students, which is typical in most urban schools. Consequently, teachers who transfer from rural to urban schools find it challenging to work in such congested and noisy classrooms. Krishan specified that when the teacher in the neighbouring class is absent, the situation becomes worse. Krishan detailed the aspects and skills in teaching he needed to develop through CPD in order to address the issues he encountered in the classroom. His explanation revealed his self-realisation about what was missing in him as a teacher.

> *I could enhance my understanding of how to implement these lessons and how to deal with the students. I could make some changes while I'm doing that, I mean, to be close with the students so that the relationship between teacher and student is more child-centred, like, I could, like, (…) I think I could enhance some ideas on how to implement my lessons.* (Krishan, interview 3)

Krishan's self-realisation regarding teacher-centredness was evident, more or less, in the lessons I observed. He did not use group work or pair work, aiming to provide more space for students' involvement, and more teacher talk was noticeable. However, he attempted to engage students in discussions using activity-based

teaching. Krishan acknowledged why he needed to improve these essential skills, as he considered students' interests and engaged them in his experimental teaching in the classroom using technology, even with the minimal facilities available, to attract students, manage time and effort, increase efficiency and achieve better outcomes. Krishan thought that using various techniques helped him establish a new identity as a modernised teacher, attracting and motivating students to learn languages.

> *They* [students] *are interested whenever we use any gadgets. It is new to them, so their participation is high. If we bring something, they are interested in it. As we do not have enough time, 40 minutes, sometimes we can't finish* [the lesson] *with various disturbances. We can continue the rest of the lesson by sending the audio to their WhatsApp group. We learnt some of these methods at iTESL. I think there was an influence from iTESL.* (Krishan, post-observation interview 2)

Krishan was eager to use technology to motivate students who were not interested in learning English. In Krishan's second observed lesson, he assigned students to listen to the first half of the story using technology and invited them to listen to the rest of the story at home, which he would share in a WhatsApp group. Krishan was keen on gaining new knowledge, aiming at making students energetic in the classroom amidst outside disturbances, lack of facilities and the different proficiency levels of students. Thus, he was making every effort to achieve CPD through various means to address practical issues in the classroom. Krishan mentioned that there was an influence of the iTESL programme in his teaching. Similarly, Nirmal considered the strategy of using CCQs and ICQs, which he learned at iTESL, was effective in grabbing students' attention.

> *I really like CCQs, instruction checking questions that I learnt at iTESL. This technique immensely helped me to check whether students have acquired the particular knowledge in the lesson and to keep students engaged in the lesson as well.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

Moreover, Nirmal reflected on his previous CPD experiences and explained how the iTESL programme empowered him to make his teaching more effective.

> *We were not closely observed in the programmes that I attended before iTESL. This is the one I was closely observed in and it pointed out, my, uh, weaknesses and the places where I had to improve to facilitate students.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

However, I did not notice any strategies introduced at iTESL to deal with classroom management issues, attention-grabbing techniques, strategies to enhance effectiveness of group tasks, questioning strategies, or similar in either of Krishan's or Nirmal's lessons that I observed. This factor will be discussed in detail in section 5.4.2.2, but Krishan and Nirmal's reflections on their positive and negative CPD experiences will be explored in the next section.

5.4 Reflections on CPD opportunities

Krishan reflected on his CPD experiences since the beginning of his career journey and expressed his views on how he developed his skills as a teacher and what he missed.

> *In 2010, I began my career. Since then I've had some training, training in the sense of professional development programmes.* […] *I have done some courses and undergone some training and things like that up to now.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Recalling Krishan's 12-year career journey, he mentioned that higher educational courses, short-term and long-term training programmes, and his self-learning with collegial support brought him to the stage where he was as an experienced teacher. He could remember two CPD opportunities that helped enhance his skills. The first memorable experience was the 10-day 'English as a life skill' programme Krishan attended 10 years earlier when he was a complete novice to the teaching profession. The other was a three-day programme he experienced seven years after that.

As Nirmal joined the system after completing his bachelor's degree, he had different CPD experiences at the beginning of his career, based on the recruitment procedure. However, the three-day iTESL programme was a major CPD opportunity that Nirmal received after joining the system. The next section focuses on Nirmal's and Krishan's reflections on the CPD programmes they found most influential.

5.4.1 Most influential CPD experiences

Krishan attended two long-term CPD programmes during his career journey up to the time of the study, and he assessed the effectiveness of both programmes in terms of delivery and content. He attended the 'English as a life skill' programme in 2012, just after joining the system as a teacher and while working in a rural school in a different province. This island-wide programme mainly focused on improving the speaking skills of ESL teachers and then using those acquired skills to enhance the speaking skills of students. Seven years later, Krishan joined the 18-hour iTESL programme conducted over three consecutive days while working in his new school in the Balangoda education zone, in Sabaragamuva province. Krishan considered these two as the most memorable programmes that helped develop his professional skills.

> *When I go back in my memory, I can remember the main two training programmes. So, the latest, I think, was iTESL in 2019, October, and before that I had another 10-day programme for improving the spoken side, mainly. It was 'life weapon' or 'sword' something like that, spoken*

improvement, life skills. (…) Yeah, that programme and it was very important, and we improved our spoken side, especially, and later than 2019, after that, I did not have any programmes. (Krishan, interview 1)

Apart from the two major CPD programmes, 'English as a life skill' and the iTESL conducted island-wide, Krishan also participated in some other training which he could not remember. He attended the 10-day 'English as a life skill' programme in 2012, and he was pleased to recall the enjoyable activities and learning experiences he shared with other teachers during that time.

> *I think about eight or nine years back I had that 'English as a life skill' 10-day programme. In that programme we had, our colleagues, uh, and I especially focused on that programme to develop our speaking skills. So, we had different activities. We all participated, actively participated, and we had to talk a lot. We had to argue a lot in that programme, through these activities, we could develop our speaking skills.* (Krishan, interview 1)

When recalling this past experience, Krishan's enthusiasm was clearly visible on his face and in the words, he uttered. Reflecting on the next memorable CPD programme, Krishan shared his thoughts on the iTESL programme and expressed his views regarding the course content, which was new to him. He specifically highlighted the reading component in the programme.

> *There we learnt how to teach reading, and grammar and communicative English also. So, we learnt a lot of things we didn't (…) I mean, I didn't know how to do reading lessons properly (…) reading activities with children including three stages, pre-reading, post-reading and while reading. Like, that, we learnt in detail and also lesson planning.* (Krishan, interview 1)

The course content of iTESL is divided into three major areas: teaching reading, teaching grammar, and using activities effectively. Krishan specified what he learnt in the reading component, and I was inquisitive to learn the reason for only highlighting the reading component in the programme. I assumed that he might have forgotten the other components as it was his first interview with me, or perhaps he might have not found anything new in other two. Thus, for further clarification, I questioned about teaching grammar and incorporating other iTESL techniques in interview 3 and in the member-checking stage. Krishan explained that owing to the limited time, he prioritised improving students' language skills as required for the O/L exam. Apart from this, with the purpose of understanding how Krishan applies new knowledge in his classroom practice, I observed two of Krishan's lessons on grammar and listening skills. However, I did not particularly notice any specific iTESL techniques in either of the lessons. As I consider this as an important fact, I asked Krishan about this in order to understand whether there were any particular reasons for not using

what he learned at iTESL. These matters will be discussed in detail in section 5.4.2.2.

As a novice teacher, Nirmal received diverse CPD experiences, commencing his teaching at international schools before moving to the state school system.

> *And... Yeah, as I was working in two international schools, I had the privilege of participating in several professional development courses. Uh, one programme was conducted by Cambridge International Examinations, focusing on Advanced-Level English language, and later on I attended a course on 'Teaching grammar with research evidence' offered by the University of York, and next I attended a teaching skill development course organised by the British Council, sponsored by the NDB bank. These opportunities were provided by the international schools.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

Thus, he expressed his gratitude to international schools for offering these valuable opportunities. The next noteworthy CPD experiences included the 21-day initial training course and the iTESL programme that he underwent upon joining the state school system. As discussed in section 5.2.2, Nirmal stated that he gained new knowledge and skills through the iTESL programme, such as the scaffolding technique and the use of ICQs, which helped to provide more support to students.

> *I understood that we should be concerned with students' understanding in a sympathetic way. They should be given enough time and opportunities, and once they don't understand something, we can explain again and use ICQs like 'What should we do first and what is next?'* (Nirmal, interview 1)

Nirmal further highlighted that he developed his understanding of the challenges students face in the classroom through the practice activities that teachers engaged in during the iTESL programme.

Reflecting on Krishan's hands-on experiences, he explained why he preferred long-term programmes of at least three days in length over one- or two-day courses, finding that there was more time to practice the learnt skills in long-term programmes with peers.

> *When we have a longer duration, it is much more intense than when we have short-term ones. I think iTESL covered 18 hours in three days.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan considered himself privileged to have participated in both the 'English as a life skill' and iTESL programmes, admiring the content and delivery of both. While the ultimate aim of CPD is to enhance teachers' classroom practices to gain better outcomes from students, I believe CPD is a cyclical process. Teachers regain CPD from what they gain through students' performance and development. Therefore, it is

worth examining how Krishan and Nirmal implemented their CPD knowledge and skills in the classroom.

5.4.2 Implementation of learnt knowledge

The interviews and the classroom observations with Krishan revealed that his classroom teaching was a compromise between prior knowledge and methodologies and the newly gained knowledge and techniques of CPD. Conversely, I observed that Nirmal incorporated his own conventional methodologies to teach grammar in both lessons, although he admired the new skills he acquired through iTESL. As discussed in section 5.3.1, Nirmal explicitly emphasised the importance of using CCQs and ICQs in his reflections, providing examples. However, during both of his lessons with grades 7 and 10 students, I observed him using the first language to give instructions and explain grammar rules. Nirmal explained another personalised strategy that he used to check students' understanding.

> *Once I finish a lesson, or after finishing one week, I talk to some students individually. I ask some random questions related to the particular lesson I have taught.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

His intentions were to use this strategy, on the one hand, to make students attentive and check their understanding, and on the other hand, to take some future steps to develop his methodologies. Similarly, Krishan believed in his own way of teaching in the classroom rather than depending totally on outside expertise, considering the contextual needs and practicality.

> *We have our own way of teaching. So, we have to mix what we learn, what we gain from the trainers or somewhere outside that. We have to have a mixture, and we have to make our own way to implement it in the classroom.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan further explained why he believed in his own way of teaching, emphasising the practical application of new knowledge in real classrooms, which were different from one another.

> *As teachers, we are dealing with students. We need to find our own way of teaching. It differs from teacher to teacher. When we teach different students, in different classrooms, we need to use different methods. Sometimes, the classroom environment is different. My way of teaching, and other teachers have their own ways of teaching, depending on the students, schools, and the school culture.* (Krishan, member-checking interview)

Nirmal expressed a similar view regarding the application of new knowledge in the classroom by making amendments to the learnt knowledge and skills.

> *I'm not going to apply the same thing that the instructor has given us and not my way. I like a mixture of it, because when I apply half of my way, the*

> *lesson becomes very natural, right? But, if I take all the things from the instructors, it becomes very mechanical. So, I don't like to be a mechanical teacher in the classroom. I always follow a mixture of what we were taught and what I have within me.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

Responding to my question, both Krishan and Nirmal admired the freedom that teachers have in implementing CPD knowledge and skills by incorporating necessary amendments in the classroom to suit the level of the students. Krishan explained his views as,

> *We have freedom to adjust. In our training, we practice with our peer groups and our trainers. When we are implementing (…) that situation is different according to the group of students, we have to be flexible. We have to change our methods. For that, we have freedom.* (Krishan, interview 1)

In fact, as Krishan and Nirmal stated, after attending CPD programmes, they applied the new knowledge they had gained in the classroom by making amendments to suit the level of the students and considering the contextual differences and lack of facilities in the classroom environment. Krishan revealed his thoughts regarding being flexible in the application of learnt knowledge and skills, as follows.

> *In school, we find a big gap, I mean, a wide range of students, the weaker ones and the talented ones. With them, in this implementation time management, outside disturbances and managing different individual students, some of them complete activities very soon and some take time. Some can understand, some cannot, things like that. Uh, so, we have to manage them. We have to come to a mediator position to work with them. We cannot give up on any one of them. We have to carry all of them. So, that's a problem. Therefore, we have to attend to everyone's needs. Ah, that's our duty, I think, as a teacher.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan elucidated why he needs his 'own way of teaching' in particular, and he was confident in justifying his practice of incorporating amendments. He was well aware of his role as a teacher who needs to be flexible to meet the needs of students.

> *We have to adjust ours according to the situation. We meet different groups of students in different schools and different classes. Yeah, so we have to adjust ourselves.* (Krishan, interview 1)

He justified his way of teaching by giving an example on the use of first language in giving instructions and explanations in secondary classes, depending on students' abilities to grasp the target language, English.

> *From grade 3 onwards, all the teachers should be ready for that, to use a lot of English in the classroom. Different teachers use mixtures of both in different classes. If we use English more from grade 3, we can continue that.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan's explanation indicates that the decision of teachers to use first language or English for instructions in the ESL classroom, specifically from primary grades, depends on the teachers' preferences. Accordingly, when teachers move on to secondary grades, they might find it difficult to change the situation to use more English for instruction if ESL teachers in primary classes had not exposed those students to an English-speaking environment.

> *We meet different students in different stages. For some students it would be ok, but with majority, we need to use first language. If not, they can't follow. We have to make this the practice from the beginning. (Krishan, member-checking interview)*

Krishan suggested that students should be familiarised with English instructions from the primary grades, as they might struggle to understand what the teacher explains in English without early exposure. Despite this suggestion, I observed both Krishan and Nirmal using translation into L1 in their lessons instead of using ICQs and CCQs. I will return to this point in Chapter 8. In the next section, I will delve deeper into how Krishan and Nirmal incorporated iTESL techniques.

5.4.2.1 Implementation of iTESL techniques and practices

I inquired specifically about the iTESL programme that Krishan and Nirmal attended two years ago in order to understand the next level – the application of iTESL techniques in their classroom practice – as it was their most recent CPD experience. Krishan and Nirmal admired the course content and the practice activities during the three days, as described below. After attending iTESL, Nirmal gained some insights through the practice activities on how to develop reading skills in students with a better understanding about the challenges that students encounter. Nirmal reflected on what they jointly experienced with other colleagues and learnt during the ITELS programme.

> *Teachers were grouped and assigned a reading task in Spanish. No one knew Spanish. Teachers struggled to complete the activity within the allocated time. It was really a challenge for us to complete the tasks within the given time frame, as it was a new language. So, there we learnt how challenging these reading tasks are for students to complete within a limited time without teacher's support because a student's knowledge is not equal. We gained this realisation.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

As Nirmal explained how he gained insights on handing reading lessons, Krishan commented, similarly, on the application of new knowledge.

> *According to my memory, I applied most of* [the training ideas] *after completing this. After gaining this practice, this training, we thought about the implementation. The course is good. It is excellent. We learnt a lot of things. We practiced.* (Krishan, interview 1)

His explanations unveiled the fact that just after attending iTESL, he incorporated new knowledge and skills in the classroom and tried to put his learnt knowledge into practice. It was a mixture of what he learnt at iTESL and the postgraduate diploma that he completed after iTESL.

> *I tried, as I mentioned, immediately after that, with the maiden knowledge, having just finished that course, I implemented some of them and the course of time, with time, uh, I think the things changed.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan followed his postgraduate diploma one year later he attended the iTESL programme. He assumed that the new knowledge acquired during the postgraduate diploma might have influenced the fading away of his iTESL knowledge. However, the word 'sometimes' in the following quote indicates that he was not completely certain about the reasons for disregarding other components.

> *I went for my PGD at University of Colombo, and there again I refreshed my knowledge about teaching methodology and the teaching learning process in detail. So, with that, sometimes what we learnt in that course may have gone and also they supported us, continuing from the point we had reached.* (Krishan, interview 1)

There is supporting evidence for what he said above regarding the implementation of new knowledge, in both of the observed lessons. In Krishan's first lesson, he taught grammar and, as he elaborated, some elements of iTESL were evident in that lesson. However, the main stages of a grammar lesson, beginning with contextualisation as introduced in iTESL, were not clearly apparent. Similarly, in both of Nirmal's lessons, he employed a deductive approach to teach grammar, introducing grammar rules first and utilising the first language for explanations, without incorporating ICQs or CCQs to facilitate the students. When inquired about the non-application in the observed lessons of the grammar teaching methodologies introduced at iTESL, he responded as follows.

> *I follow both the inductive as well as the deductive method in grammar teaching. Without introducing the grammar lesson, I ask them to write, and I give them some certain examples, sample sentences, and I ask them what the idea is and the, what the tense is, likewise, and what is the function of these words. It depends on the awareness of the students.* (Nirmal, interview 3)

This indicates that Nirmal applied iTESL techniques by making amendments considering the proficiency level of his students. However, for some reason, he integrated conventional methodologies in the observed grammar lessons. I further questioned Krishan, regarding incorporating CPD knowledge in teaching grammar, as it is one of the main components of the iTESL programme, and he explained his personal experience.

> *iTESL, actually, it was very supportive at that time. As the time passed, I can't remember exactly what we learnt there. I am applying different things. It was a great support. But now I use a mixture of my own, with my own experience and the learnt new methodologies.* (Krishan, post-observation interview 1)

Krishan's further explanation revealed that he paid a great deal of attention to the reading component but not to grammar teaching methodologies.

> *Not in today's lesson. But I can remember what we learnt for teaching reading at iTESL. I didn't use anything directly in today's lesson.* (Krishan, post-observation interview 1)

From Krishan's point of view, there were certain barriers hindering the application of new knowledge in his classroom practice. The next section focuses on how Nirmal and Krishan perceive the obstacles associated with implementing CPD knowledge in the classroom.

5.4.2.2 What impeded implementing iTESL techniques?

I sought clarification to gain a more in-depth understanding of Krishan and Nirmal's perceptions of the obstacles hindering the implementation of new knowledge, specifically inquiring about their grammar teaching approaches to identify any specific reasons for not utilizing iTESL grammar-teaching methodologies. Krishan, in response, explained the practical issues that teachers encounter within the system.

> *We have become exam-oriented. Finally, when results come, the higher level expects the figures, the percentages from us. So, we are limited to that system, as we have to think of the results.* (Krishan, member-checking interview)

The students in Krishan's grade 10 class were preparing to face the Ordinary-Level (O/L) examination, similar to the GCSE in the UK, in another year's time in grade 11. Consequently, Krishan prioritised grammar points and specific teaching areas with a focus on the O/L examination to ensure that students were well-prepared for the upcoming examination. The exam-oriented system posed a significant obstacle to Krishan's efforts to implement new knowledge gained through iTESL, and he emphasised the necessity of prioritising essential skills such as demonstrating knowledge of grammar rules, which are tested in the exam, and improving writing skills for various writing tasks to obtain good grades.

Apart from that, Krishan considered some activities, forming groups and group work as time-consuming and, thus, a waste of time, specifically in over-crowded exam preparation classes. Given the challenge of completing lessons within a 40-minute period, teachers often hesitate to incorporate time-consuming activities that promote autonomous learning. Moreover, Krishan pointed out that students' passive

behaviour, stemming from their lack of motivation to learn, serves as another demotivational factor hindering the implementation of new knowledge.

> *Students' attitudes and the time limitations are an influence. Normally, in classes we have 40–45 students. So, it takes time to have group activities. So, we hesitate to do them.* (Krishan, member-checking interview)

Eventually, teachers tend to be more teacher-centred than student-centred, thinking that it would help to maximise the use of time by having students listen to the teacher. The absence of group work and pair work and the increase in teacher talk was evident in Krishan's lesson 1. Krishan attempted to initiate discussions and involve students in whole class activities to increase child-centredness in the class. He admired child-centredness and was eager to undergo CPD to transform his teacher-centred type of teaching into a child-centred approach. Teacher-centredness had been identified as an issue in the prevailing teaching-learning process in the Sri Lankan context, so as a response, iTESL introduced various techniques to bring about a change in the system.

Teachers were trained to use grouping techniques and to assign distinct roles for the group members, aiming to give each group member a responsibility. These strategies aimed to maximise student participation and minimise teacher talk by encouraging students to engage in conversation. However, Krishan faced challenges in incorporating group activities that allowed students to talk. When students talk simultaneously, teachers from neighbouring classes complained about the loud noise during English lessons because classrooms were interconnected. Consequently, Krishan identified the lack of facilities in the school as a barrier to the proper implementation of new techniques, a situation prevalent in most schools in urban settings, due to congested classrooms.

> *We don't have any good facilities to work in at the school. I suggested some ideas (…) like activity rooms or a special place where we asked to do some activities with the students.* (Krishan, interview 3)

Similarly, Nirmal expressed dissatisfaction with the inadequate facilities provided to teachers for implementing CPD knowledge, emphasising his belief that technology is essential for effective teaching.

> *We don't have enough facilities, such as smart boards, audio equipment or internet access, which demotivates teachers. Though we are trained to teach the language in effective ways, we are still affected by the absence of facilities in the classroom context.* (Nirmal, interview 3)

Nirmal expressed this view with a sarcastic smile. Nevertheless, he attempted to compensate for this shortage with his personal devices to control such situations and minimise the impact.

> *I take my mobile phone and laptop to the classroom, but the screen is not large enough to manage all 40 students. Even the sound from the mobile phone is insufficient. I bought a speaker subwoofer. I connect the subwoofers to the mobile phone, doubling the sound, and that's how I manage in the classroom. However, not every teacher can afford technology.* (Nirmal, interview 2)

In fact, time constraints, overcrowded classrooms, an exam-oriented education system, and student behaviour stemming from a lack of motivation to learn English hindered the implementation of the knowledge learnt from CPD.

Furthermore, both Nirmal and Krishan expressed discontent about not having follow-up trainer visits after attending CPD programmes to support the classroom implementation of what they had learnt. Nirmal reiterated this fact in general as follows:

> *There should always be a follow up. Without a follow up, not everyone is capable of developing himself or herself.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

He also shared his own experience regarding trainer visits after completing the iTESL programme.

> *I don't know the other schools personally. I was not observed or visited.* (Nirmal, interview 2)

Moreover, during interview 3, he expressed a somewhat distressed tone when discussing expert support, emphasising his reluctance to contact trainers and invite them to support him in his school.

> *We do not regularly get expert support. We cannot run after them.* (Nirmal, interview 3)

Nirmal's words "we cannot run after them" indicates his negative attitudes towards trainers. Similar to Nirmal's comment, Krishan claimed that the absence of follow-up visits demotivated him, and, ultimately, he forgot the learnt techniques, as he did not implement immediately. For example, forming ICQs and CCQs were introduced at iTESL. However, I did not notice any ICQs or CCQs in Krishan's lessons that I observed. Instead, Krishan translated each utterance to the first language right after giving the instruction in English to check students' understanding. I was inquisitive to know the reason for not using ICQs and CCQs in both the lessons, to clarify whether Krishan had grasped the concept during the three-day programme. He explained the reason for not using the newly learnt techniques.

> *Actually, I don't have an exact idea about that. I think I could grasp it at the training programme and immediately after following the programme, I might have implemented those techniques, I think. Now I can't remember, as it was long time ago. I can't remember about that.* (Krishan, member-checking interview)

Krishan believed that the reason for forgetting learnt knowledge was the lack of immediate follow-up support from the trainers. He explained how trainer visits and the support of senior teachers and colleagues influenced the implementation of CPD knowledge. Furthermore, Nirmal and Krishan considered constant support an essential stage in the CPD process. Their experiences and perceptions regarding support will be discussed in detail in the following section.

5.5 Collegial reciprocity vis-a-vis outside expertise in support of classroom practice

Both collegial and expert support are essential because of a lack of human resources in the context, but trainers face difficulties in covering all the schools in the zone due to several reasons, such as the availability of enough trainers, remoteness of the locations, and the busy schedules of the trainers with other responsibilities. Consequently, ESL teachers require support and guidance from senior teachers or more capable colleagues in carrying out their career responsibilities. Krishan enthusiastically expressed his views on the importance of collegial support in professional development, considering this process reciprocal, as different individuals have different capabilities, skills and knowledge to share with others.

> *Actually, when I talk about colleagues in different schools, as we worked in different schools, we had different friends and they had sometimes followed different courses and, yes, through self-study, they had knowledge. I mean, knowledge-wise we are different.* (Krishan, interview 2)

The ESL teacher community comprises teachers who are capable of guiding less capable teachers. Some teachers are more knowledgeable than others are, either because they were brought up in English-speaking backgrounds, studied in popular schools or obtained higher educational qualifications; therefore, less qualified and less capable teachers, or even capable teachers, tend to contact such colleagues in the same school or different schools to clarify their doubts regarding the implementation of new knowledge with their support. Krishan specified the areas where he received support in the application of new knowledge in the classroom.

> *Especially lesson planning, implementing them and managing classes. We could share our knowledge. So, almost every aspect, we could cover. I mean, from different teachers we learnt different things.* (Krishan, interview 2)

On the other hand, Nirmal received support from senior teachers he met while working in different schools.

> *I always consult my senior teachers. As a habit, I go to them personally and talk to them, asking about the way they continue their lessons. And*

> *then once I talk to different teachers, I find different mechanisms that they apply, then I think of the best way.* (Nirmal, interview 1)

Nirmal also stressed that teachers need to be flexible in receiving support from others to develop themselves. In addition, Krishan explained his own experiences in providing support to other colleagues, irrespective of their seniority.

> *Yes, most probably it is reciprocal. I'm also supporting them, and I get support from my senior teachers. For example, recently a teacher came* [to the school]. *He is a senior teacher. But the problem is he has been working in a remote school. And in that school, he has not gained much time to teach English. Therefore, now he says he is out of touch in teaching English and he can't remember the methods and he is undergoing a number of problems, so he demands help from me. So, I supported him on how to plan a lesson, write lesson objectives and goals, everything. What I know already, I shared with him, and sometimes I gain support from my senior teachers.* (Krishan, interview 2)

However, Krishan raised concerns regarding the distribution of experts' support for the implementation of new knowledge in the classroom, as he believed that the support was not equally distributed. Accordingly, teachers working in remote areas were underprivileged. In remote areas, some schools are run with a single ESL teacher, and they need the support of experts, as they have no other option for receiving assistance with their classroom teaching. Trainer visits are rare due to the remoteness of the schools.

> *I think that in some schools, they do not visit frequently. Therefore, I think it is better if they have frequent visits, follow-up programmes, otherwise* [it is] *useless.* (Krishan, interview 2)

Krishan reflected on his previous experience of teaching in a remote school as a beginner teacher and expressed his disappointment at not receiving support from the trainers to stay updated.

> *The trainers must come and see us. We should have some ongoing conversations. I know that as I was in some remote areas in Sri Lanka in small schools for months, sometimes for years, no one (…) visited us. So, that's a big problem. So, the teachers teach in their own methods, but they haven't refreshed their knowledge, they don't have new knowledge, new methodologies. So, that's a problem.* (Krishan, interview 1)

This suggests that Krishan valued onsite support to address the challenges he face in the school context, rather than relying solely on periodic training programmes. He emphasised the impact of the lack of expert support, noting that teachers often become accustomed to continuing their routine practises even if their methodologies do not fully meet the needs of students. He further stated the importance of constant support through follow up sessions, along with emotional accompaniment.

> *Actually, we need continuous observations and follow-up programmes, and they need to* ***stand always behind us,*** *and they should introduce new things or knowledge or new methodologies to the teachers. Our knowledge should be updated, most probably.* (Krishan, interview 2)

Krishan emphatically stated **"stand behind us"** reminding me of the cultural norm, the nature of depending on others. In Sri Lanka, children tend to depend on their parents during childhood and even as adults. In the school system, in particular, students depend on teachers and accept everything teachers teach without any critical inquiry. Similarly, some teachers tend to depend on trainers and believe what the trainers say as gospel truth.

Apart from the support Krishan and Nirmal expected from the trainers and the authorities to strengthen teachers' practices, they sounded critical of the authorities for not taking necessary actions to develop the CPD process for the betterment of ESL education. The following section explores their perceptions on the inconsistencies in teacher development, which needs attention.

5.6 Identified inconsistencies in the CPD process

Krishan and Nirmal expressed a mixture of feelings regarding the previous CPD opportunities they received. On the one hand, they were worried about the unavailability of supportive, long-term CPD opportunities for an extended period. On the other, Krishan expressed discontent about teachers not receiving CPD opportunities frequently enough to develop their professional skills.

> *First of all, I mean, uh, I'm quite happy about, I mean, I was able to join both of these programmes. And we get fewer chances.* ***I mean we don't have*** *[any chances]. After a long time, normally, we have this sort of programme (…)* (Krishan, interview 1)

He expressed his dissatisfaction by uttering the phrase **'I mean we don't have'** with a heavy tone that indicated his heavyhearted feelings towards the lack of concern from the authorities about providing such island-wide opportunities regularly for teachers to improve their professional skills. He was able to recall what he gained through that programme after eight or nine years more vividly than the recent opportunities and was critical of not introducing such programmes, which he considered beneficial.

> *The programmes like the 10-day 'English as a life skill', I think it's a great opportunity if the government can, the authorities can organise such programmes without taking such a long time. Then, after that programme, I actually didn't attend that sort of programme again until now. Therefore,* ***I think it should not be like this****. [laugh]* (Krishan, interview 3)

The phrase he uttered with emphasis "**I think it should not be like this"** was forceful, indicating a transformation in the system, and many thoughts were hidden behind his despairing laugh at the end of the quote. The helplessness of teachers who cannot afford to receive CPD might have been concealed, as he was reluctant to be critical of the authorities. In my interpretation, he might be making an ironic statement about the governments that have ruled the country over the years not taking the necessary steps for the betterment of teacher development. Additionally, this might indicate Krishan's desire for change and an improvement in the current state of CPD accessibility as well as his longing for a more proactive approach from authorities to address the challenges faced by teachers in accessing professional development.

Nirmal pinpointed another inconsistency regarding the provision of CPD and commented on the unequal access to CPD opportunities.

> *All the newly recruited teachers are called for the programmes. Once a teacher is newly recruited to the field, they continuously receive programmes for about three years. All the programmes are organised for the newly recruited teachers up to two, three years* […] *during their probation period. Other teachers do not get opportunities, I mean those who work in rural schools.* (Nirmal, interview 3)

Thus, as Nirmal highlighted, most teachers working in rural settings become underprivileged in terms of receiving CPD opportunities. Krishan further commented on the sudden disappearance of the programmes due to the change in the political regime in the country after spending a lot of money and effort on the programme. Almost all ESL teachers received the training that prioritises improving speaking and listening skills initially, which was then transmitted to students. Krishan appreciated that effort as he received the training as a beginner teacher. Conversely, he was aware of the prevailing political and the education system in the country, which he considered a 'crisis.'

> *I think, uh, there's a big issue or a crisis in Sri Lanka, with the changes in the political parties or the governments. The educational policy should not be changed. It should be fixed as a country. So, I think we can only have any development if we have one policy in the educational system. Whatever the political party, whatever the government, it doesn't matter; we need to have one educational policy.* (Krishan, interview 3)

In response to my inquiry about Krishan's perceptions of the CPD process in context, Krishan conveyed dissatisfaction towards the absence of intervention by authorities regarding teachers' classroom practices and the lack of follow-up support for implementing new practices after attending CPD programmes. He emphasised the

necessity for frequent follow-up visits and classroom observations to achieve the expected outcomes.

> *Yeah, ah, and also afterwards there should be some references. Ur… in the sense of after completing, I mean, to examine how we are implementing new techniques in the field. There should be some post-course references or follow up programmes (…) We also don't have many [trainer visits]. Sometimes, for months, nobody comes to observe lessons, so that should be the next step. Yeah, absolutely. (Krishan, interview 1)*

Krishan acknowledged the ignorance of authorities in arranging follow-up visits as a major issue, a situation that left teachers uninformed. This implies that teachers, including Krishan, anticipate some form of stimulus or support for implementing new knowledge after participating in a programme.

> *We are having new programmes, maybe, once a month or twice a month, and after that no follow-up programmes. They don't know whether we are implementing them in school. So, we have that sort of problem here.* (Krishan, interview 2)

Krishan further elucidated the details of how, when and where the authorities could intervene, believing it was essential for all stakeholders – teachers, trainers, and the authorities – to collaborate and take the responsibility for the development of the professional skills of ESL teachers. His suggestion was for interventions to occur in the actual context, within the classroom, immediately after attending programmes to support implementation of new knowledge afresh. Additionally, he pinpointed the consequences of the absence of immediate intervention.

> *So, the problem is, as I mentioned, immediately after we had this training, we can implement them. With time, there should be some follow-up; the trainers should come here. As a collective effort, we should find a way to implement them in the real context with the students. Otherwise, the problem is, with time, they may fade away.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Eventually, this was what happened to Krishan after attending both of these CPD programmes. Nirmal shared a similar experience regarding lack of follow-up visits to his former school stressing the number of visits for three years.

> *Only two times, I was visited and had guidance when I was working at* [X] *from 2016 to 2019. Two times I was visited. I can't even remember what they said to me because it was more than three years ago.* (Nirmal, interview 2)

Apart from the absence of the aforementioned well-organised programmes that imparted new knowledge and the lack of follow-up visits, Krishan highlighted the absence of sustainability in programmes within the Sri Lankan context. When there is a lack of attention to continuity, teachers tend to give up and revert to their usual, comfortable practices instead. Having experienced this phenomenon twice in his

career journey, he claimed that it would ultimately lead to the gradual disappearance of all efforts made to bring about a transformation in the system. Reflecting on these inconsistencies, Krishan and Nirmal suggested the changes required for the development of the CPD scenario in the context.

5.7 Views on future directions for CPD

Krishan had doubts about the sustainability of CPD in this context. On one hand, there was a lack of better opportunities in the country, and on the other hand, teachers exhibited ignorance over professional development. He voiced concerns regarding the government's responsibilities to take necessary steps in creating better opportunities and stimulating teachers to develop professional skills. Krishan further highlighted the trainers' accountability in meeting the needs of the teachers and ascertained the importance of teachers being flexible in transforming themselves to fulfil societal needs.

Krishan believed that there should be strategies in place to inspire teachers who are not self-motivated to improve their professional skills. Consequently, the absence of motivational approaches in the system and the possibility of sustaining themselves with beginner knowledge led teachers to stagnate in the system.

> *There should be some sort of procedure to give increments for teachers if they gain professional development.* (…). *But there should be some sort of force and especially, uh, every individual should have some idea for his or her professional development. Otherwise, most of them will give up and remain the same as when they were appointed. I have seen some teachers that don't have even an idea about developing.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan's words highlight the necessity for a proper procedure to obligate teachers to develop their knowledge and professional skills, which could be achieved by offering benefits and increments exclusively to those who engage in quality teaching. Nirmal suggested offering foreign scholarships and study leave to motivate teachers to pursue professional development.

Krishan highlighted the importance of providing opportunities and trainer expertise in using technology to motivate teachers, rather than relying on outdated methodologies in training programmes. He asserted that enabling teachers to use technology in classroom teaching is an essential requirement in this modernised society.

> *I observe one thing sometimes. Yeah, they deal less with technology. So, I have felt sometimes, why they don't use technology for teaching and training purposes?* (…) *The world is globalised. We have to go with technology. We have to train our students how to use it, how to be*

> *equipped with technology. Therefore, outdated methodologies are not much value.* (Krishan, interview 1)

Krishan commented on the other available CPD programmes and expressed his feelings towards what was lacking in terms of both delivery and content. However, what I realised was that he repeatedly used the phrase **'I felt'** to minimise the gravity of his criticism, which also hinted at his reluctance to be overly critical.

> *But in some courses **I felt** that they could have used more technology or sometimes better methods they could have used, **I felt,** but as a whole, they were OK. Yes. Sometimes **I felt** that they were more conventional, like, so **I felt** at that time it is better if they could have used more technology in their programmes. They could have increased their efficiency, and as I mentioned earlier, we had limited time. So, if they could have done that, we think, in that limited time we could have gained more benefits. That's what I mean.* (Krishan, interview 2)

Here, Krishan indicated the transformation that the CPD process in the system requires to meet the needs of the future CPD scenario. Krishan acknowledged the potential of technology in the development of the CPD process, and instead of employing traditional methodologies that merely require teachers to listen to what they already know, he anticipated a change in the way of delivery.

Thus, Krishan suggested what the government should do to alter this situation and meet the societal needs, insisting that facilities should be provided to each school, enabling teachers to implement new methods in their classroom teaching.

> *I think the government intervention should be there as a collective effort. The development of every single teacher should be, and for that, I think, the helping hand should be there from the government side. I think there should be common ways, a common method as a country, common technology. Equally, we, if we can get in every school, I think, it would be an improvement as a country for* [teaching] *this language, and I am especially concerned about government support and the government should be concerned with this task.* (Krishan, interview 3)

Krishan might have perceived a lack of equality in facilitating schools for language education. Given his previous experience working in a remote area, he likely knew about underprivileged schools in the country. This could be the reason for his suggestion that authorities should ensure provision of facilities equally for every ESL teacher benefiting each student. While some ESL teachers receive smart white boards, computers and other digital devices to facilitate classroom teaching, teachers like Krishan end up spending their own money to purchase such equipment. However, as per Nirmal, most teachers in Sri Lanka cannot afford technological devices.

> *Teachers have their family issues, and they have to earn extra wages through private classes as the salary they receive is not quite enough to*

run the family with a couple of children and with these expenses. I mean, most of the teachers cannot afford technology. (Nirmal, interview 3)

He encapsulated the need for providing every teacher with equal access to resources and expertise in using modern technology. Additionally, Nirmal offered a critical comment on the trainer behaviour highlighting the lack of practical classroom teaching experience of some trainers.

> *Some trainers have no experiences in the classroom teaching. For example, I don't mention the name of the trainer,* [X] *visited my former school. And* [X] *started teaching in a particular class. After teaching,* [X] *came to me and said, "අනේ මල්ලි කොහොමද මුන්ට උගන්නන්නෙ ඔයා"* ['Brother, how do you teach these students?'] *Yeah,* [X] *asked that way. So, still we find trainers who lack experience in the practical classroom.* (Nirmal, interview 3)

To my understanding, this comment about trainers not only highlights their lack of classroom teaching experience but also underscores their negative attitudes towards students' capacities. Nirmal, however, expected trainers to be more aware of classroom teaching methods that suit the proficiency level of students in rural contexts. Nirmal's comment further suggests the need for a change in trainer attitudes towards difficulties that both teachers and students face in the language classroom. Accordingly, if this is treated as a collective endeavour, all stakeholders, authorities, teachers and trainers should align their perspectives. Besides updating trainer knowledge, Krishan identified negativities in the trainer's role regarding the relationship between teacher and trainer, which impeded teachers' professional development.

> *The relationship, I feel that it is the distance between the teachers and the trainers, and we should be reunited. It means sometimes we see them very rarely, and it should not happen like that, and whenever possible they should have come there to have face-to-face meetings and the training programmes. As I mentioned earlier, we both should be updated, and we have to go together with new knowledge and practices.* (Krishan, interview 2)

Thus, Krishan further expressed his willingness, if authorities take steps to strengthen the relationship between teachers and trainers, towards making both parties understand that teaching and training are a collective effort.

> *Most probably, it seems it more like they are doing some duties, but there should be some strong relationship between these instructors and the teachers. They should be there to observe, and especially after doing these programmes or seminars, follow-up observations should be there. But I think in some schools when we consider that observation, that intervention, it is very less [inadequate]. So, it can influence this teaching learning process.* (Krishan, interview 3)

Presumably, he was not expecting there only to be observations and the usual feedback but awaiting a more developed intervention or a difference in the way trainers currently engage in observations.

> *I think it should be further developed as a whole. I mean, personally, we can get support if we talk with them* (…) *but generally I think in the field their implementation, their intervention, in this regard, I think it should be further developed.* (Krishan, interview 3)

However, I assume that Krishan was flexible during the observations and ready to accept the available expertise, even with its imperfections. Krishan revealed his impression of how some other teachers accept observations and express their reluctance about trainer visits and being observed.

> *I'm concerned. I'm positive. I expect them to be with us. This is a collective effort, and we have to share our knowledge and they have to guide us. Oh, normally, some teachers, they don't like them to come, and they assume it is some sort of botheration, but personally I don't think so. I like them to come, and they have to share with us their knowledge, and we have to talk about our issues. So, that means real practical problems that we face in the classroom situation.* (Krishan, interview 2)

Both Nirmal and Krishan further explained their assumptions regarding teacher resistance to trainer visits with Krishan believing that some other teachers might have had painful experiences with trainer visits.

> *I think that the teachers, those who do not like to be observed, they have some inferiority complex, like, that they think that the ways that they use to teach that strategies, or there may be some mistakes or some problems with them. Sometimes they may think that they would be blamed, scolded in front of the students, so, due to those reasons, they don't like it, and the other thing they believe is that the observers coming to see them is like a botheration, and they come to find some shortcomings or mistakes of theirs.* (Krishan, interview 3)

Thus, the difference that teachers expect in the observation process is obvious. On the other hand, Nirmal identified teachers’ unpreparedness for lessons as a factor that might lead them to reject observations, and therefore, to make trainer visits fruitful, teachers should embrace positive thoughts regarding expert support. Overall, according to my understanding, Krishan had a broader perspective for a future transformation in the system.

> *I think we, uh, when we compare with the global trend, we are some decades back, I think, when we consider the level of, the international level, I mean. Therefore, we should be upgraded, all the… the whole system of education as a country.* (Krishan, interview 3)

Thus, Krishan expected a system change to move forward in this fast-evolving world as internationalised teachers, with the guidance and support of all stakeholders. In

addition, Nirmal expected more modernised trainer support, incorporating technology to equip teachers with skills for utilising technology and moving forward in this digitalised world.

5.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I examined the perceptions of two participants who worked in the urban setting across six main themes, along with sub-themes. Firstly, I focused on Krishan and Nirmal's paths to becoming teachers of English including their differing recruitment procedures, initial training and the impact of initial training on their professional expertise. I also explored their motivations for seeking CPD. Next, I delved into their perceptions of CPD experiences, uncovering issues related to its provision and delivery, trainer knowledge and behaviour, lack of expert support and facilities, and issues in the education system affecting the implementation of new practices. Additionally, I examined specific challenges they encountered in implementing CPD knowledge in the classroom as teachers in an urban setting. To further expand our understanding, I will next explore how Anjalee perceived her CPD experience and implementation of gained knowledge as a teacher in a semi-urban setting.

Chapter 6 – Findings – Case study 2 – Semi-Urban setting

6.1 Introduction

Semi-urban settings are located closer to major cities compared to rural areas and share many features with urban schools, including a higher number of students, better resources, and the availability of teachers for all subjects due to the large student population. Like in urban schools, teachers in semi-urban schools have access to technology, either by taking students to computer labs or using their personal devices, as most schools have internet access. Students can easily commute to nearby cities, where they often attend tuition classes to gain extra knowledge.

Teachers tend to stay in semi-urban schools as they are more convenient, allowing them to live in the nearest city while commuting. This also enables teachers to send their children to urban schools. However, since the students in semi-urban schools come from nearby areas and typically belong to poor or lower-middle-class families with little educational support at home, teachers often complain about low student proficiency levels, a lack of motivation, and the challenge of improving performance in high-stakes examinations.

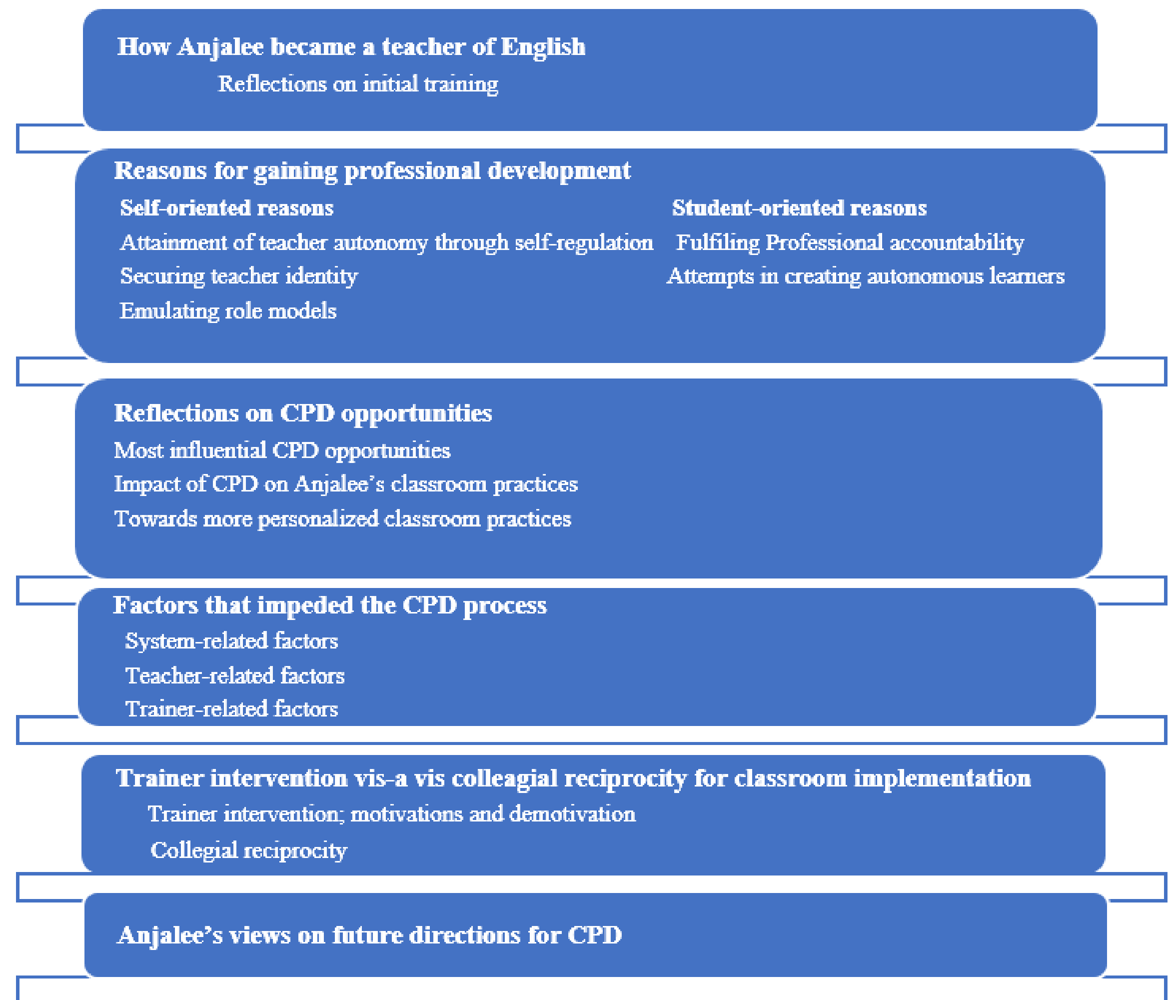
Additionally, these schools offer facilities such as spacious classrooms in large buildings, an adequate number of teachers, opportunities for teachers to attend CPD programs at nearby training centers, access to technology for both learning and teaching, and frequent collegial and expert support, as trainers find it convenient to commute. Students in semi-urban schools also have the opportunity to receive bilingual education, studying English and Sinhala in Sinhala medium schools or English and Tamil in Tamil medium schools, allowing them to take six subjects in English medium from grade 6 onwards. Although the rural, semi-urban, and urban classification is based on geographical location, there are significant differences among the three categories in terms of student-teacher ratio, proficiency levels, facilities, and the provision of CPD for teachers.

In this chapter, I will explore the perceptions of Anjalee (as Chathu dropped out) who was working at a school in a semi-urban setting. Anjalee was a female ESL teacher with eight years of teaching experience. In 2011, she was selected to pursue the three-year teaching diploma course at one of the NCOEs for ESL teacher training, based on her Advanced-Level (A/L) Z-score, her grade for English in her A/Ls, and the score she obtained in the English language proficiency test. After completing her internship period at a leading school in the capital city, Colombo, she was appointed to a school within the Balangoda education zone.

I first met Anjalee when she was teaching at her first school situated in a rural setting, commuting nearly 50 miles daily from her home to the school. During a zonal level inspection day, I visited her school as a trainer and observed her lessons. Given that the students at her school had limited exposure to English outside of their English periods, Anjalee managed to conduct her lessons entirely in English, even though it was uncommon for English to be the medium of instruction in rural settings. Over time, Anjalee gradually developed the students' English language skills, enabling them to comprehend her classroom language and instructions in English.

At the time of the study, she was working in her second school, situated in a semi-urban setting. Upon entering the teaching profession, Anjalee completed her Bachelor of Arts degree and continued her higher education studies to study for a Master's, obtaining her MA in Linguistics in 2022. Being single at the time of the study, Anjalee had no caring responsibilities, which allowed her to pursue higher education and CPD opportunities without any obstacles. She was an enthusiastic teacher who voluntarily joined a team of ESL teachers to conduct English camps in different schools, and she demonstrated this enthusiasm in participating in the research. She attended three online interviews, two classroom observations and post-observation interviews, enabling me to explore her perceptions regarding the CPD experiences and to analyse her data to identify key themes. I will examine the six main themes and the corresponding sub-themes, which I derived from the analysis of interview data by triangulating with classroom observations and post-observation interviews. These themes and sub-themes will unveil how Anjalee became a teacher of English, her initial training, her motivations for gaining CPD, and her reflections on CPD experiences. I will also explore how Anjalee perceived the factors that impede the CPD process, her perceptions of the support for CPD, and her views on the future direction for the development of the CPD process in the country, as illustrated in Figure 6.1.below

Figure 6-1. Case study 2 (Semi-Urban setting)



6.2 How Anjalee became a teacher of English

Anjalee applied for the National College of Education in 2011 after completing her Advanced Level (A/L) in the Bio Science stream, even though she had no desire whatsoever to become a teacher, a sentiment she consistently expressed.

> *I didn't have any firm ambition. I didn't have ambitions and I never wanted to be a teacher at all. Honestly, I didn't have any ambition. Teaching was my least favourite. I never wanted to be a teacher.* (Anjalee, member-checking interview)

However, she did not provide a specific reason for her lack of interest in teaching. In state sector schools in Sri Lanka, the most capable students who obtain better grades in science and maths in the Ordinary-Level examinations typically choose science or maths streams with the aim of becoming doctors or engineers. These

students usually excel in English as well due to their dedication to their studies. It is very rare to see students who are capable of following science or maths streams choose commerce or arts streams, as many parents and teachers insist they pursue bio science or maths for A/Ls in the hope of seeing them become prestigious professionals, like doctors or engineers.

However, many students fail to obtain the Z-score in the A/L examination required to enter university to take degrees in medicine, engineering or related fields. Recent statistics indicate that only 23 percent of candidates qualified for university entrance in 2020 (Wijesundara and Prabodanie, 2022), a figure that has remained relatively consistent over the past decade. As the next option, a large majority then apply to National Colleges of Education (NCOE) to become teachers, as the job is secure from entry level. Anjalee recounted her journey that led her to aspire to a career in teaching English.

> *First, I wanted to improve my English knowledge, that's why I applied for this. I knew that I had good knowledge of English. So, I was not that worried about my English knowledge when I became an English teacher.* (Anjalee, member-checking interview)

This indicates that Anjalee seized the next available opportunity to become a teacher of English, as she was confident in her language skills and saw this profession as a means to further enhance her competencies. This trend is common in Sri Lanka, where many individuals enter the teaching profession not out of a passion for teaching, but because they are destined to become teachers due to the socioeconomic situation in the country. Teaching is often viewed as a secure job with benefits such as a pension and ample time for family due to shorter working hours and extended vacations. Interestingly, Anjalee's love for teaching emerged during her initial training.

> *When I first met a group of students, as a trainee teacher, I began to get an interest in teaching English.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Accordingly, Anjalee‘s ideal teacher identity appeared during her initial training while working with students for the first time. I will elaborate on this point further in the next section, which focuses on Anjalee's reflections on her initial training.

6.2.1 Reflections on initial training

Anjalee expressed mixed feelings about the pre-service training at the NCOE.

> *I think it would be better if we were given a lot of academic training, like, if we were strengthened with the subject knowledge rather than the practice because I felt that many teacher trainees didn't get enough knowledge to teach English.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Anjalee's comment implies that the novice ESL teachers in the Sri Lanka context lack sufficient knowledge and skills in the English language upon entering the teaching profession. This deficiency might stem from their primary and secondary education being conducted in their first language, Sinhala or Tamil. While they might have met the required qualification in English to be selected for the NCOE, they might not reach the expected level of English language competence. Nonetheless, Anjalee appreciated the opportunity she received to work in a leading school during her internship year.

> *We had a two-year academic training course and then we went to an internship period (…) We had teaching practice sessions during the first two years, so we had enough exposure in the school system, when we were having our internship period. We got enough experience. I mean,* [we got] *a lot of experience from the internship school because it is a big school, a reputed one, a leading one.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

She believed that her internship school laid the foundation for her to gain confidence to work in any school in the country. Unlike schools located far from Colombo or other main cities, teachers in leading schools gained a lot of experience in organising extra-curricular activities such as English clubs, societies, literary associations and English camps. Anjalee shared her positive feelings towards the opportunities she gained by working in a leading school during her internship year.

> *So, apart from teaching in the classroom, the school had assigned us to do many other extra-curricular activities. We did projects like speaking clubs, and also we had many new experiences, and it is very useful for me to do activities nowadays too. So, that was a great experience.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Anjalee became a teacher of English in 2014 after completing the three-year NCOE teaching diploma including the internship year. Although becoming a teacher was not her initial career choice, she was intrigued by the opportunity to learn and develop her professional skills as an ESL teacher, explaining her reasons and motivations for seeking developmental opportunities.

6.3 Reasons for gaining professional development

Anjalee unveiled how her inner feelings influenced her pursuit of career development, and I will discuss in detail her inspirations and the forces driving her toward achieving her goals, which can be categorised into two aspects: self-oriented reasons and student-oriented reasons.

6.3.1 Self-oriented reasons

Self-regulating her own learning and development to achieve teacher autonomy, emulating the teacher personalities she considers as role models, and protecting her teacher identity are the key self-oriented reasons for Anjalee's career development. She believed in her capacity to take responsibility for her own development to achieve her expected teacher identity, aiming to regulate herself towards reaching an autonomous status that would enable her to make her own decisions.

6.3.1.1 Attainment of teacher autonomy through self-regulation

Anjalee's primary source of inspiration was attaining teacher autonomy, and her self-motivation influenced her towards achieving her professional goals throughout her career journey through developing her professional identity.

> *Normally, I have my own competition to go to my best self rather than today's one. (Anjalee, interview 1)*

This suggests that she was intrinsically motivated to fulfil her higher educational and professional goals by challenging her own capabilities as a teacher. She had an understanding of her capacities and her progression from being a beginner teacher to different stages of her career journey and further explained her contentment with being a teacher and having such motivation as key for attaining her expected level of autonomy.

> *Luckily, I got the feeling that 'Okay, now I'm in a rural school. If I am going to continue in this school and just become an English teacher, that would not suffice my requirements.' So, I thought about doing more for me. So, I started my higher education, and I'm proud of my positive attitudes and myself.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

She anticipated the consequences of working in a rural setting, which lacked the exposure and opportunities to use English, unlike her internship school. However, upon realising the challenge, she sought alternative ways to minimise the impact by involving herself in the development process through self-regulation, which involved identifying what was lacking and finding her own solutions. Anjalee further explained how she was involved in autonomous decision-making when applying the knowledge she received to suit her students' needs.

> *So, it's up to the teacher because she's the one who knows his or her students best. So, what I do is that I learn from the courses, I learn from the programmes and take my own decisions to adapt the knowledge that I got into my context and teach my students accordingly. (Anjalee, interview 3)*

Anjalee's explanation of autonomous decision-making was reflected in her classroom teaching, where she personalised the learned methodologies based on

her own choices, which will be further discussed in section 6.4.2.1. In addition to her inner motivations, to reach autonomy in teaching, she had other driving motivation for developing, transforming and securing her teacher identity through CPD.

6.3.1.2 Securing teacher identity

While Anjalee was teaching in her first school, she identified the repercussions of working in a rural setting where there were no opportunities to improve language skills. She was the only ESL teacher in the school and there was no one in the school community or outside the school for her to use English with for communication. As the proficiency level of students was very low compared to her internship school, she found her knowledge was sufficient to work with these students. However, after realising the difference between the two school cultures, she felt the danger of losing her English language competence and tried to increase her professional efficacy by engaging in higher education to prevent herself from stagnating.

> *I got my first appointment in a rural school. When I went to that school, I felt that I was losing my language ability drastically. So, I needed to keep up-to-date to survive in the system. So, I thought of doing higher education, plus I needed to improve my professional skills as well.*
> (Anjalee, interview 1)

As Anjalee explained, she had concerns about staying up-to-date to ensure her survival in the system. However, Sri Lankan teachers are able to survive and continue their jobs even without up-to-date knowledge, as they are not made redundant. In response to my further questioning, Anjalee explained that she was concerned about maintaining her reputation among the teacher community that she had earned during her internship year in a reputed school. Therefore, it is evident that Anjalee's concerns regarding recognition can be interpreted as her concerns about her identity as an ESL teacher. Anjalee appeared to view higher education and professional development as essential assets for teachers to protect their professional identity and safeguard themselves against being labelled as conventional or lethargic. Anjalee believed that her experiences in her internship school allowed her to develop a new identity as a novice teacher. Consequently, she was eager to uphold her teacher identity and maintain her enthusiasm by actively participating in continuing professional development activities through diverse ways.

However, when Anjalee was transferred to her second school, categorised as semi-urban, she joined a new ESL teacher community, which she did not find in her first school, where she was the only ESL teacher. Anjalee also found fulfilment in sharing her expertise with colleagues and receiving recognition for her professional support.

> *I always try to help my colleagues with the things that I have when they ask. I try to share my ideas. That gives me pleasure and a kind of encouragement for me. So, that recognition is also a great boon for me. I always join these conversations.* (Anjalee, interview 2)

Anjalee considered her higher education and engagement in professional development brought her recognition from colleagues as well as students and suggested that every teacher should hold a degree in order to excel in the profession. While she placed her own motivation to achieve recognition as a good teacher first, she also admired those who inspired her.

> *Basically, most of them are my own motivation and some others are also inspiring me.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Thus, another self-oriented factor for Anjalee's professional development was the other professionals, whom she identified as role models.

6.3.1.3 Emulating role models

Anjalee explained how she was inspired by other professionals in the field to continue her higher education. The enthusiasm of teachers and trainers she met while achieving their professional and higher educational goals persuaded her to follow in their footsteps. She described how she viewed these individuals as role models, guiding her to enhance her professionalism throughout her career journey.

> *I always follow the teachers and trainers who go to their higher education. (…) That really motivates me. And it is a kind of an inspiration for me to do higher education myself.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Once she had embarked on her higher education journey, she was committed to attending every lecture, driven by her fascination with the knowledge gained through the courses.

> *I really love going to my lectures and listening to the people who are well qualified because every word they utter is knowledge, so they really inspire me, and all the things they are saying go to my brain.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

In addition to pursuing higher education, Anjalee actively searched for professional development opportunities. Through her close contacts with trainers who conducted successful training programmes, she gained access to more opportunities for professional growth. Some of these trainers had won scholarships to do higher education courses in foreign countries, and Anjalee admired their success stories. She was fascinated by their expertise and sought to achieve professional competence by following their examples, aspiring to be like them one day.

> *(…) most of the experts that I met in my career were really actual experts in the field. They always encouraged us to find new knowledge, always*

shared the new knowledge they had received from their master trainers and everything. They were like role models for us, and we always got the impression that, OK, we also should be like this. We should learn like them and we should follow more programmes. We should improve our knowledge and polish our language, plus our professional skills, like those trainers who are role models. (Anjalee, interview 1)

Anjalee was impressed by their expertise and determined to enhance her knowledge of the subject, language skills, and professional skills. She came across similar stories on social media and followed them, aspiring to become a professional role model one day. Additionally, Anjalee's desire to provide the best for her students and her sense of accountability for their success or failure served as further inspiration for her to strive for professional competence. This factor will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.2 Student-oriented reasons

Fulfilling professional accountability and creating autonomous learners are Anjalee's two key student-oriented motivations. Anjalee recognised the lack of CPD opportunities as an issue in the system. However, rather than waiting for the authorities to provide CPD opportunities, she took proactive steps to find better opportunities to enhance her teaching skills for the benefit of her students. The subsequent sections will focus on the two student-oriented reasons that drove Anjalee to achieve CPD.

6.3.2.1 Fulfilling professional accountability

Anjalee acknowledged the direct impact of teachers' professional development on that of students, highlighting teachers' accountability for developing their professional skills by acquiring CPD in order to enhance students' knowledge and skills. Anjalee's motivation stems from her desire to provide the best possible outcomes for her students in the classroom.

I personally believe that if I learn something, that directly goes to my students. So, if the teacher is improving, her students will also be improving. So, that goes hand in hand, and it motivates me to become professionally qualified. (Anjalee, interview 1)

Furthermore, Anjalee believed that teachers must acknowledge their responsibility to prevent stagnation when meeting the needs of students. One of the factors that persuaded her to seek further professional development stemmed from her fear of losing her knowledge and skills due to the limited opportunities to update them, especially after her initial appointment to a rural school as a beginner teacher.

6.3.2.2 Attempts in creating autonomous learners

Anjalee explained her efforts to enable her students to use technology and engaging methodologies to promote learner autonomy, which began during the COVID-19 pandemic.

> *The best thing that we had during the Corona period was that we had to use new technology. So, I always searched for online courses, sometimes online activities. I shared online activities with my students.* (Anjalee, interview 2)

However, Anjalee utilised students' proficiency in technology during face-to-face lessons by encouraging them to participate in self-directed learning activities.

> *What I did was create a few Google forms for each grade and I shared the Google form. And I asked them to fill in the Google form. I made my own activity sheets, and I shared the activities with my students through a WhatsApp group. So, I asked them to read and do those activities that I had created. I discussed the activity with them in the class. Later, they self-corrected the activities.* (Anjalee, interview 2)

Anjalee faced challenges with technology adoption due to students' financial constraints. Nonetheless, she made concerted efforts to share her newfound knowledge to provide novel learning experiences for her students.

> *I did my postgraduate diploma programme after iTESL, and I learnt how to use technology in the classroom. I often used my Bluetooth speaker, laptop and especially the mobile phone to teach my students.* (Anjalee, interview 2)

Interestingly, I witnessed her novel methodologies in both the lessons I observed, which included the integration of technology and the facilitation of more student-centred and autonomous learning opportunities. As Anjalee was enthusiastic about seeking CPD opportunities and utilising her CPD knowledge in classroom practice, it was imperative to uncover her perceptions of the diverse CPD experiences she encountered in the next section.

6.4 Reflections on CPD experience

Anjalee recalled how she gained outside support to develop her professional skills as a teacher. In Sri Lanka, in-service ESL teachers receive professional development through various avenues such as the zonal and provincial education departments, the Ministry of Education, National Institute of Education, British Council and other private organisations. Some of the fee-paying higher educational and certificate courses are provided by the British Council, state and private universities. Anjalee obtained both free CPD opportunities and fee-paying courses.

Uh, several institutions and people helped me to improve my professionalism in my career, and I must say that the British Council, Ministry of Education, RESC, zonal education office plus the PGD programme (…) helped me a lot to improve my professionalism. (Anjalee, interview 2)

Anjalee was privileged to have access to various institutions offering professional qualifications shortly after beginning her teaching career. However, such widespread support was not commonplace for every ESL teacher in Sri Lanka, and she expressed her contentment with these opportunities in the following quote.

As I am the only language teacher in that school, I got a good chance to attend professional seminars (…) I got many professional qualifications (…) I did courses like 'teachers in action', 'English for teaching', TKT [Teaching Knowledge Test] *training and I got chances to participate in the SLELTA [Sri Lankan English Language Teachers' Association] conference as well.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Being the only ESL teacher, Anjalee had the opportunity to attend all the training programmes offered. However, based on my previous experience as a trainer dealing with school principals, trying to invite their ESL teachers to participate in training programmes, and considering Nadee's experiences working in a rural setting (see Chapter 7), it became evident that this 'only teacher' status posed disadvantages in most schools. Principals often resisted sending the only ESL teacher for long-term training programmes, except for obligatory ones, when there were no other teachers available to cover the ESL teacher's responsibilities at the school. Interestingly, Anjalee's experience was positive, and she was able to benefit from attending multiple CPD opportunities. Among all these CPD opportunities, Anjalee shared her thoughts on her most influential.

6.4.1 The most influential CPD opportunities

Anjalee became energised and inspired upon receiving a number of good CPD opportunities, but the iTESL programme was one of the programmes that attracted her greatly as it helped her gain new skills.

The most influential programme that I attended through the zonal education office is called 'Transform'. That is, the iTESL programme. It is one of the good professional development programmes I attended. (Anjalee, interview 1)

After completing the programme, she was offered another opportunity to participate in an extended activity, a lesson plan writing competition, and she expressed her feelings regarding her achievement in the competition.

Through iTESL, the British Council told me to enter a lesson plan competition, and I just sent a lesson plan that I had created and, uh... 48

people in the whole country got shortlisted, and I was one of them. So, those were the trainings and opportunities that I got to improve my enthusiasm for professional development. (Anjalee, interview 1)

The following quote demonstrates that she was well aware of the aim of the iTESL programme and ascertained the value of both its content and delivery, which transformed her way of teaching.

> *It is a very interesting programme because, as its name suggests, it is a transformation, so, uh, our trainers asked us to transform ourselves into a different version, a good version of ourselves, and it gave us all the, ur… not gave us, it guided us to teach all the skills in a different way.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

As guided by the programme, Anjalee was flexible in consolidating iTESL techniques together with her previous methodologies in her classroom practices. There was evidence of transformation in Anjalee's practices both in the lessons I observed and in what she explained during the interview. In the next section, I will highlight, including evidence, how Anjalee experienced this transformation process.

6.4.2 Impact of CPD on Anjalee's classroom practices

As Anjalee was self-motivated to achieve professional competence, she was able to find various CPD opportunities throughout her career journey, aside from iTESL. Therefore, she endeavoured to consolidate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired from different programmes into her classroom practice. Anjalee reflected on her newfound insights from the iTESL programme and TKT, unveiling how she applied this acquired knowledge in her classroom practice. One of the new practices Anjalee learned was ICQs and CCQs, and she admired the newly acquired knowledge and skills, which empowered her to get rid of ineffective and false practices in the classroom. This included abstaining from asking questions like 'Am I clear?' or 'Can you understand?', the common practices that tend to elicit automatic responses of 'yes' from students, without teachers truly assessing comprehension. Additionally, she recognised the drawback of relying on the common L1 translation ('තේරුණද?') as a crutch, realising that it hindered checking genuine understanding rather than facilitating it.

> *That programme was really nice and, uh..., it taught us CCQs, and ICQs. So, that is, I think, a very good technique to identify how my students have understood the concept rather than asking students 'did you understand?' to get the common response 'yes'. We always need to ask them an ICQ or a CCQ. That is a very good technique I learnt from that programme.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

The use of ICQs and CCQs was evident in both her lessons. Anjalee confidently posed these questions, and the students' responses demonstrated their

understanding and familiarity with this questioning strategy. Additionally, during the post-observation interview, Anjalee elaborated on how she implemented her new knowledge to enhance the benefits of CPD for her students.

6.4.2.1 Towards more personalised classroom practices

Anjalee explained how she considered the contextual requirements to make the necessary amendments to the knowledge she gained, aiming for the best outcome of her CPD experience.

> *I gained new knowledge and many things from the programme, so, of course, I did make adaptations according to my context, thinking about the benefits and outcome for my students, and they were quite successful actually.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Anjalee embraced autonomous conduct and self-regulation as best practices, which led her to implement the gained knowledge rather than solely relying on experts who may lack understanding of contextual requirements and students' proficiency levels.

> *So, it's up to the teacher because she's the one who knows his or her students best. So, what I do is that I learn from the courses, I learn from the programmes and adapt the knowledge that I got to my context and teach my students accordingly.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Anjalee specified the benefits her students gained from the new CPD knowledge, highlighting increased exposure to the English language and enhanced motivation to learn English through new techniques.

> *It* [iTESL] *taught us how to teach grammar, reading, and writing, all the skills that we are teaching to our students in a different way, and rather than using the mother tongue always, it gives us some activities, like some games, to use them in an interesting way, so that students are always exposed to the language.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Her views suggested that there was a prevailing trend of excessive use of mother tongue (MT) in second language classrooms, but by incorporating new techniques learned at iTESL, she was able gradually to diminish this reliance on MT. However, occasional use of L1 was still evident in her lessons, which justified during the post-observation interview. Notably, the students in her grade 6 class were in a transitional stage from primary to secondary education.

> *At once, they are learning 12 subjects from different teachers. English is also somewhat difficult in grade 6. I think I need to get close to students and to make the connection between L1 and L2, we need to use some MT. But I hope to reduce the use of L1 in future. But at present, I use MT in my lessons. I think it is helpful.* (Anjalee, post-observation interview)

Anjalee stated that she was satisfied with the knowledge and skills she acquired for managing L1 use in the classroom. She had encountered classroom management

issues in grade 6 that she needed to address, and she confirmed that she found ways to grab students' attention through the strategies she learned from iTESL.

> *I really like the signalling methods. (…) That was one of the best things I learnt from iTESL. It was very difficult to grab students' attention. But when I give the signal, they know that they have to stop and pay attention. Even today, I can use that successfully.* (Anjalee, post-observation interview 1)

At iTESL, Anjalee learnt how to scaffold by incorporating different techniques when conducting reading lessons. During classroom observation, she efficiently applied classroom management techniques and integrated the scaffolding technique into her grammar teaching with a specific purpose.

> *I incorporated those techniques, especially the scaffolding technique. I believe that just abruptly introducing the grammar structure is not appropriate. (…) We need to give them support to practice before learning the grammar structure.* (Anjalee, post-observation interview 1)

Anjalee wanted to change her methodology of teaching grammar after learning about teaching grammar inductively, starting with contextualisation. iTESL introduced stages of a grammar lesson that differed from what Anjalee had been following before attending iTESL.

> *Normally, we just introduced the structure and then gave activities following deductive approach. But I think that is not suitable for students in grade 6. Sometimes, we have to use a deductive approach and sometimes inductive. For grade 6, they need some examples, some scaffolding activities, and then step by step we have to go to the ultimate targets. So, I learnt that through iTESL.* (Anjalee, post-observation interview 1)

Anjalee demonstrated her understanding of when and how to apply the newly acquired knowledge in classroom practices. During my observation, I witnessed her incorporate group work and pair work in the classroom. Interestingly, in this semi-urban school, she did not face the issue of noise in the classroom, as she had a separate, spacious classroom for her 36 grade 6 students, allowing them to move freely. Anjalee justified her decision not to enforce strict discipline, emphasising the importance of creating a stress-free environment to promote learner autonomy. Despite her efforts to develop her professionalism and foster students' development, she expressed discontent with the functioning of the CPD process, and the next section explores the major reasons behind that.

6.5 Factors that impeded the CPD process

Anjalee's explanations revealed three types of obstacles that hindered the proper functioning and continuity of the CPD process: system-related, teacher-related and trainer-related factors.

6.5.1 System-related factors

Regarding system-related factors, Anjalee highlighted the issue of the discontinuity of iTESL and its impact on novice teachers. Despite completing the three-day iTESL training session in 2019, Anjalee noted a lack of follow-up or additional training sessions, except for one trainer visit, and she viewed it as the responsibility of the authorities to reinstate iTESL within the educational context.

> *Unfortunately, we couldn't do that as a longer process... Ur... if we had done that for the next few years, surely, that would transform the teachers, and our new teachers didn't get the chance that at all. I think they should get that chance because most of the new teachers do not know what professional qualification is, actually, so they should get this opportunity as well. I believe if the zone and the ministry would take action to start that again, that would really be beneficial for teachers and students as well.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Anjalee emphasised the significance of providing this training to newcomers to the system to establish new practices in the school system for the benefit of students. Furthermore, she criticised the wastage of money incurred when no actions are taken to continue the training, considering the substantial investment made by the government in its planning and implementation.

> *They start something, they spend millions of money on the programme and suddenly the programme vanishes from the system. That is a disaster in the system.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

In addition, Anjalee noted that teachers have limited opportunities for professional development. She urged the British Council and the Ministry of Education to maximise these opportunities to ensure that teachers receive the full benefits.

> *Year by year, the British Council have reduced the number of teachers that they are giving the opportunities to attend the TKT [Teaching Knowledge Test] course. It is a free course for teachers (…) They have started a new programme for listening and speaking and (…) they have selected the teachers (…) who have less than five years' experience. As I have seven years' experience, I did not get the opportunity to do that.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

As Anjalee was enthusiastic about finding more opportunities for professional development, she believed that this type of system-related factors hindered the CPD

system in Sri Lanka by demotivating competent teachers. She also emphasised the challenges faced by underprivileged teachers who often miss these opportunities.

> *Many teachers in the system, ur... they won't get such opportunities to make a change, I think all the teachers need such programmes, and they need to follow them.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Although Anjalee worked in a rural area, her motivation and capability meant she successfully sought out better opportunities. However, she expressed concern for other teachers who lack close connections with the trainers or institutions that organise CPD programmes.

> *As we got these free opportunities, we could follow them and we were in touch with the staff and got the newest courses. But some teachers, they don't know the RESC* [Regional English Support Centre] *staff or other members in the system, so they don't get the opportunity. And most the important thing is there are very few opportunities for them to upgrade their professional skills.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Anjalee’s remarks underscored the unequal distribution of CPD opportunities within the system, which favoured capable, enthusiastic, sociable, high-calibre teachers. According to Anjalee, there should be an efficient enrolment system of opportunities for every teacher irrespective of their professional identity.

In addition to the system-related factors that hindered the CPD process, Anjalee asserted that many ESL teachers lacked the stimulation to develop their professional skills, emphasising the importance of addressing these teacher-related factors.

6.5.2 Teacher-related factors

Commenting on the behaviour of certain teachers in this context who showed a lack of commitment to developing their professionalism, Anjalee disapproved of their irresponsibility.

> *Many teachers, I really don't like to even, to think about the fact they don't like to upgrade their professional skills and their knowledge. They just get their appointment, they do nothing, and if the teacher stays at the same level, that is the biggest crime that we do to our students.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Anjalee emphasised the contrast between her own teacher identity, which is full of commitment, and the demotivation observed among some of her colleagues, and she believed that the lack of interest among teachers in pursuing CPD was one factor hindering the CPD process. From Anjalee’s point of view, in addition to the issue of limited opportunities within the system, the impact of demotivated teachers exacerbates the situation further.

> *Actually, I think there are few opportunities for both categories, whether it is urban or rural. The chances they are getting to update their professional skills are very low, and I also found that some teachers don't improve their professional skills either. That's another part. Some of the teachers, they don't do their higher studies either.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Consequently, many ESL teachers within the system possess only basic qualifications and lack advanced professional skills. Since there are no regulations mandating professional development, these teachers have made little effort to enhance their professional skills or update their knowledge through professional or higher education programmes.

> *They just want to come to the system with a degree or diploma, they want to stay in the system, and they don't want to gain their professional and educational qualifications. There are such teachers as well in the system, in this context and in the whole country.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Anjalee pointed out that some teachers resisted attending CPD programmes organised by the zonal education office and the Ministry of Education, despite these opportunities being offered free of charge, with teachers even receiving payment for their attendance. It may be they refrained from participating so they could engage in more lucrative private tuition classes instead. Despite the programmes being free and teachers receiving payment for attendance, some teachers investigated the credibility of the trainers beforehand. Their decision whether it is beneficial to attend or a waste of time was based on their prior experiences.

However, owing to the limited availability of free opportunities, some enthusiastic teachers opt to spend their own money to gain educational and professional qualifications. Unfortunately, given the comparatively low salary received by teachers, many cannot afford to invest their modest earnings in acquiring professional skills or educational qualifications.

> *Some courses are very expensive, so teachers don't want to follow them. Now, most of the courses that I have followed were free. That's a chance.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

However, Anjalee was lucky enough to find free CPD courses organised by the British Council and the Ministry of Education, as she had earned a good reputation in the Sri Lanka context, indicating that, on the one hand, access to professional development depends on teachers' affordability. On the other hand, it is evident that high-calibre teachers receive more opportunities than ordinary and less skilful teachers do. Nevertheless, Anjalee's revelations indicate that even high-calibre teachers can become demotivated because of the behaviour of some trainers.

6.5.3 Trainer-related factors

Anjalee highlighted that certain trainer behaviour had negatively influenced her teacher identity. However, she clarified that this was not a complaint directed at every trainer, and she expected that trainers would demonstrate greater insight, knowledge, and flexibility when interacting with teachers.

> *Some were very flexible, and some trainers were kind of strict and old-fashioned.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

The conventional methodologies, beliefs and behaviour of some trainers hindered the development of Anjalee's professional identity. Therefore, she believed that all trainers needed to be equipped with subject specific knowledge, skills and qualities to enhance their professionalism as trainers.

> *There are some trainers who do not know what to teach. I'm not saying all the trainers. Most of the trainers that I met were really professional and they are very talented, but there are some trainers who do not give their best. Some of them demotivated me. Like, uh, I can remember one of the trainers told me in a recitation session, when I recited a poem in a Sri Lankan accent, the trainer told me no, that my pronunciation was not up to the standard, and asked to pronounce the words in Received Pronunciation. So, that really demotivated me at that time.* (Anjalee, interview 1)

Anjalee's classroom observation experience left her feeling demotivated due to the trainer's beliefs and lack of contextual understanding, as the trainer insisted that only Received Pronunciation (RP), considered the most prestigious British accent, was acceptable for English language competitions, leading to harsh criticism of Anjalee's Sri Lankan accent.

This inconsistency in competition regulations and these strained relationships between trainers and teachers highlighted the necessity for positive communication and guidance from the authorities. Anjalee suggested that instead of criticising and finding faults in teachers, trainers should be guided to collaborate effectively in resolving such controversies. However, despite this isolated issue, Anjalee admired the expertise and support she received from other trainers.

In addition to trainer support, teachers often seek collegial assistance to enhance their professional skills and implement newly acquired CPD knowledge in the classroom. The following section will explore how Anjalee both received support from and provided it to her colleagues seeking assistance.

6.6 Trainer intervention vis-a-vis collegial reciprocity for classroom implementation

Teachers who attended CPD programmes were expected to implement their new knowledge in the classroom. Anjalee sought constant support from trainers and colleagues that were more capable, and she expressed her feelings towards the support received from experts while also highlighting instances of negative intervention by trainers during the implementation of what they learnt and practiced in CPD programmes.

6.6.1 Trainer intervention: motivations and demotivation

Anjalee categorised the trainers she met in her career journey into two groups: the conventional type of trainers and experts with updated knowledge and skills. Conventional trainers adhered strictly to their own methods and expected teachers blindly to follow their stereotypical practices, such as sticking to prescribed, uninspiring textbook content. The following quotes illustrates their ineffective intervention regarding teachers' classroom practices.

(Interview 2)

Deepa: How do you feel about the support provided by those experts or trainers? You mentioned that some were very helpful while others seemed to just do their job. Could you elaborate on that?
Anjalee: Um... that could be related to their attitudes towards their profession or maybe the course itself. Sometimes, even though they were trained to teach us, they ended up teaching what they already knew or had in their minds. As a result, new knowledge wasn't introduced to us; instead, they shared traditional methods, notions, and perspectives. It seemed like they needed an attitudinal change, but they weren't willing to make that change.

Deepa: You said that some trainers relied on traditional training habits, focusing on transmitting what they wanted without considering your needs. Could you explain the kind of support you expect from experts?
Anjalee: They should have knowledge of modern trends (...) and an understanding of the demands of the world and the needs of students. This way, they can train teachers to meet students' needs effectively. Those are the qualities I expect from a trainer. Additionally, they should have strategies—um, some engaging techniques—to capture our attention.

Anjalee anticipated a change in trainers' expertise, behaviour, beliefs and attitudes, believing that trainers should share their knowledge and skills to guide teachers in implementing new strategies in the classroom. Additionally, Anjalee emphasised the importance of trainers having modernised techniques in order to better equip teachers to meet students' needs.

However, Anjalee expressed contentment, noting that she rarely experienced stereotypical behaviour from trainers. Instead, she encountered trainers who supported her by sharing their expertise to improve her classroom practice, and she further elaborated on one particular experience of trainer visits.

> *Just after the programme, within one week or two weeks, one of the trainers visited me and I didn't know if the trainer was visiting to observe me as they have been training us to do the lessons. I had a separate lesson plan that I wrote following the iTESL programme, and I used the signals that I learned from the programme. I completed my lesson. The time management was 90 percent successful. So, I got very positive feedback from my trainer. She appreciated me and it really helped; she encouraged me, and I felt very positive about my teaching that day.* (Anjalee, interview 2)

During this time, Anjalee was working at a rural school, and this observation was the only iTESL follow-up session conducted after the completion of the iTESL programme. However, she was pleased to get more trainer visits in her new school, as it was convenient for trainers to commute there. Anjalee reflected on the repercussions of the absence of follow-up trainer visits, and the following quote suggests that without trainer visits, many teachers tended to remain within their comfort zones rather than confronting challenges by implementing new knowledge.

> *Once the programme is over, if there were no follow-up programmes, the teachers will not follow the things that they were told, they always tend to stick to the traditional methods. If only the observers come to the classroom, they would try out some new things. If the follow-up activities are going on, they can't stick to the traditional methods, they have to transform themselves.* (Anjalee, interview 2)

Anjalee recalled the annual zonal and provincial inspection programmes and highlighted that some teachers implemented new methodologies merely to give the appearance of compliance, aiming to please the authorities and avoid criticism. She suggested that teachers should make a genuine attempt to implement new knowledge and rehearse strategies in preparation for these inspection days.

Anjalee further highlighted that trainer intervention and support can lead to positive changes in the classroom if all trainers update their knowledge and develop qualities to motivate teachers. However, due to a lack of sufficient trainers in the zone, teachers did not receive consistent support.

> *We don't have enough ISAs* [in-service advisers]*. They can't give the support that we require because they can't visit every school in the zone, and so in that case, we can't be satisfied with this.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

To address this situation, teachers sought support from one another by sharing their knowledge and skills. This phenomenon will be discussed under the following sub-theme, collegial reciprocity.

6.6.2 Collegial reciprocity

Anjalee appraised the support she received from friends that were more capable when attending training programmes. Together they discussed the practical issues encountered when applying new knowledge in similar contexts, consistently taking advantage of meeting other colleagues at training programmes to exchange personal experiences.

> *The friends (…) they are always very supportive and when we were in our peer groups, we always wanted to learn something and to help ourselves. Actually, when I have a problem, I will discuss it with my friends and they come up with the solution, and if they want help, I always support them.* (Anjalee, interview 2)

However, Anjalee admitted that the colleagues she met were not always sharing positive attitudes towards professional development and the application of new knowledge in the classroom. Whenever Anjalee met such teachers, she tried to change them but later understood that it was very hard to change them.

> *I have met teachers, ur… they say 'I don't want to do anything. I will, I would push my husband to go for higher places, but I don't need anything. I just want to take care of my children and home. And I will go* [to work] *at 7:30 and come home at 1.30'. There are such teachers. I think we can't change them at all. Their attitudes are very rigid. They won't, they don't want to change, but if we motivate the new teachers, I think we can make a change.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Anjalee identified her teacher identity, not as someone merely confined to develop her own professional and personal skills or teaching students, but also someone contributing to enhancing the professional capital of her colleagues. Her attempt was to inspire other teachers towards collegial reciprocity, even though she found it challenging and sometimes impossible to fully share and understand the professional lives of others. While resisting such negative attitudes, Anjalee endeavoured to play the role of a catalyst to inculcate positive attitudes in novices to prevent them being egocentric for the betterment of future CPD and ESL teaching-learning processes. As Anjalee's endeavour was closely connected with the exploratory practice framework, I will revisit this point in the discussion chapter to elaborate on this further. The following section examines Anjalee's perceptions regarding future directions in CPD in detail.

6.7 Anjalee's views on future directions for CPD

While working in her first school in a rural setting and then her next in a semi-urban setting, Anjalee was privileged to have participated in numerous CPD opportunities organised by the Ministry of Education, the British Council and the zonal education office, in addition to obtaining educational qualifications through Bachelor and Masters programmes at universities. She successfully implemented the techniques she learned from these CPD programmes and held a positive view of most of the programmes she attended, after considering their quality. However, the following quote revealed her expectations around receiving more opportunities at regular intervals in the future.

> *The things that I have learned from those courses will never be forgotten as I'm using those in my classroom daily and almost every day. And the worries that I'm having are that we won't get such opportunities frequently.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Anjalee claimed she attended high-quality programmes organised by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the British Council, and she expected such programmes in the future, from which she could gain new knowledge and techniques from experts. In addition, she also valued the opportunities provided during sessions to practice with colleagues, unlike attending the conventional type of programmes where she was expected only to sit and listen.

> *If we get programmes frequently, not as a burden, interesting, satisfactory programmes, quality-wise and quantity-wise, I think we can be more confident teachers in the classroom and ultimately the students will be benefitted from us.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Anjalee considered it the responsibility of authorities to provide better opportunities frequently and maintain the quality of programmes, as teachers' development directly influences students' development. She specified iTESL and expected similar opportunities in the future.

> *It would be great if the ministry collaborated with other responsible institutions, that they would introduce such courses like iTESL and many other courses to the system.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

Anjalee appeared satisfied with her professional development journey and what she had gained thus far, yet her desire for further development and keeping her knowledge and skills up-to-date was evident, highlighting her understanding of the vitality of continuing professional development as a teacher.

> *I am satisfied with the chances that I've got, but that doesn't mean that I don't need any other opportunities. I think constant practice, constant programmes are required for a teacher to update and upgrade. We introduce new trends to the students. So, the prevailing opportunities are*

> *quite OK, but that doesn't mean I'm fully satisfied with them. I think we need more.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

The quote above indicates that despite working in underprivileged rural and semi-urban settings, compared to urban settings with easy access to more opportunities, Anjalee managed to seize rare opportunities as a result of her motivation to develop her professionalism. In her quest to update her competencies, she eagerly embraced technology both for her own learning and for teaching in the classroom, believing that mastering technology was fundamental for teachers, as it empowers them to enhance students' competencies that will be needed to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. However, Anjalee observed that many Sri Lankan teachers, including ESL teachers, were reluctant to adopt technology due to a lack of technical knowledge and interest. Additionally, some lacked access to necessary facilities and could not afford them. Nevertheless, Anjalee saw a silver lining amidst these challenges, when the pandemic shifted the classroom culture in the country. It compelled teachers to bridge the gap in their knowledge and skills as teachers espoused using technology and the modernisation of teaching methods demanded by society.

> [During] *the pandemic, I think, teachers were introduced to the online platform, and that is a turning point in Sri Lankan education because some traditional teachers had to use technology, in their classrooms. They had to use modern methodologies.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

As Anjalee noted, during the pandemic, teachers had to engage in online teaching. As a result, initially, they used technology out of necessity. However, they developed their skills in using technology even for face-to-face teaching after schools reopened. In Anjalee's case, she acquired new knowledge and skills for incorporating Apps and software, motivated to promote autonomous learning in students acknowledging the drawbacks of prevailing conventional methodologies, which merely serve to fill empty vessels.

> *So, that was eye opening in that I think the pandemic brought a new era for Sri Lankan education, because other than reading books and doing the traditional jug-to-mug method, we could use many platforms. We were introduced to many other technologies, modern technological devices, platforms, games and all those things, and the most important things that I learned were the Zoom platform, Teams, creating Google Sheets, creating live worksheets, online games like using hot potatoes activities, through which I can create many online games and story starters.* (Anjalee, interview 3)

The above quote reveals how Anjalee transformed her teacher identity from conventional methodologies to modernised practices by acquiring expertise and primarily learning through experience. However, as Anjalee is an enthusiastic and

well-qualified teacher, she will continue to leverage her knowledge and explore innovative methods. Nonetheless, to ensure that every teacher in the system is equipped, the authorities will need to implement a more structured CPD process by establishing rules and regulations and introducing new policies for sustainability. To address this, Anjalee pinpointed the need for a political solution, suggesting the implementation of a single national educational policy instead of changing policies with each change in political regimes.

> *I think that most of the problems we get in this country are because we don't have national policies. With the change of the political party, when they come to power, they would like paste plasters to the system.*
> (Anjalee, interview 3)

Therefore, Anjalee expects consistent government intervention to find long lasting solutions to the aforementioned inconsistencies in the system.

6.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I delved into the perceptions of Anjalee, who worked in a semi-urban setting, detailing six main themes and their corresponding sub-themes that were derived from data analysis. Initially, I explored the factors that led Anjalee to become a teacher of English and her views on initial training before categorising Anjalee's motivations for pursuing CPD into self-oriented and student-oriented reasons, further investigating these under sub-themes. Anjalee reflected on her CPD experiences and the obstacles hindering the process, which I next examined, shedding light on pertinent issues. Furthermore, I discussed Anjalee's insights into the support and mediation provided to teachers during CPD programmes and classroom implementation, highlighting influential factors in her semi-urban school. Lastly, I explored Anjalee's perspectives on future direction to understand any developments expected within the system and among stakeholders. The upcoming findings chapter will focus on exploring the perceptions of Nadee and Tharu, who worked in similar contexts that were categorised as rural settings in case study 3.

Chapter 7 Findings – Case study 3 – Rural setting

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the case study 3, elaborating the specific characteristics of the rural settings and the stories of the two participants, Nadee and Tharu. Schools in rural areas are marginalized and suffer from a lack of infrastructure, limited human resources, and low student motivation due to their underprivileged socio-economic status. It is also common for students who pass the fifth-grade scholarship examination to leave rural schools and transfer to popular urban schools based on their exam scores, as this is a rare opportunity for low-income students to benefit from better facilities and resources. As a result, teachers often complain that they are left with the remaining students, who generally have lower proficiency levels. Another common complaint from both parents and principals is that teachers often seek transfers as soon as they are appointed to rural schools. Because many of these schools are located far from main cities, teachers face commuting challenges and often seek transfers to more convenient locations, prioritizing personal comfort. Additionally, teachers in rural areas are unable to establish private tuition as a lucrative business due to the disadvantaged economic conditions of the students.

Teacher allocation is determined by the total number of students in each school. As a result, some schools do not receive enough teachers for all subjects, and teachers from other disciplines are often required to teach 2-3 subjects without having specialized knowledge in those areas. For instance, some schools may have only one ESL teacher responsible for teaching all classes from grades 1 to 11 or 1 to 13, while others may operate for 1-2 years or more without a single ESL teacher. This situation makes some principals hesitant to send their only ESL teacher to CPD programs, fearing that students will miss their English lessons during the teacher's absence. However, these characteristics may vary or have different impacts across rural settings in Sri Lanka, depending on the socioeconomic and political influences in each region.

Nadee's school was located in a rural setting approximately 35 miles away from the city. Meanwhile, Tharu's school was only seven miles away from the main city. Despite the geographical differences, both schools shared similarities in terms of facilities, student enrolment, proficiency levels, family backgrounds and exposure to English. Additionally, both schools faced similar challenges, such as low student attendance due to economic instability with parents often keeping their children at home to contribute to family earnings. A primary concern for teachers, school

principals, parents and the community at large was the emphasis on public examinations in the exam-oriented education system, which poses challenges for students' proficiency levels. Therefore, in case study 3, I explore the experiences of Nadee and Tharu, categorising the context as a 'rural setting' due to these shared characteristics.

I first met Nadee when she was a primary student (though not in the same school) when I was working as a teacher as I had connections with her parents, and Tharu and I worked together in the same school for a certain period. Thus, our personal relationships facilitated maintaining clear boundaries between the roles of researcher and researched in this study, minimising the effect of any power dynamic between my trainer role and the participants' roles as teachers. Nadee and Tharu belong to two different categories of teaching experience, and their recruitment procedures were different. I had previously visited both schools as a trainer and was familiar with the contexts. However, there were minor changes in the schools due to developments that occurred two to three years after my previous visits.

During the study, Nadee experienced significant changes in her personal life, such as marriage, relocation to another city, and migration to another country. Despite these upheavals, she continued to actively participate in the research. Moreover, our relationship prompted her to reach out to me for references when she was seeking job opportunities in Dubai. On the other hand, Tharu, a mother of three children, had caring responsibilities alongside her professional duties. Despite her family commitments, she was also involved in administrative work at her school, in addition to teaching English and she worked each year as head of a paper-marking panel for public examinations.

I explored Nadee and Tharu's perceptions across six main themes, along with sub-themes discovered through analysing online interview data, classroom observations, and post-observation interview data. The themes and sub-themes depicted in figure 7.1 below are aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of Nadee and Tharu's CPD experiences.

Figure 7-1 Case study 3 (Rural setting)

7.2 Different beginner stories of Nadee and Tharu

Nadee and Tharu had different beginner stories in their journeys to becoming teachers of English, including variations in their motivations and recruitment procedures. Nadee became a teacher after completing a three-year NCOE teaching diploma qualification whereas Tharu began her journey after completing a diploma

course at a state university. In the following sections, I will examine the motivations that led Nadee and Tharu to become teachers of English.

7.2.1 How Nadee became a teacher of English

After completing her Advanced-Level exam, Nadee had a desire to pursue a career as a software engineer or to enrol in a business management course to become a high-calibre professional. In addition to these aspirations, she decided to pursue a diploma in computer applications. During this period, Nadee's parents submitted an application to the NCOE for her to join the three-year teaching diploma programme, as she had achieved the required Z-score and possessed the necessary English language qualifications. Her parents encouraged Nadee to improve her English proficiency and insisted her she take an English course at a state university. Given that both of her parents were teachers and one of her cousins was an English teacher, they urged Nadee to consider a career as an English teacher. She reflected on the influence her parents had on her decision to become a teacher.

> *As my parents are teachers, my father always wanted me to improve my English knowledge. My mother was the one who submitted my application on my behalf. Finally, I changed my desires I had to make my parents happy.* (Nadee, member-checking interview)

Nadee relinquished her personal aspirations and enrolled in an NCOE to follow the English teaching diploma course, ultimately leading to a career as a teacher of English. Her decision was primarily aimed at pleasing her parents. Nevertheless, she realised that she was content with this choice.

> *Now I am happy about the decision I took to enter the NCOE and also to become an English teacher. I think I am an effective teacher. I felt that when I left my school, Uh, I think, uh, I have, I have put my 100-percent effort into my teaching. So, I am really satisfied.* (Nadee, interview 1)

Despite initially considering a different career path, Nadee expressed her satisfaction with becoming a teacher, completing her teaching diploma and internship at a leading school, after which she received her first appointment to a rural school. At the time of the study, Nadee had accumulated five years of teaching experience at her first school.

7.2.2 How Tharu became a teacher of English

After completing her Advanced-Level studies, Tharu continued in higher education to attain the necessary qualifications for her chosen career path. Teaching had always been her dream job, and she turned this dream into reality through her higher education. Tharu's journey to becoming a teacher of English differed from Nadee's path.

When I was a teenager… and in my school age it was my ambition. I wanted to be a teacher, an English teacher one day, so I followed my English teacher to become an English teacher like my English teacher (Tharu, interview 1)

She did not have much exposure to the English language in the area she lived during her childhood. However, she obtained good grades in English for public examinations with the support of her English teacher, who inspired her to become one herself. After leaving school, Tharu followed an English diploma course at a state university focused on English language teaching, which provided her with practical teaching skills. The diploma course consisted of a two-year internal programme along with a three-month internship at a school under the supervision of the university.

I entered the University of Sabaragamuwa. So, there my main aim was to be an English teacher and they trained us, to be teachers, good teachers. (Tharu, interview 3)

Tharu gained valuable experience during her internship, achieving her goal of becoming an English teacher after completing this qualification. At the time of the study, Tharu had 23 years of teaching experience and she was working at her third school.

7.2.3 Reflections on initial training

Nadee began her teaching career after completing the three-year pre-service training course at the National College of Education. Reflecting on her that initial training, Nadee expressed positive feelings towards the support she received.

I am satisfied with our training... Our lecturers supported us. Yeah, very much. They guided us how to plan a lesson and how can we select objectives and how can we familiar with our students, how can we identify our students, likewise they guided us. (Nadee, interview 2)

In addition to the support from her lecturers, Nadee expressed her appreciation for the support provided by her more capable colleagues at the time.

I could learn many things from my peers. There were so many active and capable teacher trainees at the college, and we all shared our knowledge and supported each other. I also learnt from them. (Nadee, interview 2)

Nadee also recalled her internship period, during which she received guidance from a lecturer to enhance her teaching skills, stating that this experience enabled her to become a methodical teacher, equipped with the skills to plan effective lessons. She appreciated the authoritative approach of the lecturer in charge, which she felt facilitated her learning of essential teaching skills.

> *During my internship period, especially my lecturer-in-charge, she supported me to become a well-planned teacher actually, because she was a very much, ur... somewhat strict and those days she wanted us to do good lessons then, otherwise she did not give us marks. So, I learned how to write a lesson plan correctly by selecting the correct objectives according to the lesson.* (Nadee, interview 2)

Nadee's remarks suggest that, despite initially focusing on achieving good grades, she also developed the essential skills crucial for her career journey. Thus, the fear of failure and the authoritative approach of the evaluator contributed to her success in acquiring essential teaching skills and developing her identity as a teacher of English.

Tharu underwent a different initial training and recruitment procedure compared to Nadee, and she elaborated on the benefits she gained from the university diploma course, which prepared her for her teaching role.

> *We learnt ELT methodology on the course and engaged in teaching practice for three months. A supervisor visited me in my school to observe my lessons. I received feedback and was offered a grade as a part of the diploma course.* (Tharu, interview 1)

This programme provided her with the initial knowledge and skills required to work as a teacher. After completing this internship training, Tharu received her teaching appointment. She worked as a teacher for four years before being selected to participate in a two-year in-service training programme called Professional In-Service English Teacher Training (PRINSETT). Tharu described her experience.

> *That was a great course and great opportunity. I had to follow the PRINSETT course to develop my professional skills and to obtain the trained teacher status. We did micro teaching sessions as a requirement for the trained teacher qualification. This gave an opportunity to receive a grade and also feedback from the observers. However, I think this is not enough. We want to improve our teaching career more and more.* (Tharu, interview 1)

PRINSETT, organised by the Ministry of Education, was a weekend course designed for ESL teachers who had completed three years in their career to gain professional development and a professional qualification as trained teachers. This programme was previously available in various centres in major cities across the country. However, the government discontinued the PRINSETT course after implementing the National Colleges of Education, which then provided the three-year pre-service training for teachers entering the system.

Nadee and Tharu's comments in the preceding section indicate the ongoing need for professional development throughout their career as teachers of English. The

following section will outline the specific reasons they highlighted that led them to decide to take up the professional development opportunities.

7.3 Reasons for gaining professional development

Nadee and Tharu shared similar reasons for pursuing professional development. Both faced challenges in their professional contexts related to socioeconomic backgrounds and remote locations. Consequently, they recognised the importance of resilience gained through CPD to overcome, or at least mitigate, these challenges. They complained about the ignorance of the authorities in supporting teachers in rural settings, despite them acknowledging the hardships they endure, emphasising the critical need for CPD among teachers working in rural settings.

7.3.1 Mitigating contextual challenges of being a teacher of English in a rural setting

Nadee and Tharu highlighted specific concerns as major challenges in schools in rural settings, such as the lack of exposure students get to the English language, irregular student attendance, insufficient parental encouragement and support, and the overall lack of student motivation for learning English. Overcoming these contextual challenges and hardships was one of their primary concerns for seeking CPD.

> *We need CPD programmes frequently to improve our skills to work with students who have no interest at all to learn English and students with low proficiency levels.* (Tharu, interview 1)

As Tharu highlighted, this is a common issue in rural settings, where students lack a learning background and face a lack of parental motivation and support. She explained that many teachers attempt to convince parents about the importance of regularly sending their children to school to upgrade their proficiency. As Tharu highlighted, because of economic constraints, parents are often unable to afford private tuition for their children, making school the primary avenue for them to gain knowledge. During one observation day, I witnessed Tharu advising parents to encourage their children to attend school regularly, and she expressed the need for specific strategies to address such students and enhance their skills. However, Tharu emphasised that not every teacher has the capacity to take responsibility for their own CPD due to personal issues, affordability constraints, and limitations in capabilities.

> *Every teacher can't take the responsibility for their own professional development because they have many problems. So, some teachers who*

are working in some remote areas can't reach the town area. So, we have to face lot of problems in rural areas. (Tharu, interview 1)

This suggests that teachers in rural settings need to be facilitated by providing more trainer visits and mediation to access CPD, considering their personal hardships, financial constraints, and difficulties in commuting to the city. According to Tharu, when teachers face numerous hardships in life, they might not attempt to pursue professional development as they give priority to solving their personal problems.

Nadee highlighted another reason why more CPD opportunities and trainer visits are needed in rural schools. The limited number of ESL teachers made it difficult for her to attend most of the CPD programmes she was invited to, due to the principal's restrictions on leaving the school.

> *Especially in my school, I am the only English teacher, and the principal doesn't like if we go for more than two days, uh, that's the problem. Because, yeah, that's the challenge.* (Nadee, interview 1)

The situation differed for Anjalee in case study 2 when she worked in a rural school, which suggests that principals' attitudes and lack of awareness of how CPD can beneficially influence teachers' ability are a significant factor. As a remedy, Nadee suggested more trainer visits for mediation within the classroom context to aid her professional growth.

> *I think it's better if they can come once a month at least or twice a month, but they rarely come to rural schools. So, we have seminars and workshops, uh, and they teach and they give us materials or something, but they don't come to, I mean, they don't come to help us to implement those things with our students because our students are somewhat different from the students in urban areas.* (Nadee, interview 2)

Moreover, Nadee highlighted the specific needs when implementing new knowledge in the classroom with rural students, who are different from those in urban schools. Due to limited exposure to English in rural areas, she believed that students in her school needed specific strategic interventions to understand the knowledge they received, and teachers needed to be equipped with these professional skills.

Nadee, as a less experienced teacher, and Tharu, as a more experienced one, had diverse experiences of CPD. Tharu expressed enthusiasm about attending CPD programmes organised by authorities, as it was impossible for most teachers, including her, to afford expensive professional development and higher education courses at universities. On the other hand, Nadee attended expensive CPD programmes conducted by the British Council at her own expense. The following section explores the CPD experiences of Nadee and Tharu in detail.

7.4 Reflections on CPD opportunities

As an experienced teacher, Tharu participated in both 'English as a life skill' and iTESL programmes, which were conducted island-wide, as well as some short-term, one- or two-day programmes during her 23-year career journey. Nadee, on the other hand, attended only a few one- or two-day programmes, aside from iTESL and other courses she took of her accord and personally paid for during her five-year career. Both shared their perspectives on the efficacy and effectiveness of their CPD experiences.

7.4.1 CPD provision and delivery

Teachers usually receive invitations to schools from the zonal or provincial authorities or the Ministry of Education to attend CPD programmes, which are often held at training centres in the main city. Some teachers, especially those in rural settings, live far from these centres and need to travel long distances to attend, and teachers will be granted study leave for attendance. When the only English teacher in rural schools attends these programmes, their absence means students miss their English lessons, as was the case with Nadee.

As discussed in section 7.3.1, Nadee expressed dissatisfaction with her principal's failure to find alternative options to allow her to attend all the available CPD programmes. Moreover, she was concerned about attending effective programmes, as she wanted to make the most of her limited opportunities for professional development. Despite these challenges, Nadee attended the few training sessions she was allowed with the hope of making her time and effort worthwhile. She highlighted that teachers become helpless after joining the system, as the authorities pay less attention to providing free opportunities for teachers to gain professional development. Only teachers like Nadee, who can afford expensive courses, could continue their professional development.

> *But after iTESL training, we did not receive any, ur, I mean, to develop ourselves as professionals, professional development. We did not receive any professional development; we had to find it. We had to pay for it personally and I did TKT [Teaching Knowledge Test] and a postgraduate diploma without any help from the government.* (Nadee, interview 1)

She expressed dissatisfaction about not receiving free professional development opportunities for all teachers and the unfair distribution of CPD opportunities. While some teachers were able to take the Teaching Knowledge Test course for free, Nadee had to pay for it. The Teaching Knowledge Test course was a teacher development course organised by the British Council and provided free of charge to a few selected teachers across the island to be attended at regional centre s.

However, those who did not receive this free opportunity and could afford the course fee, like Nadee, attended the course at the British Council.

Tharu explained a common negative experience regarding the ineffectiveness of CPD delivery.

> *Some workshops are OK, but in some, we get nothing from those actually, but we enjoy ourselves being with our colleagues. From some seminars or workshops, we didn't get anything.* (Tharu, interview 2)

This suggests that Tharu attended such programmes primarily to socialise. However, despite meeting their expectations of acquiring new knowledge through the programmes, teachers benefitted from connected with colleagues, sharing experiences, concerns, and success stories, and being part of the ESL teacher community working towards mutual development.

Tharu further explained the inappropriate behaviour of trainers that she identified in CPD programmes, which had negative impacts on the development of her teacher identity. Consequently, this trainer behaviour has a deleterious effect on teacher attendance at training programmes. Tharu made a strong comment in response to my inquiry.

(Interview 3)

> *Deepa: In our second interview, we talked about trainer behaviour. Let's explore further how trainer behaviour impacts your professional development and classroom teaching.*
>
> *Tharu:I think trainers should act more like friends and cooperate with teachers, engaging in conversations rather than, uh, just instructing.*
>
> *Deepa: You mean in a friendly way?*
>
> *Tharu: Yes, without criticizing mistakes. Every teacher makes mistakes, and teachers' knowledge, skills, and teaching styles vary from one to another.*
> *Deepa: OK. Do you think trainer behaviour can both motivate and demotivate teachers from participating in CPD programmes?*
>
> *Tharu: They actually demotivate, not just me, but others as well. When we think about the English teacher training programmes (…) honestly, we don't like to participate. I think they're not useful to us. It's just talking and blaming others. That's been our experience in past years. They need to change those things. Also, we don't want to listen to their personal problems. They talk about their personal issues, argue with each other, and criticize each other's weaknesses. We don't understand or need any of that.*

Tharu was more critical of this trainer behaviour, not because of the lack of new knowledge that trainers shared but because of the trainers' inappropriate behaviour.

However, attending these CPD programmes at least allowed novice, experienced and more capable teachers from diverse contexts to come together, fostering new relationships or refreshing former ones, leading to mutual professional and personal development. According to Tharu, in this particular situation, teachers became demotivated when the few available free opportunities turned out to be entirely inefficacious and ineffective due to the personal qualities of some trainers. Her expectations were evident in the following comment, as she highlighted the need for authorities to prioritise meeting the needs of teachers rather than initiating CPD programmes for the sake of it.

> *We attend training to improve our knowledge and skills and to improve our teaching skills more and more. So, they have to make those changes in our workshops.* (Tharu, interview 1)

As discussed in section 7.3.1, Nadee preferred more school visits because of the challenges she encountered when attending the programmes. However, Tharu highlighted that the authorities need to consider enhancing the quality of the available programmes. Nonetheless, despite these negative experiences, Tharu and Nadee described the efficacy and effectiveness of some programmes they attended, admiring the iTESL when compared with other common programmes. The following section focuses on participants' perceptions of the most influential CPD opportunities.

7.4.2 The most influential CPD opportunities

The most recent CPD programme Nadee and Tharu attended was the iTESL programme. As Tharu recalled, there were no opportunities for professional development due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic except for certain online awareness programmes organised by the zonal education office to encourage teachers to conduct online lessons.

> *Yeah, professional development is essential. I think that, during these past three years, we didn't participate in any workshops.* (Tharu, interview 1)

Thus, participants reflected on the iTESL programme as the most influential CPD programme they had attended recently. It was also the first long-term CPD programme Nadee attended, as she had less than five years of teaching experience at the time.

> *I found the iTESL programme different. Before that, I had participated in two or three seminars, I mean, workshops, but they were like seminars. We had to just sit and listen. That's all. But in the iTESL programme, uh, we actively participated in it. We planned lessons and sometimes we did*

group work. We pretended to be like students and did activities and that was really an amazing experience. (Nadee, interview 1)

Nadee highlighted the nature of conventional programmes, which typically involved just ‘filling the empty vessels’ or a top-down approach that made attendees passive listeners. Nadee found the iTESL programme worthwhile because teachers could put themselves in students’ shoes to understand the difficulties that students encounter in learning the language. Furthermore, iTESL empowered them to explore and understand their own puzzles. One such practice, that Nadee highlighted, could be witnessed in her classroom, with some amendments to suit her student’s language skills (this will be discussed further in section 7.3.3). Considering this practicality, Nadee suggested that such programmes should continue for the benefit of newcomers to the field, as she observed that some of her colleagues missed the opportunity.

I know some new teachers who recently got appointments, missed iTESL. So, I gave them new lesson plans and, actually, now, I don't have my iTESL guidebook even. I gave it to one teacher because, uh, she didn't know how to write lesson plans according to three ‘p’ method. (Nadee, interview 2)

Nadee recommended iTESL for novices to enable them to acquire essential skills. Similarly, when comparing the iTESL programme with other conventional programmes, Tharu made the following comment.

Actually, I like the iTESL programme. There were some other workshops just like one-man shows. The trainers didn't allow to, uh, they didn't allow us to speak. When I asked questions, they blamed. Some trainers, not all. So, those were also very boring ones. We don't like those, but iTESL is very helpful. (Tharu, interview 2)

Tharu explained how embarrassed she felt when the trainer suppressed further questioning, mistakenly interpreting her inquiries as a challenge to their expertise, indicating how the absence of positive relationships among trainers and teachers in certain programmes demotivated teachers from attending, as they lacked the opportunity to share their frustrations, concerns and doubts with experts. Although they admired the iTESL programme, Tharu found the duration insufficient to grasp new knowledge and skills, which suggests that teachers expected recurrent practice with trainer support during training sessions before implementing new methods in the real classroom, followed by frequent follow-up sessions to review their practices.

Actually when I followed this three-day iTESL programme, I learnt something new to develop my professional level. So, I think three days were not enough. I think it should be extended. (Tharu, interview 1)

Furthermore, Tharu suggested continuing the programme to receive more support for CPD and implementation of new knowledge. The next section focuses on how Nadee and Tharu initiated change in their classroom practice after gaining CPD. Both participants explained how the iTESL programme affected a change in their classroom practice and specified iTESL was the latest CPD experience they received at the time of the study due to the influence of the pandemic in 2020 and the years following.

7.4.3 Impact of iTESL on teachers' classroom practice

Foreign trainers affiliated with the British Council in Sri Lanka trained a selected group of teacher trainers island-wide with the aim of cascading the training of the ISAs and ESL teachers across the island, intending to introduce new methodologies for teaching reading, grammar and classroom management techniques in anticipation of a change in teachers' prevailing classroom practices. The organisers identified inconsistencies in teaching methodologies through a needs analysis and planned to introduce new methodologies by organising the iTESL programme, and Nadee and Tharu explained how they attempted to bring about the expected change. One aspect of the iTESL programme was to introduce lesson planning, highlighting the stages of reading and grammar lessons, and teaching grammar inductively.

> *After iTESL, I actually changed my lesson planning. Now, I am planning my lessons according to what I learnt from that programme. We planned lessons with our peers and planned some lessons and we presented. Uh, the instructors helped us to correct our plans, and so it was a nice experience because we actively participated in it. Uh, if we had problems, we could discuss them with the trainers and our peers to solve those problems.* (Nadee, interview 1)

She further elaborated on the specific aspects she changed in her lessons after participating in iTESL and developing her lesson-planning skills.

> *After attending iTESL, I tried to use so many enjoyable activities, visuals, technology, and changed the way of questioning. I changed my way of teaching grammar and reading, so I think my students might have felt it.* (Nadee, interview 2)

Although a lesson plan was not required for the classroom observation in the research, Nadee was happy to share her lesson plan before the observation. Moreover, teachers writing lesson plans was a rare phenomenon in this context despite Nadee being ready for the lesson with her lesson plan. During my first visit to Nadee's school, I missed observing the pre-planned grade 6 lesson due to an unanticipated issue with the school timetable, but she invited me for the second period, which was a grade 10 grammar lesson, a well-planned lesson using visual

aids, though there were only 10 students present as some had gone for sports practice. Nadee provided evidence for her explanation above, having structured her lesson according to the stages of a grammar lesson introduced at iTESL, beginning with contextualisation. She also explained her approach to conducting grammar lessons before attending the iTESL programme.

> *Before iTESL, I gave them the structure first and completed the textbook activities. After attending iTESL, I changed the methods of grammar teaching. I presented grammar by setting the scene first. I used more group and pair work allowing them to help each other, and they did peer correction. I think I talked a little and students did the activities by themselves.* (Nadee, post-observation interview)

Nadee commented on her lesson explaining her attempts to minimise teacher talk in order to promote students' autonomous and collaborative learning. She incorporated pair and group work by assigning roles to each group member to maximise participation, as introduced in iTESL. The students' behaviour indicated familiarity with Nadee's approach to conducting group tasks.

> *I planned the lesson for 40 minutes. Due to the shorter* [lesson] *periods, I reduced the number of sentences in the activity. I used group work to assign roles for each participant in the group as presenter, timekeeper and group leader. But I forgot to use ICQs.* (Nadee, post-observation interview)

Before the observation began, Nadee explained how she made amendments to her planned lesson, due to unexpected changes in the time allocation. During the observation, I witnessed Nadee incorporating iTESL guidance for assigning group tasks in accordance with what was stated in her lesson plan. I also witnessed students in the classroom following teacher's instructions in English and engaging in various assigned roles, such as group leader, note-taker, timekeeper and presenter.

However, during post-observation interview, Nadee reflected on the lesson and expressed regret for not using ICQs, considering that a mistake, and she appeared to be overly concerned about incorporating the techniques she had learned into her lesson. I observed that her students demonstrated their understanding of the teacher's instructions, and ICQs were not required. She also explained how she amended some activities introduced at iTESL instead of simply imitating the trainers.

> *I changed my way of doing reading activities after this programme. Uhm, I used, ur... I mean a Hindi or Chinese paragraph to do the reading activity before starting our lesson, uh, because I can remember, there was a reading activity using Spanish, Spanish paragraph in the iTESL book. I did it according to that, actually. Yeah, I felt that students like to engage in different kinds of activities. It changed their learning environment also. So, it was very effective.* (Nadee, interview 1)

Nadee adopted the technique and amended it according to her preference, using Hindi, a language she was familiar with, instead of Spanish. In the iTESL guidebook, this strategy of using an unfamiliar language for the reading component was introduced to make teachers realise the difficulties students face in learning English if English is unfamiliar for them. However, Nadee incorporated this strategy as a task, including visuals, to improve students' inferencing skills, and she explained the effort she took using the available resources to make her lesson enjoyable and effective.

> *We don't have a smart board. But I used our school TV to do that lesson. Uh, normally I do not use TV to do listening activities. That was the first day that I used our television to do a listening activity. It was really fun and students enjoyed very much because it was a different experience. Yeah, there were only 20 students in my class. We do not have big classrooms and, you know, but in this little area, students really enjoyed the video and I think my lesson was successful that day.* (Nadee, interview 1)

In accordance with Nadee's comment on this lesson, I witnessed her efforts to make changes in her teaching using available resources. Additionally, my visit to Nadee's school helped me understand the daily challenges teachers face, including commuting. It takes long hours to reach from the main city, and there is no signal coverage for using mobile phones in the area. Despite practical concerns, Nadee made efforts to apply her new knowledge by flexibly adjusting her teaching methods in classroom practice. To better understand the changes Nadee made to her classroom practice, I inquired about how she conducted reading lessons before attending the iTESL program.

(Interview 3)

> *Deepa: Before gaining iTESL knowledge, how did you handle reading lessons? Can you explain briefly?*
>
> *Nadee: Yes, normally I would ask students to read the text, or I would read the whole text aloud while they listened. Then, I assigned some students to read while the others listened. After that, we discussed and answered the questions. That's how I conducted reading lessons before the iTESL program.*
>
> *Deepa: OK. Did you use any translations or anything different?*
> *Nadee: Yes, I used the mother tongue.*
> *Deepa: To explain the content?*
>
> *Nadee: Yes, to explain difficult words.*
> *Deepa: OK. Not the whole passage or… [Nadee interrupts]*
> *Nadee: No, only the difficult words, yes.*

This conversation highlights how Nadee adopted iTESL methodologies to conduct reading lessons more effectively. Similarly, Tharu shared what she gained from the iTESL program and how she applied this new knowledge to her classroom practice.

> *I apply the things I learnt at the iTESL programme in the classroom. We did some interesting activities and we followed those things. And when I do pre-reading, while reading and post-reading... ur... students like, they also like those activities and some games. So, we also like those techniques, as there is more student participation.* (Tharu, interview 1)

During my observation, I noticed her efforts to make the lessons more interesting and attention-grabbing by using visuals and enjoyable activities. As Tharu stated, she included some features of the iTESL programme, though she did not follow the stages of a reading lesson exactly as instructed. In the first lesson, I observed there were only eight students in the grade 6 class. The students' behaviour indicated that they were familiar with the techniques used by the teacher except the grouping techniques, which seemed to confuse them. However, they followed the teachers' instructions in English without any difficulty.

Tharu spent nearly an hour arranging the technology for her second lesson, which I observed. Some other members of the staff helped her to use the computer to show the pre-planned PowerPoint slides, but, as she failed to complete the arrangements, she adapted the mode of teaching and did a different lesson for the grade 11 students. There were 11 students in the class out of a total of 16, and the lesson was targeted to get students ready for the O/L examination, specifically focusing on one particular question in the exam paper with Tharu teaching that grammar component in the lesson. There were some shades of the iTESL programme as well, as she contextualised the grammar point according to the iTESL instructions. However, she used translations to explain the content. She commented on why she deviated from using ICQs and CCQs as instructed at iTESL programme.

> *I used the mother tongue because my students are slow learners, most of them. I used the mother tongue to check understanding. Most of the students were absent, do not attend school regularly. So, they do not have the basic knowledge. So, I used the mother tongue more.* (Tharu, post-observation interview).

Tharu highlighted students' irregular school attendance, as discussed in section 7.3.1., as one specific reason for their low proficiency level. Furthermore, she pointed out these contextual challenges as justification for her decision not to apply some of the new techniques and CPD knowledge.

> *Always we have to think about our students, the level of the students, when we apply new things we learnt from any workshop we participate in. First of all, we have to think of the students' capacity, depending on the students' capacity, whether they can manage, and we have to arrange the*

> *lessons. And also not only, uh, based on the examinations, we have to teach them to use them in day-to-day life.* (Tharu, interview 1)

In terms of applying new knowledge in classroom practice, Nadee and Tharu, despite working in similar contexts, had different perspectives. Nadee implemented the acquired knowledge and skills by making amendments to activities based on contextual specifications, while Tharu opted for the most applicable techniques for the students' proficiency level, disregarding practices that were challenging to implement with students of lower proficiency.

However, both Nadee and Tharu experienced disappointments in their attempts to implement the CPD knowledge they gained in the classroom due to experts' lack of understanding of the context and students' background. They believed that this lack of understanding might impede the teachers' attempts to implement new knowledge in the classroom, and this will be discussed in detail in the following section.

7.5 Factors impeding CPD and implementation of new practices

Nadee and Tharu elaborated on the factors they encountered that hindered their CPD and application of new knowledge in their classroom practices, believing that the lack of government intervention for CPD provision, limited facilities in schools, and experts' lack of contextual understanding impeded CPD and its implementation. However, upon triangulating interview data and classroom observations, it became evident that Tharu and Nadee attempted to mitigate these issues in diverse ways. In the subsequent sections, I will discuss what Tharu and Nadee highlighted under these three headings.

7.5.1 Lack of government intervention for providing CPD

Nadee and Tharu were critical of the lack of government intervention in providing teachers with free CPD opportunities, acknowledging that not every teacher could afford or was willing to personally invest in professional development. However, Nadee talked about her interest in gaining CPD and how she spent her own money to achieve her higher education goals. She also commented on the challenges faced by other teachers in that context.

> *Government also should pay attention to this matter because normally, I don't know actually, I don't know whether there are any courses free of charge. Uh, I mean, postgraduate or anything, Masters, we normally we have to pay for that. That's the problem. That's why many teachers do not try to do any professional development things. (*Nadee, interview 1*)*

Nadee believed that it was the responsibility of the authorities to encourage teachers by providing free opportunities, and neglecting this might impede the process of CPD

and the expected outcomes. As Tharu pointed out in section 7.3.1, not every teacher could afford CPD or higher education, especially with low salaries and particularly those teachers working in rural areas. Therefore, she suggested that the authorities should pay more attention to facilitating teachers with frequent opportunities for professional development, though her comment indicated that their requests had fallen on deaf ears. Tharu received a three-day iTESL training eight years after completing the 10-day 'English as a life skill' programme, and she felt the government had not adequately supported her CPD efforts.

> *Yes, it's better to have* [CPD] *continuously, year by year or after six months as we don't have opportunities frequently. Yes, as teachers we requested the higher authorities and zonal and the provincial education offices to organise long-term programmes, more than five days at least.* (Tharu, interview 1)

Tharu further emphasised the responsibility of higher authorities to provide trainer visits to offer onsite mediation for developing their practices. As she highlighted, during the time of this study, there was only one in-service adviser for the entire zone, responsible for 158 schools due to the retirements of two ISAs. Tharu expressed dissatisfaction with the authorities for not having plans for new recruits or replacements.

> *I like when ISAs visit us regularly. I asked our ADE* [Additional Director of English]*, but due to the lack of ISAs, he can do nothing. I think it is the problem, and authorities must do something.* (Tharu, interview 2)

Tharu also commented that for three years during the COVID-19 pandemic, ESL teachers did not receive any CPD opportunities, while teacher training courses were available for other subjects.

Nadee observed that teachers in rural settings were marginalised, expressing her views about the authorities not addressing practical issues by providing free opportunities.

> *Sometimes we, those days, we did not receive even letters. So, I have to search and go for workshops. But, now we have WhatsApp groups and everything, I think this situation will change. We can receive information about some workshops with this facility.* (Nadee, interview 2)

She highlighted that she personally felt underprivileged as she did not received invitation letters for CPD programmes on time or at all. This situation hindered CPD attendance before the pandemic. However, post-pandemic, the impacts were positive due to improved communication methods. Nadee expressed hope for a shift from conventional methods of sending letters to digitalisation when inviting teachers to CPD programmes to avoid delays with the invitations.

7.5.2 Lack of facilities

Teachers acquire and practice new techniques during training programmes at training centres. However, when they implement new techniques in their classrooms, they often find themselves having to make all the decisions independently and encounter classroom management issues while implementing certain techniques. Nadee shared one such experience she faced, when conducting group activities in congested classrooms.

> *Some teachers blamed me, complaining that my students were very noisy. They said they were noisy, but, uh, not because they were gossiping or having personal chats; they tried to speak in English. But those teachers complained that they were noisy. However, now that problem is over. Now I have an activity room.* (Nadee, interview 1)

Nadee resolved this issue by finding a separate room (the activity room) within her school, where she conducted these activities with her students during the English lesson. However, not every school has spare rooms available to create activity rooms. For instance, Krishan, who taught in an urban setting (see case study 1), faced a similar challenge with his noisy classroom, as they had connected classrooms with over 35 students. By contrast, Nadee, in her rural setting, had only 10 students in her class. Therefore, this ill feeling may stem from a lack of understanding, collegiality and tolerance among colleagues. Nadee highlighted that teachers need to be mindful of each other's endeavours and work together as a community to achieve the same professional goals.

As discussed in section 7.3.4., on the day I visited her school, Tharu experienced issues due to a lack of facilities when attempting to use technology to teach English to grade 11 students. She had concerns regarding her established teacher identity as an experienced teacher and considered this incident a failure, expressing her embarrassment as follows.

> *Because of the technology issue, I couldn't do the planned lesson. My slides are in my pen drive but I couldn't open it. I had to do another lesson. I spent more than half an hour trying to operate with the support of my colleagues.* (Tharu, post-observation interview)

Teachers encounter practical issues when trying to implement new knowledge, owing to a lack of facilities in their schools. Tharu rearranged the classroom by moving tables to another separate room for her planned lesson to use the technology. However, she ultimately had to give it up and experienced disappointment. Similarly, Nadee complained about the lack of resources and the failure of authorities to take responsibility for providing resources to teachers in rural settings.

I think, uh, instructors and certain authorities, they also have that responsibility, I think, because, we can teach but we need facilities for that. We need training. We need different, I mean, materials. Personally, I don't have anything in my school. Uh, I spend my money to buy resources for visual aids. So, the authorities should take the responsibility for that. (Nadee, interview 1)

This specifically highlights the difficulties encountered by teachers working in rural settings when planning lessons and trying to follow the instructions given in the training programmes. Along with the training itself, teachers expect facilities to make their tasks easier to realistically implement in the classroom. Additionally, teachers expect collaborative, friendly onsite mediation from experts who can better feel the difficulties teachers encounter. Therefore, experts require good intrapersonal skills in handing mediational tasks. However, despite the lack of facilities, in these interventions, teachers become embarrassed on certain occasions when trainers, lacking contextual understanding, try to pressurise teachers to follow their methodologies. The next section focuses on the impact of experts' lack of contextual understanding.

7.5.3 Experts' lack of contextual understanding

Tharu complained about the lack of understanding among higher officials and CPD programme planners regarding the contextual challenges. According to Tharu, teachers working in rural settings require different methodologies and strategies to motivate students effectively. She recalled some of her negative experiences when certain higher officials and trainers visited the school to observe her lessons.

When some people visit our schools, they think, uh, about their standard, but they don't think about our students. So they say, you do this and this way. But we cannot follow their advice; they have to think about our students. So, we have to plan our lessons for our students thinking of their level and difficulties. (Tharu, interview 1)

Thus, teachers face quandaries regarding whether to follow the advice of higher officials and their methodologies, or to utilise newly gained CPD knowledge to develop their own flexible methodologies that suit the level and needs of their students. However, Tharu's words indicate how she constructed her teacher identity and self-efficacy by choosing the best practices for the benefit of her students.

Trainers can say anything, but we need to think what is most suited to our students' ability. Our students have to sit for their examination. So, we have the responsibilities to do, uhm, uplift the results also. So, we arrange our lessons according to the students' level. (Tharu, interview 1)

As an experienced teacher, Tharu was able to regulate her teacher identity, while acknowledging that these circumstances might cause inexperienced teachers to feel

professionally inadequate. Nadee, as an inexperienced teacher in a rural setting, expressed her disappointment about trainer visits.

> *Only one time. I have been working there since 2017, only one time for the whole four-year period, only one day I got that chance to teach a lesson for a trainer to observe. (*Nadee, interview 1)

This first visit was disastrous, as the trainer advised Nadee to maximise the use of English in the classroom. According to Nadee, this demonstrated the trainer's lack of understanding about the context.

> *But the problem is my students are somewhat weak and they are very poor. So, some of our experts don't, I mean, don't know how to work with this type of student. They speak only in English, so my students can't understand, now they can understand, but at the beginning of my... when I came to this school, some of our students were even, they couldn't write letters. The trainers came to our school and asked me to use only English. So, that was the problem, because they rarely come to our places they don't know about our students and their backgrounds. They only focus on... normally, they compare our students with good students.* (Nadee, interview 2)

According to Nadee's further clarification, she labelled the students in leading schools with high proficiency levels as 'good students'. However, she attempted to gradually upgrade students' proficiency levels soon after beginning her career at her first school. She observed progress in students' understanding of her classroom language and instructions and minimised the use of the mother tongue, but she expressed dissatisfaction with the behaviour of trainers during their very first visit to her school. She believed that this type of intervention and these criticisms hindered the implementation of new practices, as they did not receive positive feedback from experts. Nadee insisted that her hard work as the only English teacher in the school, covering all the grades and facing hardships in the rural setting, should be appreciated with supportive interventions rather than marginalisation. The next section focuses on this factor in detail with regard to collegial support and the pros and cons of trainer interventions for classroom implementation of new knowledge.

7.6 Collegial reciprocity vis-a-vis trainer intervention

Teachers attend CPD programmes to gain new knowledge, methodologies and strategies to enhance their classroom practice. They engage in simulated practices with colleagues during certain programmes to refine their practical skills. While they may successfully perform these activities with their colleagues, they often encounter unforeseen challenges when attempting to implement their new knowledge in real classrooms with actual students when they return to their schools. Consequently, teachers require on-site support and mediation to address contextual challenges

effectively. Nadee and Tharu explained how they received support for the implementation of new knowledge and from whom they received it. Furthermore, they expected the mediators to possess specialised knowledge, offer flexible interventions and demonstrate contextual understanding.

7.6.1 Trainer intervention; motivations vs demotivation

In interview 1, I invited Nadee to imagine herself in the trainer's position and consider what support she would offer teachers for implementing learned techniques in the classroom. This allowed her to reflect on her expectations.

> *If I were the trainer, I would go to their schools and I would check whether they follow what they learnt or whether they need my help. Surely, I would do that because I did not receive anything like that.* (Nadee, Interview 1)

Nadee recalled her own experience as a beginner teacher and commented on the support inexperienced teachers should receive. During her initial years, she faced disappointments rather than receiving support from experts regarding classroom implementation, as discussed in the previous section (7.4.3). Her explanations indicate that the rural setting placed her at a disadvantage.

> *I think, as I have at least five years' experience, we know how to change our mind and how to change our way of teaching. We can manage it, but new teachers don't have that experience. Their students are very new to them, uh, and they haven't used these textbooks and materials much, so they have to study it. They should receive support from trainers more.* (Nadee, interview 2)

Nadee believed that novice teachers require more scaffolding through trainer visits, observations, and feedback. However, she remained confident in her ability to overcome difficulties by adapting her teaching practices as necessary.

Although Tharu had some negative experiences with trainer visits, as explained in section 7.4.3, she did not resist them but instead welcomed them.

> *If they come to visit us, observe and give us feedback, or advice, we like it, because we are going on our own way, although we use the techniques we learnt in workshops. Our students also like it and we like when they come to our schools and observe us.* (Tharu, interview 2)

She acknowledged that the lack of expert support would lead her to rely on routine practices, which might hinder the application of new knowledge. Although she invited trainers to visit her school, the scarcity of trainers in the context affected frequent visits to receive expected support. Nadee did not receive expert support due to the remoteness of the area, as trainers rarely visited her school. Consequently, both Nadee and Tharu found collegial support to be a feasible and promising alternative.

7.6.2 Collegial reciprocity

Connecting to the principles of Exploratory Practice, the sub-theme of collegial reciprocity was identified as a specific scenario where teachers support one another. As the only English teacher in her school, Nadee had no opportunity at her school to receive or give support to colleagues regarding classroom practice. However, she sought support and maintained a sense of community with colleagues from neighbouring schools by engaging in voluntary activities such as English camps, societies, and exam support seminars for students. Through these activities, she developed her teacher identity despite the disadvantageous background in which she worked, which demonstrates her proactive approach to professional development despite the challenges she faced in her own school. She also admired some of her colleagues and their teaching methodologies.

> *I am alone here but our teachers working in neighbouring schools are very supportive. At the beginning of my teaching there, one teacher gave me term notes and activity plans. Actually, she helped me to make up my mind to teach there. Especially, another colleague (…) inspired me a lot. I love to see her teaching; actually, her way of teaching is marvellous. And there are some of my colleagues who are doing YouTube channels. As I said, those people inspired me. I tried to imitate their methods.* (Nadee, interview 1)

Nadee's remarks indicated that she benefitted more from the support of her colleagues than from that of trainers. Additionally, she specified areas in which she could further develop her teaching with the help of her colleagues.

> *Especially, they helped me to teach, uh, loudly because in those days, I was a very silent person. I didn't speak that loudly, so they helped me to solve that problem, especially, then how to create very attractive visual aids. Sometimes they helped me to, and I got their support to make activities other than the textbook.* (Nadee, interview 2)

Likewise, Nadee was willing to assist new teachers by voluntarily organising English camps with a team of teachers from neighbouring schools. Nadee established her unique identity as a teacher through supporting the teacher community.

> *I supported the teachers in my school when the new teachers came. I gave them some advice about our area or our content and, uh, the things we have to do to our younger colleagues. When I handle seminars for grade 11 students and when I was conducting English day camps, I supported them and also they supported me.* (Nadee, interview 2)

Similarly, Tharu admired the collegial support and feedback, finding it stress-free and readily available from peers at the same level rather than from higher hierarchical positions.

I must say that collegial support is actually very useful because when we are doing some activities or planning lessons we can collaborate with them. Their feedback on our lessons helps us to do future lessons effectively. When I do some lessons like teaching grammar and teaching reading and useful activities, they help us. When I have some questions or doubts, or if I have forgotten something about some areas, I ask my colleagues, and we help each other. (Tharu, interview 2)

This demonstrates her growing confidence in being able to explore, reflect and respond to teaching in contextually appropriate ways with collegial reciprocity. However, Nadee and Tharu expressed their feelings towards the change they expected in teachers and in the system for better outcomes in CPD.

7.7 Views on future direction for CPD

When considering their views, what they emphasised was the need for various changes in the system for better CPD outcomes. Moreover, Nadee and Tharu were critical of trainer behaviour, the lack of intervention by authorities, and teachers' negligence in professional development. Nadee acknowledged that in the recent past, they lacked proper communication methods to receive information due to limited technology use. However, with the pandemic eradicating this barrier, teachers' lives became more digitalised. Based on recent experiences, Nadee asserted that it is up to teachers to be more attentive in finding better CPD opportunities.

I found many modern ways of teaching, methods and activities. But, I mean, we cannot satisfy actually, umm, with the opportunities that are given by the authorities, but if we are motivated, we can find and we can develop. Otherwise, I think there are not any ways of organising such things in Sri Lanka. (Nadee, interview 3)

Nadee indirectly pointed her finger at teachers who wait for authorities to provide opportunities, encouraging them to utilise available modes of communication instead to build networks and seize CPD opportunities.

Maybe they do not use technology properly or they just teach and go home. That may be the reason. They don't want to communicate with others or they don't want to uplift their professionalism. Nowadays, there are many online courses and online meetings to uplift our skills, improve our knowledge, and improve our professional skills. There are so many opportunities we can get easily, if we have good communication, I think. (Nadee, interview 3)

While Nadee expected change from teachers, Tharu emphasised the need for trainers to exhibit qualities conducive to building positive relationships with teachers.

I think trainers are better being a friend, and they need to cooperate with teachers and have friendly conversations, like, I mean, without criticising

> *the mistakes because pronunciation is different from teacher to teacher because we are not… er... native speakers.* (Tharu, interview 3)

This indicates that trainers need to show flexibility and respect for teachers' beliefs and perceptions, rather than provoking irritation. Overall, aside from major system changes such as transitioning from an examination-oriented system to a skills-oriented one, Nadee and Tharu advocated for small-scale changes in trainers and teachers to enhance the CPD process in this context.

7.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I detailed the perceptions of Nadee and Tharu regarding their entry into teaching and the different modes of initial training based on recruitment procedures. Next, I explored Nadee and Tharu's reflections regarding CPD experiences highlighting the inconsistencies in CPD provision, particularly the marginalising of teachers working in rural settings. I also examined their perspectives on the nature of the effective CPD opportunities they had received. Both expressed positive views towards the iTESL programme, including its content and delivery, while also expressing concerns about the limited follow-up and on-site support for implementing new knowledge.

In terms of addressing their professional development needs, they preferred collegial support over waiting for authorities to facilitate CPD opportunities. Furthermore, they highlighted the lack of contextual understanding among trainers and the inflexible nature of guidance provision, which led to dissatisfaction. Overall, Nadee and Tharu's perceptions highlight that CPD needs to emphasise the positive elements of what teachers already know and do boost their confidence in working through, exploring and understanding issues that are directly relevant to them and their contexts, and assist them in developing the personal and professional skills needed to become better practitioners.

In the next chapter, I will present my conceptualisations incorporating the relevant literature, taking into account the perceptions of participants from all three case studies.

Chapter 8 – Discussion

The nature of teaching demands that teachers engage in continuing career long professional development, but particular needs and the ways in which they may be met will vary according to circumstance, personal and professional histories and current dispositions.

(Day, 1999, p.15)

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of the study in light of the relevant literature, reviewing how each participant perceived CPD, both from their personal experience and from the experiences of their colleagues. The primary objective of this study has been to understand ESL teacher perceptions of their CPD experiences, CPD's impact on classroom practice and how teachers' experiences of CPD vary according to the local context. To address Research Question 1 (RQ1), I will first focus on teacher perceptions of the nature of the CPD they received, their specific expectations from CPD, what they planned to gain, and the actual benefits acquired in fulfilling their professional and social roles. Next, I will delve into the attributes of CPD that can stimulate change in ESL teaching and learning, potentially leading to significant system-wide changes. Finally, I will then explore the factors influencing the change process.

From there, I will examine teacher perceptions of the support they received for implementing new knowledge in the classroom, aligning with their expectations for an enhanced CPD scenario, addressing RQ2. By considering findings related to the support and obstacles in the CPD process, I will scrutinise teachers' expectations for collaborative CPD, drawing connections to the principles and procedures of Reflective Practice (RP) and Exploratory Practice (EP). Furthermore, I will expand the discussion by examining the potential benefits of RP and EP practices in enhancing the CPD process. To begin with, I will explore the nature of CPD in this specific context.

8.2 Nature of CPD in context

In Sri Lanka, teachers receive CPD mainly through planned programmes provided by authorities, who invite teachers to attend. However, they are not penalised for non-attendance. Therefore, teachers have the freedom to decide whether to attend when they receive invitations from authorities. The findings demonstrate that

teachers' decisions whether to participate in CPD depend on several factors, such as the quality of the programme and its delivery, as well as their previous experiences with trainers. Having this element of choice, it was common for teachers to first research the trainers conducting the programme and then decide whether to attend, based on their previous experiences with them. This suggests that teachers did not attend CPD programmes uncritically but rather they carefully assessed various options to meet their expectations. However, it was obvious that there were limited options for CPD in their context and they had concerns about receiving CPD in terms of regulating their teacher identity and addressing societal and contextual needs within the evolving system of education. Moreover, they found existing CPD provision to be too infrequent and not well-planned. Thus, teachers expected more frequent and well-organised programmes to update their knowledge and skills, as they believed that it is the responsibility of the authorities to provide CPD opportunities to teachers. In line with this argument, Day (1999) states that "professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities" (p.4), adding that most of the formal programmes for professional development are organised to introduce curriculum changes or to address specific issues within the education system. Highlighting the infrequent provision of CPD, Day and Sachs (2004) claim that professional development initiatives are typically introduced when there are concerns about teachers' ability to maintain their professional identity. However, findings suggest that in the Sri Lankan context, CPD is needed for various reasons depending on teachers' requirements, which I will further discuss in section 8.3.

Participants emphasised that most teachers had limited capacity to take responsibility for their own CPD and, therefore, had to rely on CPD programmes offered and their trainers' support, which was not always effective. The teachers pointed out that many trainers strictly followed a top-down approach and did not consider their professional needs with some trainers just repeating the existing content without introducing new knowledge or techniques while others conducted 'one-man shows', perceiving teachers as passive listeners; they did not give them space to engage in discussions and benefit from collaborative learning, which contradicts what CPD research suggests. With regard to their study, Hanks and Dikilitaş (2018b) emphasise the importance of giving teachers an opportunity to "take control of their learning" (p.33), which they demonstrate in their practitioner research project in Turkey in which they adopted an egalitarian principle of EP practice and allowed teachers' to explore their own puzzles. According to this principle, EP practice will encourage autonomous learning and develop the teachers' understanding of the puzzles in their own contexts. In this study, participants

emphasised similar collaborative environment in CPD programmes and follow-up visits to work with experts and colleagues for the development of their classroom practice.

Tharu initially attended top-down CPD programmes for the sake of enjoying time with colleagues. Yet, through informal professional discussions, reflections and the exchange of experiences and perspectives with colleagues, even in the absence of substantial support from experts, she realised the transformative power of these conversations in reshaping her ideologies and perceived her teacher identity. While discussing her practice with her colleagues, she developed a deeper understanding of her ability to confront contextual challenges by drawing upon her knowledge and understanding of her students as an experienced teacher. Thus, she valued these collegial conversations over the conservative, trainer-led, top-down programmes they were experiencing. Opposed to this top-down training model, Malderez and Wedell (2007) suggest that trainers should provide teachers with opportunities over time to develop awareness and understanding, enabling them to gain “unconscious thinking” which leads to “experiential knowing”, a process which allows teachers to intuitively feel what is right (p.33). They state that “[p]rofessionals are autonomous and use relevant knowledge and skills to make practical decisions in a range of ever-changing situations” (p.11). To reach this level of understanding, teachers should be facilitated with a suitable community and culture and given adequate time for their growth to improve their capabilities (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

Findings highlight the various CPD experiences that participants had during their career trajectory that they believed helped them fulfil their expectations of developing their professionalism. Only two participants who joined the system before 2009 attended both the ‘English as a life skill’ programme (also referred to as ‘Speak English our way’) and iTESL programme, which were made available to all ESL teachers across the island in 2009 and 2019, respectively. The ‘English as a life skill’ programme brought about an attitudinal change, emphasising the use of English for effective communication rather than as a demonstration of one’s social status, and this shift in perspective made teachers more confident in using English for communication. Participants reflected on what they learnt over the 10-day ‘English as a life skill’ programme 13 years earlier, admiring the programme because it helped them improve their speaking skills, apart from their teaching skills, during their early career stage, fulfilling one of their main requirements.

Teachers consider obtaining fluency in speaking as a prerequisite because almost all ESL teachers in Sri Lanka conduct their higher education in their L1 and start speaking in English upon becoming ESL teachers. As a result, most teachers lack

fluency in speaking in English when they enter the profession. The teachers in this study also appreciate how the programme encouraged both students and the general public to speak in English with confidence. The findings highlight the advantages of participating in long-term programmes that included follow-up observations. However, they had concerns regarding the sudden disappearance of such well-planned, long-term programmes, which they believed should be offered more frequently. The programme gained popularity through publicity that featured local celebrities such as cricketers and sports personalities, which boosted the confidence of students, teachers and the public in speaking English even with mistakes. However, before achieving the expected goals, the programme disappeared due to the change in the political regime, as it could not continue without support from the new government. As Meyler (2015) explains, 'English as a life skill' was a "highly ambitious" programme, which disappeared after a lot of money was spent on teacher training, guidebooks and materials. Meyler (2015) further states, "[After] a flurry of publicity in 2010, it seemed to fade away" (p.181) and considers this as "a missed opportunity" (p.183). With regard to a similar curriculum reform project initiated by the US government, Fullan (2007) states that "[h]uge sums of money were poured into major curriculum reforms" (p.5). Therefore, this indicates that this is a common issue globally where many countries might not find the money spent on CPD to be a worthwhile investment.

The next long-term CPD programme, iTESL, was planned after conducting a needs analysis during which the organisers identified teaching grammar, teaching reading, and using activities effectively as the major areas in need of development. Moreover, the primary goal of the two-year iTESL project was to transform the education system by developing the twenty-first-century skills and competencies in students such as critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and decision-making (Wyburn, 2020). However, it took a decade to initiate the next long-term, island-wide CPD programme, iTESL, following the 'English as a life skill' programme. As Richards and Farrell (2005) explain, teachers' knowledge and skills become obsolete over time and may no longer align with the current requirements of the school if they remain stagnant and are not updated. Thus, this issue should gain attention and CPD should be provided more frequently to keep teachers refreshed and up-to-date with new teaching methodologies

All participants attended the iTESL programme, which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was marked as the last CPD programme they attended before I conducted the research. Consequently, they shared their perceptions regarding the iTESL experience. In addition to these diverse experiences, all participants shared their insights on the extent to which participants' expectations around bringing about

a change in the system were met through the iTESL programme, which I will discuss in more detail in section 8.4. In the next section, I will explore what participants' expectations were from CPD in general.

8.3 Participants' expectations from CPD

Findings highlighted four primary expectations for CPD among teachers.

1. Retention of acquired skills to prevent marginalisation as novice teachers when working in rural settings
2. Provision of extra support to enhance student proficiency levels
3. Fulfilment of moral purposes in teaching
4. Development of teacher identity

I will examine each of these expectations in turn by exploring participants' perceptions and relevant literature. As beginner teachers, participants sought out CPD to update their language skills while working in their first schools, which were located in rural settings. They feared marginalisation from the ESL teacher community due to the potential loss of their English proficiency. However, while teachers were experiencing isolation, stagnation and a lack of collegial support, society expects ESL teachers to be proficient English users who can assist the school community and those in need with day-to-day tasks, demanding a good knowledge of English. This demand drove participants to maintain their social status and teacher identity as ESL teachers. For instance, fluent English speakers in the ESL teacher community held more power than less fluent teachers in the Sri Lankan context, motivating teachers to belong to that prestigious ESL teacher group. Similar to this situation, Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) explain how "organizational conditions" in schools influence teachers during their early careers. Referring to Rosenholtz's (1991) "stuck and moving" schools concept, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that teachers face uncertainties in stuck schools where there are no collaborative cultures for learning, in contrast to moving schools. Thus, due to the absence of certainty, "arising out of trust, advice and shared expertise" in stuck schools, teachers stagnate in the system (p.112). Resembling these stuck schools, Lewin (1990) identified a similar situation based on the data from his study, where transformations are slow in rural settings in Sri Lanka, due to their distant contacts with authorities. Rivers and Houghton (2013) posit that individuals possess "multiple selves" in society, depending on the roles they represent in their group (p.2), and that some social groups within the same society are identified as "more powerful and prestigious than others" (p.3). This indicates that social pressure a motivational

factor for gaining CPD, specifically for the teachers who work in rural and marginalised settings.

Nadee's and Anjalee's circumstances and expectations as beginner teachers were similar, as both worked in rural settings after completing their internship period at leading schools, and the findings indicate their concerns about losing the language competencies they had acquired during their internships at high-calibre schools. They acknowledged that working in a non-English speaking environment would lead to a decline in their language skills due to limited opportunities to use English. Realising this would be an issue, they actively sought out the rare opportunities organised by various affiliated institutions rather than solely relying on invitations for government-organised programmes. In addition, they enrolled in expensive professional development and higher education courses, considering CPD the bedrock of their career development that enables them to enhance their professionalism by developing autonomous decision-making skills (Day and Sachs, 2004). As Rosenholtz (1989) argues, teachers who feel efficacious are more likely to confront challenges and make efforts to strengthen their professional practices and maintain positive attitudes towards students' capabilities. In contrast, teachers who lack efficacy might perceive students as incompetent and put the blame on students for their failures. In this study, participants who experienced marginalisation as beginner teachers, demonstrated self-efficacy in their CPD search and practices.

Provision of extra support to enhance student proficiency levels is another expectation that the findings highlighted. Tharu expected to gain new knowledge in order to scaffold students who were frequently absent due to family matters. When parents need support from their children for their daily earnings, parents often prevent their children from attending school, and Tharu had concerns about supporting such students to improve their proficiency levels. Additionally, when students in the same class have different proficiency levels, teachers need strategies to make their teaching beneficial to all, and CPD would help learn them essential strategies for making their teaching more participatory. In this study, participants had diverse expectations at the early stages of their career, influenced by their internship experiences, social backgrounds and proficiency levels. For instance, Anjalee, who worked at a leading school during her internship, was motivated to achieve higher goals to enhance her professional capital. On the other hand, Tharu's expectations were primarily oriented on developing her students' skills to obtain good grades in public examinations. Consequently, by continuously developing their professional skills, becoming more qualified and maintaining motivation throughout their career trajectory, they might offer high-quality teaching to students, which is one of the primary expectations of most teachers. Supporting this finding, Day and Sachs

(2004) state that one primary expectation of the authorities in providing CPD opportunities to teachers is to ultimately raise students' standards to meet societal needs in the developing world by creating well-qualified, accountable teachers capable of achieving better outcomes. Day and Sachs (2004) claim that teachers' critical inquiry when applying learned knowledge, individually or collectively, in the classroom can strengthen their "knowledge-of practice", fulfilling societal requirements such as egalitarianism and ultimately improving students' outcomes (p.8). However, participants' expectations regarding CPD evolved over the course of their career journeys in response to the changing demands of their occupations. As Tarone and Allwright (2005) state, beginner teachers might initially expect to acquire basic teaching skills to survive in the system with the later goal of developing conceptualisations to find fulfilment from what they do.

In the following quote, Day (1999) provides a comprehensive definition of the CPD process, encompassing the modes of CPD and the expectations associated with it.

> It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew, and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching: and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking. (p.4)

Building upon the above explanation, Hayes (2014) further elucidates that CPD requirements vary across different stages of teachers' career journeys, depending on their diverse motives and expectations. Similarly, participants in this study had multiple expectations, with moral purpose being one primary expectation.

Anjalee's journey exemplifies the connection with the moral purpose. Anjalee's motivation was rooted more in her love for the language than a passion for teaching itself, which fuelled her confidence in becoming an ESL teacher. However, as she gained satisfaction while working with her students, she gradually developed a deep affection for them and recognised the moral significance of her role in ensuring they received the best education possible. Despite initially being unaware of the moral purposes inherent in teaching, Anjalee evolved her moral commitments over time and realised the importance of being accountable and optimising her professional capital to fulfil her responsibilities as an ESL teacher. Day and Sachs (2004) propose that teaching is "a moral enterprise" primarily centred on student achievement and that facilitating teachers with CPD addresses individual needs of both students and teachers to function as change agents. Supporting this view, Mann (2005) highlights that language teacher development goes beyond professional advancement but is deeply intertwined with personal growth, encompassing values and moral development in teachers as professionals. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) posit that

to promote professional capital for quality teaching, teachers should be “highly committed, thoroughly prepared, continuously developed, properly paid, well networked with each other” (p.3). Anjalee exhibited most of these requirements, which she could manage by herself except for being “properly paid”. This indicates her moral commitment to giving priority to providing the best she could for her students.

Findings suggest that there were limited opportunities for beginner teachers to develop moral purposes in teaching through CPD programmes. However, Nirmal developed his moral purposes at a later stage, using collegial discussions to motivate students for learning. As a result, as a beginner teacher, his lack of moral purpose in teaching led him to punish students when he observed inappropriate behaviour. Later, after receiving guidance from senior teachers, he transformed himself by developing moral purposes and using different strategies to control students instead of giving physical punishment. Nirmal gained self-awareness by listening to the members in his social group in order to incorporate harmless strategies instead of physical punishment to develop students’ learning habits. This was evident in teachers’ behaviour and the use of the term "පුතේ" in the first language to mean ‘son’ when participants addressed students in the classroom. (In the Sri Lankan context, teachers commonly use it for both genders.) However, words alone cannot evoke affection in students and teachers need to integrate moral feelings into their teaching. In this study, participants demonstrated their moral commitment through both words and deeds. As Day (1999) explains, when teachers synthesize their “head and the heart”, they can fulfil moral purposes and enhance the success of their teaching (p.16). Moreover, teaching experience, maturity and cultural values can influence teachers to express either parental or fraternal concerns for their students.

Another expectation regarding gaining CPD was the development of participants’ teacher identities. For instance, participants had specific obligations that the broader society expected from ESL teachers, including organising English camps, English competitions or completing forms in English for the school community. Additionally, the wider community expected support with drafting emails and reading and translating documents from English to L1, as they viewed ESL teachers as English language experts. As Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) argue, teachers, as moral agents, cannot ignore these responsibilities. Consequently, teachers feel pressured not to jeopardise societal expectations by failing to meet these obligations and consider CPD as essential for their societal integration. In this study, Nadee, as an inexperienced teacher, specifically highlighted this concern.

Apart from demonstrating their identity in the wider society, teachers had an expectation to establish teacher identity in front of their students by incorporating new practices in the classroom. Participants experimented with new practices in the classroom after attending the iTESL programme. Anjalee incorporated ICQs and CCQs in the classroom in a balanced way by minimising first language use, while Nadee changed the methodologies she previously used for grammar teaching after attending iTESL and incorporated alternative ways to incorporate new strategies for her classroom practice. In these ways, these teachers identified their capacities to create a better picture of themselves for their learners and among the ESL teacher community. Rivers and Houghton (2013) state that teachers demonstrate their identity in the classroom when altering their practices appropriately according to the contextual needs. However, teacher identity is not a fixed state as it is only one aspect of an individual's larger identity, and each person might perceive their teacher identity from different perspectives (Rivers and Houghton, 2013). Supporting Rivers and Houghton (2013), Dikilitaş and Yaylı (2018) argue that CPD enables teachers to reform their identity through the ideological changes that occur as a result of gaining new knowledge. Findings suggest that the iTESL programme helped participants reform ideologies and construct new identities.

Accordingly, after iTESL participation, all participants underwent ideological changes regarding their established practices and the teacher role, becoming more self-aware of the need to transform the English classroom (see sections 5.3.1 and 6.4.2.) However, due to inadequate support, participants achieved this goal to varying degrees, depending on their personal capacities, motivation and commitment. Therefore, CPD did not consistently change teachers' ideologies or develop their identities every time. Inconsistent CPD practices, attitudes of the teachers and trainers, teachers' capabilities, contextual barriers, time constraints and lack of preparation all affected the extent to which ideologies and teacher identities change. While some teachers adjusted their ideologies through CPD, contextual barriers and individual teacher identities influenced putting new knowledge into practice. According to Rivers and Houghton (2013), developing teachers' identity is one of the fundamental objectives of teacher education. Day et al. (2006) consider enhancing students' performance as one of the primary moral purposes of teachers as professionals, which is also compliant with their ethical values and professional identities. According to Clarke (2008), moral purposes emerge when teachers develop their professional identity, preparing their inner sense to truly embody the role of a teacher, which he identifies as "becoming a teacher" (p.8). Clarke (2008) differentiates "being a teacher" and "becoming a teacher". "Being a teacher" refers to the process of acquiring knowledge and skills to perform as a teacher, whereas

“becoming a teacher” involves turning a person into a teacher by developing their identity (Malderez and Wedell, 2007, p.8), while, according to Danielewicz (2001), becoming a teacher entails the development of teacher identity. As discussed in the literature review, teacher education lays the foundation for identity development (Clarke, 2008). Danielewicz (2001) defines identity as “our understanding of who we are and of who we think other people are” (p.10). In agreement with this definition, Urrieta (2007) explains that identity encompasses not only how others identify and categorise individuals, but also their own understanding of themselves and how they position themselves within society. Accordingly, ESL teachers form their own estimations of their position compared to others within the ESL teacher community. Furthermore, the ways in which they shape their professional behaviour and contributions play a crucial role in creating, maintaining and developing their teacher identity.

As discussed earlier, the findings indicate that participants developed new conceptualisations and refined their teacher identities through iTESL training. However, the two participants who worked in the urban setting, did not immediately put this knowledge into practice in the classroom due to situational constraints, a lack of power or motivation, or lack of empowerment to address contextual barriers. Conversely, Nadee’s teacher identity facilitated her ability to discover alternative methods for integrating new strategies into her classroom practice in the rural setting, thereby further enhancing her teacher identity through experiential learning. According to Dikilitaş and Yaylı (2018), development of skills and identity is not static but changes over time under the influence of teachers’ experiences, while Clarke (2008) delineates how diverse identities are shaped by factors such as power dynamics, social standing, situational factors and internal thoughts and behaviours, all of which influence performance. In fact, Krishan might apply new knowledge in a different context with the support of an expert when he is ready to put that new knowledge into practice.

Findings further suggest participants’ concerns about inconsistent CPD provisions and their worries regarding the absence of follow-up support in the classroom context, and this lack of support in their professional development raises important questions about the sustainability of teachers’ identities. All participants emphasised that teachers in the Sri Lankan context require ongoing scaffolding through CPD to maintain and evolve their professional identities. They highly valued long-term CPD programmes, coupled with follow-up classroom observations, as they could nurture their professional identities through best practices. For instance, Krishan and Tharu found that the two long-term programmes they attended (‘English as a life skill’ and iTESL) were more beneficial than one-day programmes. All participants found iTESL

to be beneficial, but they expected it to be extended with follow-up observations, rather than limiting it to just three days. Considering these findings, I suggest that authorities should consider continuing iTESL and similar effective CPD programmes for the benefit of novice as well as experienced teachers, while leading them for autonomous and collaborative CPD.

In response to my inquiry about teachers taking responsibility for their own learning, Anjalee (see section 6.5.2) shared her perspective. While she acknowledged that self-directed learning is the ideal and ultimate goal of CPD programmes, Anjalee ascertained that not every ESL teacher in the Sri Lankan context is ready to independently regulate their learning and develop their teacher identity without external assistance. The findings emphasised the importance of having experts with contextual understanding available in their contexts to support CPD until teachers can develop their teacher identity and develop their autonomous decision-making skills. This highlights their expectation for scaffolding through CPD. Dikilitaş and Yaylı (2018) report how reflection and self-evaluation strategies were incorporated in a study with Turkish teacher participants about successful transformations they engaged in, which contributed to their identity development. Their continuous and autonomous involvement in action research gradually influenced a change in their teacher identity (Dikilitaş and Yaylı, 2018). Dikilitaş and Yaylı's (2018) study found that self-regulated CPD opportunities were more beneficial for teachers' identity development, which suggests that a more self-directed and self-regulated approach to professional development may contribute to a stronger and more sustainable teacher identity. As discussed in literature review, Dikilitaş and Yaylı (2018) argue,

> Insights into teacher identity are more evident when teachers are open to development and change and can engage in self-directed learning over a longer period, as opposed to 'one-shot' teacher training sessions, in which interaction may be much more limited. (p.416)

Consequently, participants' expectations of long-term programmes and scaffolding could guide them toward achieving self-directed learning.

8.4 Inconsistent processes and practices

The findings highlight the need for a gradual, four-way transformation within the system to address inconsistencies in people, practices, and structures. Teachers, trainers, training programs, and the broader system must undergo changes to resolve these discrepancies in teachers' CPD and classroom practices. Building on these findings and the expectations discussed earlier, I will first examine the four key aspects contributing to the inconsistencies in the CPD process and practices.

8.4.1 Teachers

Most teachers lack positive attitudes and potential for autonomous CPD and are unaware of its ongoing nature. They tend to rely on their initial knowledge and lack the motivation to pursue self-directed professional growth. Some novice teachers resist collegial support despite their limited teaching skills. Furthermore, some teachers fail to take accountability for attending planned CPD programs designed to enhance their proficiency, which is essential for providing better opportunities to students, as they prioritize their tuition classes or prefer to focus on personal matters instead of engaging in CPD.

8.4.2 Trainers

Trainers generally rely on conventional methodologies in training programs, lack in contextual understanding and repeatedly disseminate knowledge that teachers are already familiar with. Teachers becoming passive listeners in training programmes is a common phenomenon. Most trainers fail to update themselves and are reluctant to use technology or modern techniques. Similarly, Gunawardhane (2011) highlights the poor quality and inefficiency of programs conducted by in-service advisers in Sri Lanka, attributing this to their limited skills in using technology.The trainer-teacher relationship is often unhealthy, distant, and lacks collaboration. Due to miscommunication, a lack of mutual understanding, and the trainers' personal qualities and rigidity, teachers experience emotional stress and resist training opportunities.

8.4.3 Training opportunities

Training opportunities are limited, and most fail to address the needs of teachers or the specific context in which they work. Bandara (2018) highlights this discrepancy in relation to Teachers’ Professional development in Sri Lanka. Moreover, most training opportunities do not cater to the autonomization of teachers. Instead, they encourage teachers to rely on outside expertise. The lack of trainers within the system results in minimal follow-up and onsite support for implementation. Consequently, teachers who attempt to apply new practices in their classrooms often abandon their efforts when faced with challenges. Long-term, island-wide programs frequently fade away before new practices can become firmly established in the system. Additionally, the mismatch between societal expectations and systemic inconsistencies further discourages teachers from implementing their new knowledge, leading them to revert to traditional methods. As a result, the desired changes in classroom practices are not sustained.

8.4.4 System

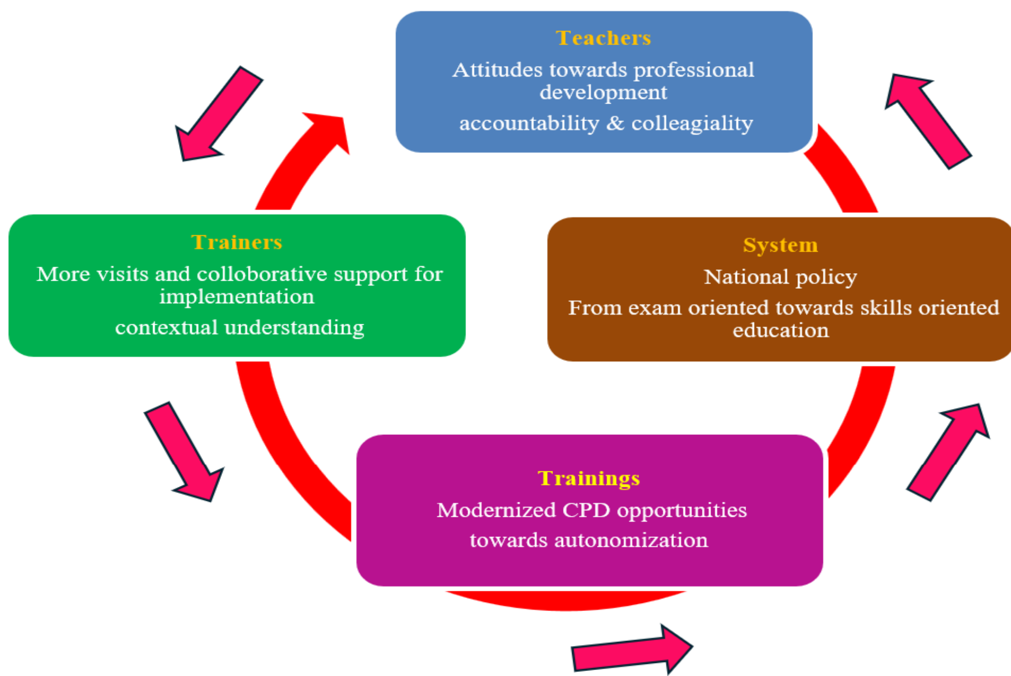
The absence of a national education policy hinders the implementation of new initiatives. Bandara (2018) highlighted this systemic issue in his study of School Based Teacher Development programmes in Sri Lanka. With changes in the political regime, initiatives often disappear and are replaced by new ones that serve political advantages. The exam-oriented education system acts as a barrier to changing classroom practices, as teachers are compelled to focus on preparing students for high-stakes examinations. Teaching English, however, is particularly challenging due to a lack of student motivation to improve their English skills, as English language qualifications and proficiency are not mandatory for entering Advanced Level classes or sitting for the A/L examination. English becomes significant only when students choose university courses or seek employment, at which point they realize the importance of their English language grades and proficiency. Thus, it is obvious that there is a mismatch between what is required for the system and the practicality of reaching the expected goal.

Considering the above discussed discrepancies and participants' expectations identified in this study, I developed a model titled The Cycle of Transformation as a novel contribution which is crucial for mitigating these barriers and advancing the development of the CPD process in Sri Lanka.

8.5 A framework for addressing CPD inconsistencies: The Cycle of Transformation

Figure 8-1, The Cycle of Transformation outlines the identified paths for transformation; teachers, trainers, training programs, and the system that contribute to inconsistencies in CPD processes and practices. Considering the main findings, I propose a reciprocal four-way development and transformation of systems, people, and practices to progress beyond conventional methods and foster collaborative learning. As illustrated in the figure, participants expected system changes, teacher change, and changes in teacher training modes, trainer visits and the nature of classroom observations, which would contribute to the development of the CPD process. This transformation should aim at shifting from existing conventional practices towards more efficient, collaborative and sustainable ones, welcoming change in each system by building positive relationships among teachers, trainers and authorities.

Figure 8-1 The Cycle of Transformation



For instance, as findings demonstrate, detached relationships and lack of communication among teachers, trainers and authorities hindered transformation attempts. Moreover, teachers' attempts to change their classroom practices after gaining new knowledge were influenced by the expectations of stakeholders for exam-oriented practices. Consequently, teachers prioritised conventional practices ignoring the introductions of autonomous learning strategies in CPD programmes. Therefore, this transformation should occur reciprocally, either starting with teacher change for a system change, vice versa, or all four aspects simultaneously.

Participants identified the need for an essential attitudinal change in teachers towards gaining professional development by being accountable for their own development. They were critical of the demotivation of most of the teachers regarding updating their knowledge to suit the current needs of the world. Therefore, they expected to receive well-planned CPD programmes, highlighting the need for modernised CPD opportunities incorporating technology, transformation from top-down instructions towards collaborative attempts and change in the purpose and the nature of trainer visits, as illustrated in Figure 8-1.

Defining the purpose of CPD, Guskey (2002) explains that,

> Professional development programmes are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students. (p.1)

In relation to Guskey's (2002) definition, authorities and trainers should make systematic and collaborative efforts to organise and deliver CPD programmes, enabling teachers to transform their practices, as illustrated in Figure 8-1-The Cycle of Transformation.

Accordingly, reciprocal communication and functioning should be developed between trainers and teachers by sharing teachers' contextual understanding and trainers' knowledge. This mutual understanding will help develop classroom practice. It is also obvious that trainers should act flexibly to bridge the needs of both authorities and teachers, facilitating the transformation of classroom practice. Participants considered updating trainer knowledge, noting that the information trainers conveyed was often outdated; therefore, CPD opportunities should not only prompt changes among teachers but also improve and update trainer knowledge while organising and conducting current CPD programmes.

Moreover, the transformation of trainer support illustrated in Figure 8-1 suggests a different type of trainer visits, one that is more collaborative and focussed on building positive relationships rather than finding faults and giving advice that can harm teacher identity. I suggest that this expectation can be connected with EP, providing bottom-up professional development opportunities to encourage teachers to identify and discuss their puzzles with trainers in a collaborative and autonomous learning environment (Hanks and Dikilitaş, 2018a). As discussed in my literature review, fostering autonomous decision-making in teachers is essential. However, this should begin in a collaborative environment until teachers are equipped with the skills and understanding needed for autonomous learning. As Hanks and Dikilitaş (2018a) explain, EP can be utilised in a step-by-step process, beginning with introducing EP principles, organising workshops, and then enabling teachers to critically investigate puzzles in their classrooms, promoting the EP principle "Quality of Life" (p.3). Alternatively, trainers can join in investigating the puzzles troubling teachers to support them in mitigating challenges, thereby making the transformation process feasible and sustainable.

Participants anticipated significant systemic changes with the introduction of a national education policy (see section 5.5), aiming to transition from an exam-oriented system to a skill-oriented one. As a result of the challenges posed by the exam-centric education system, teachers prioritised preparing students solely for public examinations, and they were therefore reluctant to invest time in their professional development or implement new knowledge in the classroom. This emphasis on exam-preparation, particularly on writing skills for the O/L examination, was apparent in the grade 10 and 11 lessons I observed, which highlights the limited

scope for improving students' speaking skills and creating autonomous learners through CPD programmes that address social demands. Referring to a study conducted in Sri Lanka, Lewin (1990) reports that curriculum reforms were introduced to address the social demand arising from prevalent social instability due to ineffective school education. The study, which focussed on implementing new knowledge for science education in schools, highlighted that teachers lacked the expertise and qualifications to deliver the new knowledge. Additionally, the reforms were not pre-tested, lacked attention to teachers' voices, and suffered from a lack of coordination among relevant authorities (Lewin, 1990). Although Lewin's (1990) study was conducted more than three decades ago, participants in this study highlighted similar inconsistencies in the system.

Findings suggest that teachers who received more CPD opportunities and higher education were more motivated and accountable in developing their knowledge and professional skills. However, they claimed that not all teachers share this level of motivation due to personal characteristics, beliefs and motivations. Therefore, there should be mechanisms to change teachers' attitudes towards their professional development. Reflecting on the educational systems of developed nations, participants stressed the necessity of supporting teachers in obtaining higher educational qualifications. Nirmal preferred that this support include provisions such as scholarships for foreign training programmes and study leave. However, a comparison with educational policies and practices in high-achieving territories like Finland, Alberta and Ontario reveals a significant difference in teachers' higher education qualifications, as teachers in these regions typically hold Master's degrees and receive consistent support for CPD and higher education (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

Considering the gap identified between participants' expectations and the existing forms of CPD available within the context aimed at fostering changes in their classroom practices, my upcoming exploration will centre on comprehending the gains they have acquired through CPD. Furthermore, I will examine the extent to which their CPD experiences have aligned with or hindered the change process in classroom practice, ultimately impacting the transformation of the entire education system in the country.

8.6 Factors inhibit or facilitate teacher change

The findings reveal considerable disparities in the participants' openness and adaptability to embrace and implement change in their classroom practice. Anjalee and Nadee believed initiating change in the classroom is one of their responsibilities

after acquiring new knowledge through CPD, and they welcomed the challenges they encountered during the change process. In contrast, Nirmal remained unchanged in his practices at the time of the study, while Krishan implemented his own methodologies. For instance, Krishan refrained from using group work techniques he learnt at iTESL due to contextual challenges. Instead, he applied personalised strategies he had developed to enhance the effectiveness of his lessons. Tharu experimented with trial-and-error methods to incorporate technology into her classroom but adjusted her planned methodologies when faced with challenges due to lack of facilities.

All participants conducted grammar lessons using a deductive approach, introducing the structure first before they learned about contextualisation in the iTESL programme. While all participants acknowledged the effectiveness of the new grammar teaching methodologies, four of them adapted their practices to teach grammar inductively to varying degrees and found new methodologies more effective as students' involvement increased. Supporting these findings, Wedell (2009) argues that not every teacher finds it easy to change their deep-rooted practices and beliefs and that they might need time for adaptation. Fullan (2007b) describes this transformation process as "reculturing – changing the way things are done" (p.53). Furthermore, he suggests that individuals who feel anxious and apprehensive about making changes require support from experts to facilitate reculturing, explaining that "some people prefer to do the old 'wrong' thing competently rather than the new 'right' thing incompetently" (p.51). Thus, teachers need to be scaffolded by experts until they feel competent in using new methodologies.

Anjalee incorporated the 'scaffolding' technique introduced in the iTESL programme for conducting reading lessons, which she found effective in assisting her students. While Anjalee primarily utilised 'scaffolding' for teaching reading, she also scaffolded learners throughout her lessons by using ICQs and CCQs. Despite making excuses, as teachers commonly do when not implementing new knowledge, Anjalee had a plan to gradually familiarise her students with her teaching methodologies. Alternatively, she used the students' first language (L1) with her new group of grade 6 students to scaffold and aid their learning and understanding of her classroom instructions when needed until they became accustomed to her teaching methodologies. Wedell and Malderez (2013) rightly explain that,

> English teachers who are really intent upon supporting learning (as opposed to, say, finishing the chapter in the textbook or 'covering the syllabus') will also consider whether (and when) their particular learners

> need that particular scaffolding function to be expressed in English or in their mother tongue. (p.41)

Wedell and Malderez (2013) identify scaffolding as “help that is contingent (help that is actually needed) at the time” with an understanding about learner capabilities (p.40). As the students in the class do not possess equal ZPDs (zone of proximal development – the level of mental capacity in-between the two levels in which a student can do the work individually and do it with the help of the teacher) scaffolding would enable student to achieve the task (Wedell and Malderez, 2013). In other words, when learners have limited capacity to do tasks on their own, they will do it with the assistance of the teacher (Johnson and Golombek, 2011). Although Anjalee did not explicitly use the term “ZPD”, she conveyed the concept by explaining that students require varying degrees of support in their learning process depending on their proficiency level. This reflects her understanding of the rationale behind the zone of proximal development concept.

On the other hand, Nirmal said he usually used both inductive and deductive techniques, depending on the situation to teach grammar. Even though he did not reject the new knowledge, he remained deductive, introducing the structure first and working primarily in a teacher-centred mode with no attempt to adopt iTESL techniques to make them more child-centred in both of his lessons I observed. However, he adopted pre-, while - and post-reading stages after attending iTESL. Krishan admired child-centred methodologies and expected support to develop his skills in minimising teacher centeredness in his classroom. Tharu attempted to apply new techniques to some extent. These findings suggest that the process of reculturing did not occur simultaneously or at the same level in participants’ established classroom practices after attending the CPD programme. In his study, Hayes (1997) identifies a comparable situation in schools in Thailand, where teachers adhered strongly to traditional methodologies in teacher-centred classrooms. However, Hayes (1997) notes that Thailand experienced some positive changes as a result of recent developments in the education system, in comparison to many other Asian countries where the “educational culture had long been conservative, accepting of authority, and uncritical” (p.81). Conversely, findings of this study suggest that participants did not uncritically reject or inclined to accept and implement every innovation introduced by the authorities.

The reasons for Nirmal and Krishan not using group activities and relying on more teacher-centred methods were the over-crowded classes and the varying proficiency levels of students. It is important to consider that Nirmal’s unchanged classroom practices might be due to his lack of preparation to implement new practices for the observed lessons. However, he might incorporate new knowledge in his future

lessons when he feels confident. He might have continued with the methodology that he was comfortable with, as he did not need prior preparation for his usual practices. As Sikes (1992) argues, experienced teachers might be hesitant to adopt new practices due to their fear of failure as they have already established consistent routines. According to Hayes (1997), this varied application of knowledge might be due to inconsistencies in programme delivery or demotivation from the school context for teacher change. Furthermore, Hayes (1997) identifies that the "teacher's own personal predisposition towards change may be a key variable" (p.83), which might be particularly applicable to Nirmal's classroom behaviour. Consequently, his deeply ingrained conceptualisations might have influenced his approach to teaching grammar.

Contrary to Nirmal's classroom practices, Tharu, Nadee and Anjalee substantiated their perspectives by applying new knowledge in their classroom practice. While Nadee and Anjalee actively integrated newly acquired techniques into their practices, Nirmal, Krishan and Tharu made more modest and selective changes. This variability in their approach might stem from their individual inclinations and motivations regarding the change process. However, after attending the iTESL programme, all participants made efforts to implement new knowledge to varying extents by making small-scale changes in their classroom practices. The findings of this study suggest that diverse external factors influenced the extent of participants' involvement in the change process. According to Richardson and Placier (2001), the following processes are encompassed when utilising change in the classroom.

> Teacher change is described in terms of learning, development, socialization growth, improvement, implementation of something new or different, cognitive, and affective change, and self-study. (p.905)

In fact, teachers should internalise knowledge acquired through CPD and develop necessary skills in them to personalise new knowledge adapting to fit contextual requirements. This suggests that change takes place over time and that personal traits, behaviour, motivation and individual engagement influence their varied involvement in the change process. However, due to diverse factors the change process in the context was inhibited. Richardson and Placier (2001) inquire as to "why some teachers implement change and others do not", suggesting that individual stimuli in them trigger change initiation (p.909). Childs (2011) notes that teachers often rely on their past learning experiences and their inner conversations develop conceptualisations that determine "why teachers do what they do", which are hard to deviate from even when they attend CPD programmes (p.65). The findings of this study align with the conceptualisations of both Richardson and Placier (2001) and Childs (2011), indicating that teachers' personal dispositions and internal and

external factors play a pivotal role in either facilitating or hindering their engagement in the change process.

By introducing both the ‘English as a life skill’ and iTESL island-wide programmes in 2009 and 2018, respectively, the authorities expected major changes in the system, thinking that any small-scale changes that individual teachers make might eventually contribute to major educational changes in the system. However, the perceptions of participants suggest that both programmes failed to achieve their expected goals because of limited resources, allocations, political influence and the absence of a national education policy in the country. When introducing the two island-wide CPD programmes in Sri Lanka, priority was given to the development of human resources, trainers and teachers, through a cascading approach. However, as discussed in the literature review, the intertwined “embedded cultures” – the classroom, occupational, organisational, and national cultures within the professional world – influenced the change process during the implementation phase (Wedell and Malderez, 2013, p.48). Commenting on the educational systems across the world, Wedell (2009) explains that, in most of the countries change is considered as a “linear… legislative matter” (p.2). Nonetheless, change can occur within individuals and in the entire system (Wedell, 2009, p.1). In the entire process of educational change, teacher change is only one aspect, albeit the most prominent one, and in most countries change in human resources gained less attention (Wedell, 2009).

For instance, as discussed in section 8.3, the school culture influenced Tharu to consider the moral purpose of providing extra support to underprivileged students whose parents do not regularly send their children to school, as they are often exploiting them for household earnings. In addition, the exam-oriented educational system, which is a part of the national culture in Sri Lanka, hinders teachers’ efforts to change the classroom culture and practices. An amended version of Hoban (2022) Figure 3.2, shown in Figure 8.2 - Web of Educational Change, includes specific systems that influence the educational change in Sri Lanka. All the sub-systems, practices and people in the Web of Educational Change collectively or individually work either to bring about change or to obstruct the attempts teachers make to change their classroom practice. However, these systems might influence educational change across the globe differently, to varying degrees, depending on the cultural, contextual, economic, political and social conditions.

I discussed in the literature review that all cultures as described by Wedell (2009) are connected with the systems laid out in Hoban (2002) in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 (see section 3.8.2). As illustrated in Figure 8.2, (page 200) diverse systems, people and practices that connected to each other impact on one another, leading to change in

teachers' classroom practice, which might ultimately contribute to major educational change (Hoban, 2002; Wedell, 2009). I will next discuss the impact of the elements of the Web of Educational Change in more detail, taking the findings of this study into consideration.

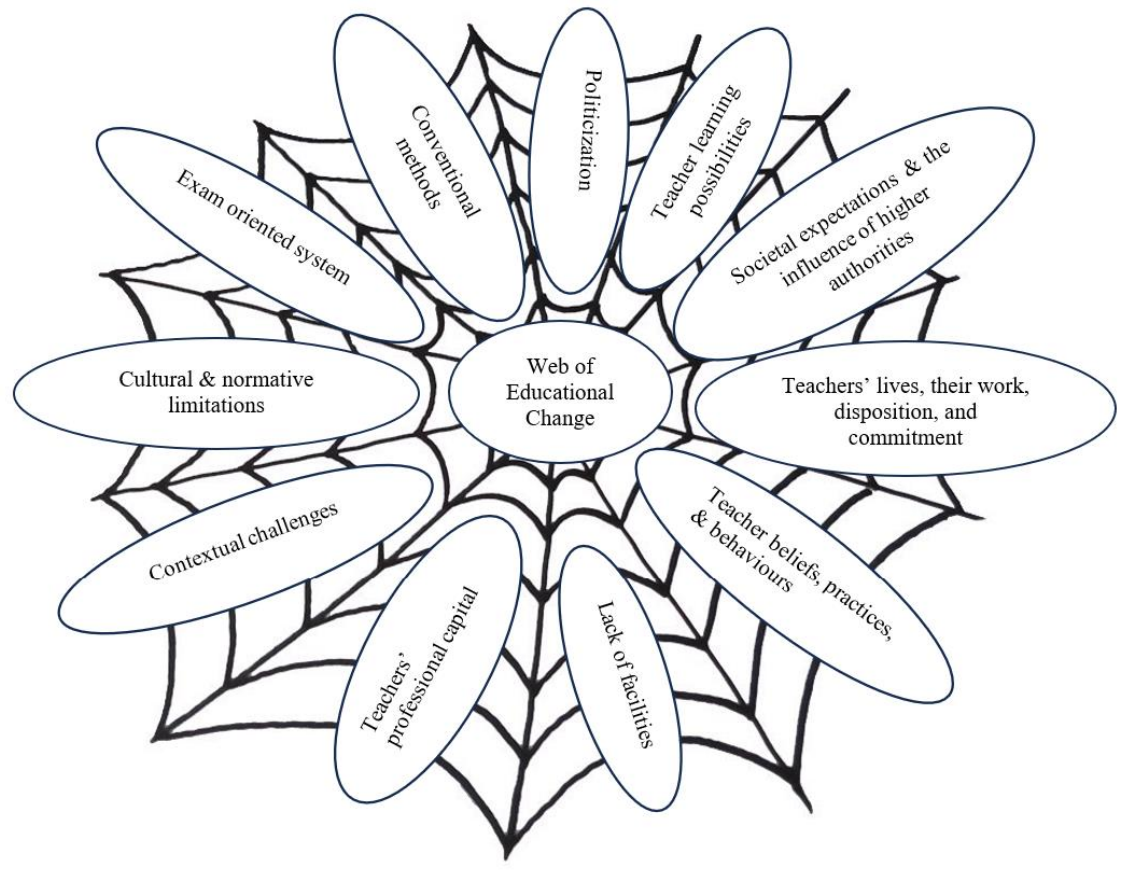
8.6.1 Politicisation

As Wedell and Malderez (2013) emphasise, government educational change initiatives are mostly political.

> Since education is so important to parents and so to the whole society (the voters) it is tempting for politicians or leaders to use popular and seemingly beneficial initiatives to try to gain favours with and/or positive publicity among the people-as-voters. (p.177)

The above comment is applicable to the circumstances in Sri Lanka as politicians take decisions to introduce innovations to the education system with the aim of gaining publicity. As shown in the figure, the influence of politics or politicisation of education together with societal expectations influenced educational change in the country after the 'English as a life skill' programme was introduced, using the slogan "speak English our way" in the government publicity campaign (Meyler, 2015). Findings suggest that this programme influenced teacher change, including their beliefs and classroom practices, despite the criticisms of elites. The most common criticism was that this would degrade the quality of English as the trainers were trained in India, a non-native speaker country. There were criticisms from opposition political parties, as usual, irrespective of the purpose and the effectiveness of the innovations as it was a national initiative, as they labelled the programme a political agenda. Yet, participants who attended the programme stressed that whatever the political agenda behind the government initiative was, it is worth continuing by any government that came into power if it brought desirable outcomes for the education system. However, as discussed in section 8.2, the programme disappeared after five years before reaching the expected goals, as the new political regime did not allocate funds for the programme and had no interest in continuing it.

Figure 8-2 Web of Educational Change



(Adapted version of Hoban, 2002, p.37)

The iTESL programme is the second example of how politicisation influenced CPD. It was funded by the Ministry of Education and planned and conducted by the British Council in Sri Lanka. The first phase was conducted to provide training to teacher educators in National Colleges of Education, teacher trainers, and pre-service and in-service teachers across the country, focusing on teaching reading, teaching grammar, and introducing classroom management techniques. However, participants were not satisfied with the expert support for implementation through follow-up visits (see section 5.4.2.2). Supporting this finding, Wyburn (2020) claimed that evaluation indicated there were inconsistencies in follow-up observations and feedback for teachers. The trainers were trained to conduct the second phase focusing on improving speaking and listening skills. However, not all of the five participants had received the second training session as only teachers who had less than five years of teaching experience were invited to take part, which might be owing to limited government allocations to continue training targeting all ESL teachers.

At the outset there were long-term plans for both ‘English as a life skill’ and iTESL programmes; however, political instability, limited government allocations and absence of a national education policy led to their unexpected disappearance or

inconsistencies in continuation with follow-up programmes. As Guskey (1994) states, “Professional development efforts should be designed with long term goals based on a grand vision of what is possible” (p.12). This suggests that governments coming into power should establish feasible and consistent goals aligned with a broader vision rather than giving the priority to political agendas when planning continuing professional development. However, as Wedell (2009) explains, governments allocate funds and resources for initiatives and authorise them by specifying their expected goals.

> ‘We expect this change to happen’, ‘we expect it to happen like this’, ‘we expect it to begin on this date’, and then waiting for the desired change to appear identically in every classroom. (p.43)

Such rigidity might not yield the expected ideal outcomes when introducing innovations in any context due to diverse factors. Additionally, changes in the classroom and associated expectations can be influenced by external forces, including politics, cultural norms, societal expectations, conventional practices, contextual challenges and numerous other elements, as illustrated in the figure. The change process might also be obstructed when there are contradictory practices in the system. As participants emphasised, the exam-oriented system significantly hindered their efforts to implement new practices.

8.6.2 Exam-oriented system

As previously discussed in section 8.3.1, Krishan pointed out that the exam-oriented education system in the country hindered change by compelling teachers to prioritise preparing students for exams mechanically rather than fostering a balanced development of all language skills. For instance, as speaking skills were not assessed, teachers tended to neglect improving students’ speaking skills. In Sri Lanka, students in the state sector face a disadvantage due to their poor communicative competence in job interviews, leading to missed opportunities in the job market. Recognising this barrier, the government initiated the introduction of speaking tests for public examinations after implementing the ‘English as a life skill’ programme. However, practical issues within the organisational culture, such as limited human and material resources, hindered the implementation of speaking tests. Consequently, teachers reverted to their previous practices, focusing solely on preparing students for written public examinations due to a lack of time and motivation to implement new methodologies acquired through CPD. Diop (2017) reports a similar situation in Senegal, where teachers prioritised helping students achieve good grades in English papers due to stakeholders’ demands for exam scores, even though these scores had little influence on higher education.

The findings of this study suggest that individual teachers' capacity, beliefs and personal dispositions influence either to initiate change in the classroom or to continue their routinised practices. I will next focus on the relationship between participants' beliefs and their practices in detail.

8.6.3 Teacher beliefs, practices and behaviours

The findings suggest that there is not always a one-to-one correspondence between beliefs and practices, and the degree of correspondence varies depending on the circumstances. For instance, Anjalee's positive beliefs about using ICQs enabled her to minimise the use of the first language by incorporating them. Thus, Anjalee's new classroom practices might have the power to change the school culture, forcing other ESL teachers to adopt similar beliefs and practices towards development, unless the teacher community obstructs her attempts. However, although Krishan believed group work is an effective technique, he could not put it into practice in a congested classroom, demonstrating limited correspondence between his new beliefs and practices. Although Krishan changed his former beliefs after attending the iTESL programme, contextual barriers prevented him from implementing his new beliefs. Nadee, as a novice teacher, followed the methods used by senior colleagues in neighbouring schools to enhance her practices as she believed those practices were effective and relevant for her context and the proficiency level of her students. Basturkmen (2012) reports contradictory findings by reviewing a selected set of studies, while the study by Farrell and Bennis (2013) with an experienced and a novice participant found more convergence in the beliefs and practices of experienced teachers than in those of novices.

As the least experienced teacher among the participants, Nadee found alternatives to address contextual issues in order to put her new beliefs into practice. This finding of convergence between beliefs and practice supports the findings of Farrell and Ives' (2015) study with a novice ESL teacher. Similar to the findings of Phipps and Borg (2009), regarding a teacher who believed in teaching grammar inductively but presented grammar rules, Nirmal demonstrated in this study a divergence between his beliefs and practices in grammar teaching after attending iTESL. Nirmal explained his beliefs (see section 5.3.1) that teaching grammar inductively is effective, but in some situations, he taught the rules first. However, deviating from his stated belief, Nirmal introduced the rules first in both the lessons I observed. Conversely, Anjalee and Nadee sought new opportunities, learned new knowledge, and changed their former beliefs without accepting or rejecting new beliefs uncritically. They implemented new practices by incorporating personalised strategies to overcome contextual challenges, suggesting that teachers' positive

conceptions, motivations to fulfil moral purposes, and capabilities strongly influence changing beliefs and classroom practices. Extending this view, Borg (2011) in his study on an in-service teacher education programme, found a considerable impact on the change of beliefs when teachers had opportunities to reflect on and vocalise their beliefs during the programme.

In light of the above argument, some researchers suggest that the decisions teachers make in the classroom are shaped by their belief systems (Hayes, 1997; Borg, 2011; Farrell and Bennis, 2013; Farrell and Ives, 2015). Conversely, some studies show that only implicit beliefs, or beliefs held unconsciously, correspond to teachers' classroom practices (Basturkmen, 2012).

Anjalee changed her beliefs to some extent after gaining new knowledge by considering contextual needs and decided to what extent she should implement these new beliefs in practice. Some studies (Hayes, 1997; Basturkmen, 2012) provide evidence for this finding by suggesting that certain conditions need to be fulfilled for teachers to put their new beliefs into practice. As Hayes (1997) explains,

> What is taken from a course and what is transferred to the classroom will, therefore, be mediated by an individual teacher's personal beliefs, experiences, and circumstances. (p.77)

Supporting this view, this study suggests that after attending the iTESL programme, participants made various attempts to change their former beliefs and put their new beliefs into practice. They fully or partially succeeded, or failed to change their classroom practice, depending on their conceptions, motivations, capacity to encounter contextual limitations and circumstances, and individual capabilities.

In relation to teacher beliefs, differing views and arguments can be found in the literature on teacher beliefs and practices. Some studies (Johnson, 1992; Hayes, 1997; Borg, 2011; Farrell and Bennis, 2013; Kubanyiova, 2012; Farrell and Ives, 2015) show that teacher beliefs correspond their practices, while other studies (Phipps and Borg, 2009; Basturkmen, 2012) show limited correspondence between beliefs and practices. Supporting the findings of this study, Basturkmen (2012) highlights the contradictory nature of teacher beliefs and practices due to the influence of interconnected systems.

8.6.4 Teachers' lives, their work, disposition and commitment

Nirmal showed one aspect in teachers' lives that brings about negative impacts for the CPD process, that is, the financial constraints that teachers faced due to their low salaries and the fact that not every teacher was able to afford to pursue higher education and professional development. However, those who had the motivation

completed their higher education despite financial constraints. Most teachers gave priority to conducting private tuition to earn extra income to manage their expenses. The English language's place in the country as a means for climbing the social ladder gives teachers more opportunities to conduct tuition classes as a successful business. Nirmal specified that teachers who have two or three kids need extra income, as the teacher salary is comparatively very low. Those teachers and also teachers who are business-minded do not spend their time on professional development or implementation of new skills as they lack the time to attend CPD and preparation to use new methodologies as they prioritise attracting students for their tuition classes. Hayes (2010) rightly explains this situation in Sri Lanka.

> Also, teaching can function as a step up the social ladder (….) from poor rural communities in Sri Lanka as in other countries. Societal pressure to succeed in education creates the opportunity for teachers to increase their income by teaching supplementary classes outside of school. (p.529)

Although Hayes (2010) comments on teachers generally, participants in this study stressed that most ESL teachers also prioritise tuition and pay less attention to spending time on professional development and obtaining educational qualifications.

In relation to a longitudinal study in England researching into teacher effectiveness, Day et al. (2006) report

> Teachers across all professional life phases felt that heavy workload, a lack of time and financial constraints were important inhibitors in their pursuit of professional development. (p.123)

Participants in this study highlighted that, owing to financial constraints, some teachers dedicate more time to earning extra income, and they do not prioritise pursuing CPD. However, while participants in this study did not emphasise workload or lack of time as inhibitors for themselves personally to gain CPD or apply new knowledge, they commented on the heavy workload and lack of time as constraints generally affecting the ESL teacher community in Sri Lanka.

Conversely, Nadee and Anjalee were able to avoid inhibitors to applying new knowledge by combining their usual practices with new knowledge. As Anjalee explained in section 6.3.2.1, she aimed to avoid confusing new students with English instructions, striving instead to foster a comfortable atmosphere in their new school and classroom. Given that new grade 6 students come from rural settings with limited exposure to the English language, she prioritised easing their transition. Similarly, Mann et al. (2020), in their study analysing various reasons behind Thai teachers' use or avoidance of the first language, highlight that teachers employ the first language in the classroom for "both affective and cognitive reasons" (p.31). In addition to cognitive and affective considerations, Anjalee's explanation included

moral reasons, taking into account the diverse backgrounds of her new grade 6 students. Consequently, Anjalee adapted her methodologies to create a more comfortable classroom environment for her students. Freeman (1993) defines this process as "renaming and reconstruction" (pp.485– 486) of knowledge that teachers gain through CPD programmes. In relation to the findings of a study on impact of a CPD programme on teachers' classroom practices, Freeman (1993) further explains how teachers developed their practices expecting better outcomes: "[T]he teachers renegotiated the meaning of their actions and thus constructed more critical, ways of understanding what they were doing in their classrooms" (p.486). This suggests that teachers make sense of their prior classroom behaviour from different perspectives with the new knowledge they gained through the CPD experience.

In my study, we can see Anjalee attempting to renegotiate and reconstruct new practices by critically analysing students' capabilities (see section 6.2.4.1), considering giving adequate time for students to familiarise themselves with her methodologies after meeting them for the first time. She planned to replace her L1 use with ICQs gradually to minimise the L1 use when giving classroom instructions. Through renegotiation and reconstruction, Anjalee tried to improve the 'Quality of Life' in the classroom, making both the teacher and students feel comfortable in teaching and learning English in a new environment. Accordingly, Anjalee's commitment, autonomous decision-making and mutual understanding resulted in significant changes within the classroom. Both lessons conducted by Anjalee exemplified how these negotiations fostered trust between her and her students, ultimately contributing to an improved 'Quality of Life' in the classroom. I witnessed Anjalee's students enjoying more freedom during lessons by moving and taking to their friends in a stress-free environment. As Allwright and Hanks (2009) explain,

> [W]hen students can understand a teacher better they see a chance to open up their inner selves as well. As teachers and students gain possibilities for constructing mutual understandings about the classroom environment, practitioners – students and teachers – show growth in their intellectual and critical perspectives. Both discover their potentialities; grow in self-confidence and self-assurance. (p.226)

In relation to this explanation, in practice, I found a certain degree of 'Quality of Life' in Anjalee's classroom, even though participants were unaware of the EP principles.

8.6.5 Conventional methods

Participants claimed that certain teachers made no effort to apply new knowledge and were resistant to changing their classroom practices because of a lack of commitment. They also highlighted the impact of conventional practices in training programmes and classroom observations. Anjalee described one of her experiences

of being criticised by a trainer after the trainer observed her recitation training session for students competing in English Day competitions. The trainer instructed Anjalee to teach Received Pronunciation because students could score higher in competitions, due to the conventional assessment methods used, but Anjalee emphasised that it is the responsibility of the authorities to ensure fair judgments in competitions for underprivileged students who live in areas with low L2 exposure. Participants commented too on inconsistent CPD programmes with top-down instructions that made them passive listeners. Similar to the situation in Sri Lanka, in the Armenian school system, teachers were required to follow top-down instructions, and the experts' ignorance of contextual specifics significantly affected the implementation of new knowledge (Khachatryan et al., 2013; Cirocki and Farrelly, 2016), which might lead trainers to utilise conventional methodologies in a top-down approach. However, in this study, participants had the freedom to make ammendments in classroom practice, depending on their motivation and capabilities.

This study demonstrated the conventional methods used by some trainers in CPD programmes and classroom observations. Some teachers also did not attempt to make changes in their classroom practice due to contextual challenges, limited understanding of the gained knowledge, lack of motivation for self-development and lack of capability. Hoban (2002) argues that teachers often hinder the change process, being more resistant compared to other professionals, which is a common criticism. As Wedell (2009) argues, teachers become anxious in implementing change, anticipating classroom management issues such as disciplinary problems and noise. Therefore, they tend to continue their usual practices to avoid new challenges. The most common criticism is teachers attend CPD programmes and gain new knowledge and skills but continue using the common stereotyped methodologies that their teachers incorporated when they were learners (Lortie, 1975; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Hoban, 2002; McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright, 2008).

As Nirmal observed, in Sri Lanka, teachers were treated as "empty vessels", with trainers pouring knowledge into them, thereby undermining the teachers' capacities. Nirmal claimed that not all teachers could be treated as incompetent. However, due to the cultural norm of a dependency mentality from childhood, trainers are prone to follow top-down methodologies in CPD and other restricted practices. When children are taught to obey societal norms, they tend to depend on someone they perceive as more capable or worthy of respect because of their adulthood and greater experience. Moreover, participants commented on the conventional behaviour of some trainers who maintain hierarchical power relationships, which oppress and undermine teachers. This will be further discussed in the next section.

8.6.6 Cultural and normative limitations

In Sri Lankan education culture, some conservative teachers, trainers or higher officials expect absolute obedience from their students and teacher trainees at NCOEs and other in-service training programmes. As discussed in section 7.4.1, Tharu's desperation over inappropriate trainer behaviour demonstrates the misuse of power by professionals in CPD programmes. She experienced some trainers criticising each other and exhibiting personal grudges during sessions, making attendees uncomfortable and resistant to attending programmes. Cultural and normative limitations often leave teachers submissive in such circumstances, especially when authoritative figures misuse their power. As Wedell and Malderez (2013) define, culture includes a set of rules that "guide and control social behaviour", a concept applicable to educational culture in any context (p.36). Tharu argued that trainers should show respect for each other and for their trainees as professionals and role models, considering their accountability in developing teachers' personal and professional qualities rather than oppressing them by misusing their power. However, despite their distress, teachers remained silent, determined to endure programmes conducted by these authoritative figures, refraining from challenging such behaviour because of cultural and normative limitations.

Nadee experienced a different type of cultural norm in her first school as a novice teacher, finding that some elderly teachers in her school were averse to incorporating technology in classroom teaching, as they were technophobic. As a result, they did not like to see novice teachers incorporating technology and new methodologies in their teaching. Nadee's efforts to introduce new practices were hindered by the resistance of these teachers to some extent, making her feel unwelcome in the school community. This situation made Nadee lose her "sense of belonging" (Wedell and Malderez, 2013, p.13), feeling like a stranger in her own context.

8.6.7 Lack of facilities

Participants pointed out that the lack of resources (see section 7.5.2) influenced their attempts to teach using effective and attractive techniques. This was particularly evident in Tharu's classroom observation in her rural setting. Her attempt to use her prepared PowerPoint slides in one of the observed lessons failed due to issues with the technology. She was embarrassed, as she had to change her lesson plan after spending nearly half an hour trying to set up the technology. However, despite their urban settings, Nirmal and Krishan had concerns about limited facilities such as

technological devices and had to purchase some essential equipment themselves. Nadee, who spent her own money on resources to avoid penalising students in her rural school, claimed that it was impossible to continue doing so because teachers in Sri Lanka receive a small salary. Nadee stressed that it is one of the primary responsibilities of the authorities to provide resources to implement changes in the classroom and move on from conventional practices. Reporting on a study in Senegal, Diop (2017) states that rural schools lack facilities such as suitable classrooms and electricity when compared to urban schools. According to Sahakyan et al. (2018), this is a common phenomenon in schools in developing countries that undergo economic crises and political changes. In the Armenian school system, a dearth of facilities, represented by large classes and insufficient materials for students, make teachers' task more difficult (Cirocki and Farrelly, 2016). It is evident that the lack of facilities is a global concern for teachers, which can demotivate them in their attempts to change classroom practice.

8.6.8 Teacher learning possibilities

Participants commented on the limited availability of freely accessible or natural learning opportunities for ESL teachers beyond official CPD programmes. They emphasised that not every teacher could afford expensive university courses or programmes conducted by the British Council. Moreover, participants highlighted that not every teacher had the capacity for autonomous learning or the motivation to seek self-learning opportunities, and these inadequacies in teacher learning opportunities impeded change in classroom practices. As a result, most teachers rely entirely on CPD programmes for gaining new knowledge and fostering change in their classroom practices. As Hoban (2002) suggests, opportunities for collaborative learning can help teachers share experiences and insights within a community of teachers and trainers, and Krishan suggested this approach to address the lack of planned learning opportunities in the context. He perceived that building non-threatening collaborative relationships among teachers and trainers could be a more feasible alternative to the lack of teacher learning possibilities, thereby facilitating classroom change. As Wedell and Malderez (2013) assert, teachers' understanding of their own contexts, experience and insights empowers them to initiate teacher-led, small-scale changes in the classroom to fulfil their expectations. However, teachers might be motivated to follow this type of initiative in collaborative environments with the support of more capable colleagues and experts.

8.6.9 Contextual challenges

The next most influential factor obstructing the implementation of new classroom practices and the change process was contextual challenges. Findings demonstrated that these challenges significantly influenced the change process in teachers' classroom practices. As Nirmal and Krishan highlighted, contextual challenges such as congested classrooms, lack of facilities, complaints from neighbouring class teachers about noise, and students' varied proficiency levels hindered the implementation of new practices. Consequently, teachers often reverted to their former practices for practicality and applied personalised methods in the classroom. However, while Anjalee and Nadee adapted their new practices to suit the context, Krishan avoided incorporating new strategies and continued with his personalised practices. This situation resembles the findings of Sahakyan et al. (2018), who identified a similar phenomenon in a study with Armenian teachers. Some participants in their study, who identified as autonomous decision-makers, adjusted their classroom practices to mitigate contextual constraints. Similarly, some participants in my study made use of the freedom they had to experiment with their own methods in the classroom. According to Wedell and Malderez (2013), both teachers and learners are part of their classroom context or they are "even creating their context as well as influenced by it" (p.15). Therefore, teachers cannot ignore the contextual specifics when implementing new practices, and their understanding about the challenges might be helpful in mitigating them.

8.6.10 Societal expectations and the influence of higher authorities

Societal expectations and the influence of higher authorities also play a significant role in either promoting or impeding change attempts, and participants identified societal expectations as a barrier to implementing change in the classroom. As discussed in section 8.4.2, teachers adjust their classroom practices to prepare students for public examinations, prioritising the specific writing skills that will be tested. It is contradictory that society expects students to be fluent in English speaking upon leaving secondary school while neglecting the improvement of speaking skills and enforcing the pursuit of good grades in written exams. As a result, teachers focus more on exam preparation using conventional practices such as teaching grammar rules and sentence structures rather than implementing new methodologies learned through CPD. They face the challenge of increasing the percentages of students' results in public examinations for accreditation from authorities. Therefore, most teachers prepared students for the examination using more teacher-centred approaches. However, Krishan utilised the freedom to personalise newly gained knowledge and skills to suit the proficiency level of Grade

11 students who were facing the O/L examination at the end of the year. He attempted innovations and amendments with the CPD knowledge he had acquired to provide new experiences for the grade 11 students while preparing them for the examination. McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008) identify this competence as "[e]ducating teachers who develop into adaptive experts" (p.146), an essential capacity for teachers in the process of development, as it enables them to adapt according to circumstances and make essential changes in their teaching. However, not every teacher would take on this challenging effort.

The same exam-oriented system was evident in Sri Lanka more than three decades ago in Vulliamy et al.'s (1990) study, which found an absence of change in classroom practices. Vulliamy et al. (1990) rightly identify "the power that the public examination system exerted over teaching and learning" (p.196) in the Sri Lankan education system, arguing that it was obligatory to implement the prescribed methodologies blindly, as imposed by the authorities. Cirocki et al. (2014) conducted a similar study on Sri Lankan ESL teachers' classroom research and reflective practice. As Cirocki et al. (2014) comment, "[T]eachers were expected to uncritically implement only what had been prescribed" (p.25). Their claim was that authorities made decisions about what teachers should do in the classroom, which contradicts the findings of this study. They found that there was no space for teachers to make their own decisions regarding classroom practice. Contrary to their findings, this study found whether to stick with mechanical methodologies for exam preparation or take on the challenge of preparing students for the examination while efficiently incorporating new CPD knowledge depends on teachers' motivation, competence and commitments. Supporting my findings, participants in Cirocki et al.'s (2014) study were critical of the exam-oriented system, the lack of contextual understanding of trainers and the lack of CPD opportunities and support.

8.6.11 Teachers' professional capital

Hargreaves and Fullan (2020) define professional capital as "open and collaborative professionalism, not individually autonomous professionalism" (p.331). Findings highlight the demotivation of the majority of the ESL teachers in Sri Lankan context to try for CPD and their lack of commitment and self-efficacy to change their conventional practices and thereby optimise their professional capital for the betterment of students' education. As discussed in the literature review, teachers as professionals should be accountable for building and utilising their professional capital. Krishan specified that (see section 5.5) in order to optimise participants' professional capital and to make essential changes in classroom practice, collaborative practice with trainers and colleagues should be promoted.

As illustrated in Figure 8.2, participants encountered the influence of diverse systems that hindered the efforts they made to optimise their professional capital. For instance, after attending iTESL, participants expected frequent trainer visits and supportive classroom observations for collaborative implementation of new knowledge with experts and their colleagues rather than in training centres, as they found contextual challenges such as the lack of facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and students with variable proficiency levels in their own contexts.

In summing up the participants' attempts aiming at a change in their classroom practice as discussed above, Krishan did not use group activities because of the contextual barriers, but Nadee could find alternative ways to combat barriers by optimising her professional capital. Nirmal did not change his grammar teaching approach after attending the iTESL programme, and this might be a result of his rigidity or the absence of follow-up, which would have helped him gain confidence. Tharu, on the other hand, incorporated her new knowledge to change her practices, but a lack of facilities demotivated her from sustaining the new practices. Thus, findings in this study suggest that, while well-organised CPD programmes influence teacher change, due to teachers' personal dispositions, a lack of attention of the higher authorities to support teachers with follow-up visits and other outside obstacles diminished continuation and implementation of new practices. Thus, participants' attempts to use CPD knowledge to make small-scale changes in their classrooms by optimising their professional capital were hindered, and this ultimately affected the sustainability of the expected change process in the system through the iTESL programme. However, Guskey (1994) claims that the challenges teachers encounter in implementation of new practices in classrooms cannot be totally avoided, no matter what attempts the organisers make in the planning and preparation of the programme. Accordingly, on-site support might help teachers to get rid of their tensions and enable effective implementation. On the other hand, a seemingly simple change that a teacher makes in the classroom can have a substantial impact on education at the regional, provincial, or even national levels, provided it is rigorously evaluated and supported by authorities committed to bring on change. Moreover, all systems should be interconnected and work collaboratively to achieve the same goal. Considering the above findings and addressing RQ2, next I will examine the support participants expected and the support they received for implementing new practices.

8.7 Participants' expected support vs received support for CPD

Krishan's statement in section 5.4, "they [trainers] need to stand always behind us" recalls the influence of the cultural norm in Sri Lanka, the tendency to depend on

someone from childhood. As children depend on their parents, or on the father in the patriarchal home environment and in school, they expect the same from teachers. Then, in later life as adults and professionals, the teachers tend to depend on trainers, higher officials or the authorities. Thus, this cultural practice influences their thinking process and the development of teachers' autonomous decision-making skills. According to Mann (2005), one of the fundamental aspects of teacher development is fostering "self-development and self-direction" to create "autonomously functioning individuals" (p.104). However, the requirements of different contexts differ in relation to the institutional culture, how they accommodate change, and the availability of facilities and human resources, and, thus, the supportive mechanisms will differ from one context to another (Guskey, 1994; Wedell, 2009; Wedell, and Malderez, 2013). Participants emphasised that due to the limited teacher capacity for self-development and the cultural norm of dependence, many ESL teachers might require constant support until they gain confidence in making autonomous decisions and transition to autonomous practitioner status.

8.7.1 Collaborative classroom observation as a support mechanism

Findings suggest the importance of introducing on-site individual or collaborative support and trainer visits instead of the conventional type of visits by trainers and authorities characterised by stressful classroom observations, finding faults and giving advice. The teachers were not satisfied with the follow-up observations and the guidance they received from some trainers who lacked contextual understanding. For instance, some trainer visits demotivated Nadee's attempts to initiate changes in the classroom, because of their lack of understanding about contextual challenges. Recalling one of her experiences with a trainer, Nadee expressed her disappointment by being given inappropriate instructions to use only English for classroom interaction, further explaining that the trainer did not see any difference in the proficiency level of the students in urban settings and rural settings. As a result of this lack of reliance on trainer guidance, she began to search for collegial support as they found those experiences more comfortable and efficient. Thus, findings indicate that participants expected some improvements in the CPD process to bring about a sustainable CPD scenario in Sri Lanka.

Participants explained the different types of informal collaborative engagements they experienced apart from rare top-down trainer visits and observations, saying they preferred to receive collegial interactions and support in a stress-free environment by observing how other colleagues implement changes in the classroom. Nadee explained one of her positive experiences (see section 7.6.2) when visiting a neighbouring school and observing lessons done by a colleague whom she called a

role model. Nadee admired the strategies her colleague used in her attempt to change classroom practice after attending a CPD programme. According to Darling-Hammond (2013), collaborative teacher learning enables all participants to gain more insights simultaneously into how to make the teaching and learning process more effective. Improving the quality of education is primarily a collective effort and the responsibility of teachers and other stakeholders (Day and Sachs, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2013), and in relation to the process of change, Guskey (1994) explains the two aspects of change in the following quote.

> Change is both an individual and an organizational process. In planning and implementation, it is important to work for incremental change. Working in teams maintains support for change. (p.1)

According to Guskey (1994), change occurs gradually and individuals might contribute to major educational changes with the support they receive for their small-scale initiatives in the classroom.

Nirmal explained one experience of visiting a rural school with his colleagues to observe how the ESL teacher in that school had created an English-speaking environment in a rural setting. Nirmal admired the teachers' steady commitment and his personalised methodologies to help students to speak in English. Nirmal found that observing real classrooms and engaging in discussions with colleagues was a different type of supportive experience for gaining insights and "developing a sense of plausibility" (Prabhu, 1990; Mann, 2005) for his professional and self-development. As Prabhu (1990) defines it, "teacher's sense of plausibility" means teachers creating "personal conceptualizations" of how teaching is processed based on their prior language learning, teaching and training experiences. According to Mann (2005),

> Plausibility is engaged through change, reflection on experience of teaching, and through interaction with other teachers' versions of plausibility. (p.108)

Accordingly, teachers' engagements in professional practices develop their sense of plausibility to regulate "how they think about language and how language is best learned" in their conceptualisations (Maley, 2018, p.23).

The professional discussions during school visits enabled Nirmal to experience different versions of teachers' plausibility. However, in relation to iTESL attendance and the application of grammar teaching techniques, Nirmal's sense of plausibility was ossified due to his routinised grammar teaching methods. Maley (1989) describes the danger of over-routinisation and the importance of activating teacher's sense of plausibility through collaborative CPD.

> But if the job becomes 'overroutinised', there is no sense of plausibility. The 'sense of plausibility' gets buried or frozen or ossified. From that point of view, the aim of professional activity should be to keep the teacher's sense of plausibility alive and, therefore, open to influence by the ongoing experience of teaching and interaction with other teachers' perceptions and senses of plausibility. (Maley, 1989, cited in Maley, 2018, pp.27-28)

Considering my findings, I suggest collaborative classroom observation experiences would enable teachers to develop their sense of plausibility with colleagues and experts in a stress-free environment.

8.7.2 Collaborative strategies for an enhanced CPD scenario

Interestingly, participants acknowledged the common drawbacks in the CPD process and suggested transformations required for an enhanced CPD process in the context with the aim of developing their professional skills. One of the false beliefs is that transmission of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) or the knowledge of what to teach is adequate for teachers to work in the classroom (Yates and Muchisky, 2003). As this is the common practice in CPD programmes in the Sri Lankan context, instead, I suggest teachers and trainers should collaboratively engage in reflecting on their practices critically, attempting to understand each other's beliefs and assumptions, and engage in active learning in the training programmes (Yates and Muchisky, 2003).

Nadee and Tharu highlighted the negative impact of transmission of knowledge in some CPD programmes in this context, expecting instead their own space for individual contributions for collaborative learning, transforming the trainer role from being the transmitter of knowledge into becoming a mediator to suit the purpose of CPD programmes. Freeman and Johnson (1998) state that teacher educators should acknowledge teachers as unique individuals who join the CPD programmes equipped with pre-existing knowledge, beliefs and assumptions and require shaping of their prior practices by gaining new knowledge rather than filling 'empty vessels'. Considering teachers as unique individuals, Freeman (1993) claims that the ultimate purpose of CPD programmes should be to scaffold teachers to develop their own cognisance and potentialities rather than transmitting knowledge. However, Nirmal ascertained that only 'some trainers in some programmes' still consider teachers as empty vessels and this might be a conventional behaviour of some trainers.

Further, Nadee highlighted (see sections 7.6.2 and 7.7) that, rather than depending only on sponsored programmes for gaining CPD and relying on the support of the trainers, different mechanisms should be introduced and encouraged for teachers to understand their needs, beliefs and practices and how to develop their professional

capital. As Wedell and Malderez (2013) suggest, Practitioner Research, such as Action Research, Exploratory Practice or collaborative learning modes would enhance the CPD process. Furthermore, Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective highlights the necessity of social interaction for learning to take place and thus, incorporating different forms of Reflective Practice, such as Stimulated Recall and Collaborative Reflection, would enable teachers to develop personal conceptualisations (Vygotsky, 1997; Farrell and Ives, 2015b; Mann and Walsh, 2017).

According to Mann and Walsh (2017), the developmental process is iterative, and interaction with other teachers would help to develop understanding and, later, reflection, practice and further discussion would develop new understandings. However, in some contexts if a teacher shares her problems, others might underestimate their knowledge and skills and thus, teachers are reluctant to share their reflections, as they do not have trust towards the other professionals (Osterman and Kottkamp, 1993).

As findings highlighted in section 5.5, CPD as a collaborative effort sharing experience with trainers in the classroom would bring more space for teachers to develop their self-esteem rather than conventional trainer visits, criticisms and formal advice. Krishan suggested organising occasional informal get-together activities would bridge the gap between teachers and trainers. All participants commented on trainers' lack of understanding about contextual challenges and that trainer visits and observations pressurised teachers as a result. Thus, Krishan and Anjalee suggested informal gatherings and networks to provide trainers to connect with teachers and intervene with more understanding by balancing the power relationships with positive thoughts about teachers' efforts in the classroom. This indicates teachers' expectations for enhancing "Quality of Life", one of the principles of EP "as a way of maximizing sustainability and minimizing the burden on teachers" (Hanks and Dikilitaș, 2018a, p.3). Rather than working in isolation, EP will enable teachers to work together to develop their understanding of puzzles in the classroom for an enhanced CPD process (Allwright and Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2017; Dikilitaş and Hanks, 2018).

Krishan explained that teachers might not consider the contextual specifics and the strategies they need to incorporate when working with colleagues in workshops. Thus, they would find implementing the same activities challenging when working with students in real classrooms. Having had a similar experience, Krishan suggested frequent trainer visits and collaborative implementation of new knowledge in the real classroom for better understanding of the contextual challenges instead of

simulating activities in training centres with colleagues. One of the teacher development aims is raising teachers' understanding about their own practices and collaborative processes as an efficient method for reaching this aim (Roberts, 1998).

All participants expressed their willingness to conduct collaborative work attempting to understand and learn from each other's practices in the classroom. As Hanks (2017) argues, "classroom language learning and teaching should be participatory, egalitarian, and empowering" (p.11). Thus, collaborative practices would make ESL teachers feel more relaxed to experiment with new knowledge in a more supportive environment with equals. Krishan's suggestion (see section 5.5) to join trainers with teachers in real classrooms so they understand the contextual challenges refers to an aspect of EP for professional development (Hanks, 2017; Dikilitaş and Hanks, 2018), "puzzling", working collaboratively for understanding by using "lived experiences" or using "what is normally done in classroom" (Hanks, 2019a, p.9). This is an example of teachers being involved in researching their own practices in the real classroom (Borg, 2013; Hanks, 2019b), sharing experience and scaffolding when necessary for their own and collegial development.

Anjalee's questioning herself regarding why, when, and how to use ICQs was another example of positioning herself in the researcher's shoes to make meaning of her own practice. As Hanks (2019b) explains, when "teachers position themselves as researchers in their own right" (p.143), they might deepen understanding of their own practices, what they do and why they do it (Borg, 2013; Hanks, 2017) and take more responsibility for their own teaching and learning. Thus, when considering the findings related to the contextual requirements, such as frequent onsite support to build up teachers' confidence to implement change in the classroom and sustainability of change, collegial support due to a dearth of expert visits and follow-up and participants' preference for collaborative learning, EP practice (Hanks, 2019a; Hanks, 2019b) would make the CPD process efficacious.

The findings (in sections 5.4 and 6.5.1) suggest that facilitating teachers with enhanced CPD opportunities incorporating technology and modernised techniques for developing effectiveness of the programmes is essential. As participants highlighted, most Sri Lankan teachers were less motivated about and less capable of self-directed learning. Thus, conscious learning opportunities by exploring teachers' own puzzles in the classroom with collaborative support to elucidate and understand their own and others' puzzles in CPD programmes and in context should be planned by prioritising contextual specifics and needs. Furthermore, changing the transmission model to increase teacher involvement would enable teachers to shape their teacher identity by being accountable for what they do in the classroom and

how they function as change agents and active professionals (Dikilitaş and Yaylı, 2018). This would empower teachers to optimise their professional capital and utilise their capacities for initiating change in the classroom (Shulman, 1986; McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright, 2008).

Additionally, acknowledgement of the inadequacies in the CPD process, such as the lack of frequent follow-up programmes and observations and trainer interventions that pressurise teachers, is fundamental to rectify the pitfalls. Moreover, aforementioned system changes are pivotal to motivate teachers to initiate small-scale changes in their classroom practices. Findings (in sections 5.4 and 7.5.2) further indicate that the collaborative efforts of teachers and trainers would enhance the CPD process, thereby avoiding professional burnout (Hanks, 2019a). In addition, participants' perceptions of collaborative attempts to develop their understanding shed light on navigating EP principals and collaborative RP in context.

8.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I discussed the key findings of this study along with the relevant literature. The analysis of data provided an in-depth understanding of the nature of available CPD opportunities in this context. Moreover, the positive and negative influences of the support teachers received and the need for providing the expected support were highlighted. Building on these key findings, I discussed participants' concerns related to available CPD opportunities and their expectations for enhanced CPD, driven by both student-oriented and self-oriented reasons, which vary depending on the contextual specifics in urban, semi-urban and rural settings. Considering participants' diverse expectations from CPD, I suggested a four-way reciprocal transformation in the system for an enhanced CPD process in context. Thereby, I propose that CPD should empower participants to manage collaborative and independent learning, utilising effective and supportive mediation strategies along with on-site follow-up support after the provision of new knowledge.

In the suggested four-way transformation of the system, programmes, trainers and teachers, reciprocity among all the components is an essential requirement. For instance, there should be a supportive and encouraging environment from authorities, trainers and the school community for all to work towards the same CPD goal and welcoming teachers' transformation attempts. Furthermore, I highlighted considerations needed to understand and mitigate the influential factors of the change process in the classroom, which hinder reaching the transformation goal. The ultimate goal of CPD attempts is teacher development for the betterment of students.

To achieve the transformation goal, I recommend well-organised collaborative learning strategies such as collaborative RP and EP, which can support teachers in developing teacher identity, enhancing autonomisation and promoting teachers' professional capital in context. Overall, in relation to the findings, I hope this study enhanced my skills and understanding as a researcher and contributed to the development of teacher education and CPD in the context and the wider world. I will summarise my reflections, implications of the study, limitations and suggestions for future research in the next chapter.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

> *Teachers, being at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, have long been ignored or, at best represented as statistics in research … It is time for teachers as individuals to emerge from the shadows of the research process.*
>
> (Hayes, 1997, p.85)

9.1 Reflections

I was initially inspired to conduct this study as an insider researcher while working as an ESL teacher trainer in the state-sector school system in Sri Lanka. This motivation stemmed from completing my MA (TESOL) Teacher Education research, which focused on a related area of study. Consequently, the findings of my MA (TESOL) dissertation instilled in me the confidence to begin a PhD and explore ESL teacher learning and teaching further. My intention was to deepen my understanding of the factors influencing the CPD process of ESL teachers in the Sri Lanka context and the application of new CPD knowledge in their classroom practice by exploring ESL teacher perceptions of their CPD experiences over time.

As time passed, I continued working as a teacher trainer, conducting training programmes for both pre-service teacher trainees and in-service teachers across the island. After enduring four challenging years, I refrained from judging whether it was the right time to embark on a PhD journey while undergoing difficulties and uncertainties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, it was a research endeavour taken during a challenging period, facing numerous obstacles throughout the PhD journey, including settling in a foreign country, struggling with financial constraints as a self-funded student, navigating employment during lockdowns, and confronting the life-threatening impacts of the pandemic. Additionally, the absence of collegial support, limited access to libraries and inadequate study spaces posed further obstacles to my research efforts as a doctoral student.

Moreover, the entire data collection process was filled with hardships, including challenges in contacting and recruiting participants, conducting online interviews across two different time zones, and enduring lengthy power cuts lasting up to 13 hours in Sri Lanka. Upon arrival in the research context, I encountered barriers to visiting schools due to sudden school closures and political unrest in the country. Nevertheless, with the immense support of my supervisors, I remained determined and goal-oriented until the completion of the study.

Despite facing numerous challenges, I gained valuable experience and insights as both a researcher and a teacher trainer during this research journey. Through my extensive readings, meetings with supervisors, participation in training and development programmes, collegial discussions, conference attendance and presentations, and work as a teaching assistant at the university, I learned the importance of developing time management, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills as a researcher. So far, I have reflected on my personal growth as a researcher throughout the process. Moving forward, I will reflect on and present the contributions I have made to the field of education in the next section.

9.2 Contributions

This study provides new insights into the field of teacher education and ESL teachers worldwide, specifically to teachers, teacher trainers, programme developers and higher authorities in Sri Lanka. In this section, I aim to emphasise the developments that ESL teachers expected to see for the suggested four-way reciprocal transformation in ESL teaching and teacher learning processes and procedures, encompassing both theoretical and pedagogical contributions. The proposed reciprocal four-way transformation (Figure 8.1) represents a novel contribution that authorities should consider for sustainable change. Reciprocity is highlighted in the transformation process, specifically aiming at collaboration and support among the components: systems, training, trainers and teachers. For instance, all the components should work for transforming the top-down provision of knowledge into autonomous learning by eliminating the dependence mentality of teachers and trainers.

Throughout this transformative journey, it is crucial to acknowledge how the interconnected systems, as depicted in the Web of Educational Change (Figure 8.2), influence the change process. As illustrated in the web, the people, processes and practices within the interconnected systems work directly or indirectly to impede or enhance the expected transformation process. Thus, the attention of relevant authorities is needed to further enhance and make the transformation process sustainable.

Another significant contribution is the introduction of EP to the Sri Lankan context. My focus on EP revolves around fostering a community of practice for mutual understanding among teachers, particularly in the absence of expert support, and cultivating healthy relationships between trainers and teachers. To my knowledge, no previous work in the Sri Lankan context has connected EP to CPD research with the aim of developing autonomisation in ESL teaching, teacher learning or student

learning. While RP and AR are commonly incorporated for evaluation purpose, they are not typically utilised to create autonomous learners or practitioner researchers in this context. Therefore, as a new concept, EP can be introduced as a “bottom-up in-service teacher development” (Hanks and Dikilitaș, 2018b, p.25) strategy for Sri Lankan teacher trainers and teachers aiming at creating autonomous practitioners while working together to enhance “Quality of Life” (Hanks and Dikilitaș, 2018a, p.5). This needs a step-by-step process, which, first, provides an awareness workshop to make teachers and trainers understand the EP principles and practices, identifying and working on their own puzzles and the puzzles of their colleagues. As the first step, teachers who work in similar contexts as categorised in this study can work collaboratively to identify similar puzzles. Trainer mediation will be needed during initial stages until teachers gradually reach autonomisation. This process can be further developed at a later stage involving students.

Overall, I believe that this work provides unique insights that are valuable for teachers, teacher trainers and higher authorities in Sri Lanka for an enhanced and sustainable CPD process. Next, I will provide a brief overview of the thesis.

9.3 Thesis overview

In this thesis, in Chapter 1 I outlined the research background and the rationale for the study, detailing how my experience as a teacher trainer influenced the emergence of this topic. In Chapter 2, I introduced the research context, including the Sri Lankan state school system, the historical background of teaching English as a second language, and primary and secondary education, as well as public examinations. Additionally, I provided details of the primary modes of teacher recruitment, and pre-service and in-service training in Sri Lanka. Positioning this study within the literature in Chapter 3, I delved into concepts such as teacher training, teacher education and teacher development. I examined ideologies and previous studies related to teacher knowledge, assumptions and beliefs (BAK), and explored the factors influencing teacher change. When drawing on relevant literature, I acknowledged the sociocultural theoretical perspective of language learning as the theoretical foundation of the study and explored how teacher learning takes place through mediated experiences in the journey of becoming autonomous learners.

Next, I explored how teacher change occurs over time, what might hinder the change process during the process of autonomisation, and discussed which strategies would support teachers to become autonomous practitioners and thereby promote autonomous teaching in the classroom. In Chapter 4, I elucidated my ontological and

epistemological stance behind my methodological decisions to conduct this qualitative study, adopting a multiple case study design and recruiting six ESL teacher participants through a purposive sampling strategy. I then explained how I continued my data collection procedures with five participants, after one dropped out, using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and post-observation interviews.

I explained my data analysis process, including the initial stages and final analysis, done by incorporating thematic analysis to identify key themes from my data. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I explored my data and presented them as three case studies, categorising participants based on their school settings: urban, semi-urban and rural. In Chapter 8, I discussed my conceptualisations using relevant literature and presented my contributions by creating the reciprocal four-way transformation model and the Web of Educational Change that influence or hinder the change process. Finally, in Chapter 9, I explained my reflections on the research journey, the limitations and my attempts to mitigate them. I also discussed the implications of the study for the wider field of teacher education, including suggestions for future research.

9.4 Limitations

Every approach has its inherent strengths and limitations. It is fundamental for researchers to acknowledge these limitations. I will begin discussing the limitations by explaining my viewpoint on generalisability. Although I did not aim for generalisation in this qualitative case study, as it is unrealistic to generalise findings from a small sample, this study intended to achieve “particularization” (Stake, 2006, p.10) by exploring cases in depth and providing readers with opportunities for “naturalistic generalization-learning from others’ experiences” (Duff, 2008, p.51).

I acknowledged limitations in the study and incorporated certain strategies to address some of them. First, I attempted to minimise the impact of my researcher positionality throughout the process by acknowledging and understanding my role as a researcher. The power dynamic with my participants was minimal, as I had personal relationships with each of them in different ways, aside from the researcher-researched relationship. However, I was constantly aware of my role and responsibilities as the researcher.

In addition, I was aware of researcher biases, such as the tendency to interpret data through my own “ideological and cultural baggage” due to my contextual understanding and insider perspective (Holliday, 2016, p.187). Another limitation was researcher subjectivity, stemming from my insider position. To address this, I

incorporated Sahakyan's (2023) member-checking strategy (see section 4.7.4.1) during the third interviews, sharing visual representations I created for each participant (Appendix P). I invited them to amend any misinterpreted information or add missing details. Participants did not identify any misinterpretations but did add missing information.

I found conducting interviews online was a limitation due to disturbances such as power cuts and signal strength issues, participants were not always free at their homes and it took longer to build trust with them. These breakdowns affected the natural flow of the interviews, creating uncertainties and disturbing the "rapport building" (Mann, 2011. p.10). The online interview method was chosen as an alternative to face-to-face interviews, which I failed to arrange due to the influence of COVID-19.

Additionally, the use of technology posed another limitation in selecting participants, as some teachers faced issues with completing the survey questionnaire I emailed. Consequently, the number of teachers who responded was lower than expected. I emailed the questionnaires to school principals with the aim of reaching more than 30 ESL teachers across ten schools. Out of the 30 ESL teachers who received the questionnaire, eight teachers shared it with their colleagues. Therefore, I anticipated that more than 30 teachers would receive it with secondary sharing. I expected at least 30 responses, as many teachers expressed interest by sending personal messages through social media to participate. Additionally, I sent hard copies to some teachers who had informed me about issues with using technology. Even with these efforts, I only received 11 responses, which limited my pool for selection to six participants. This affected the diversification of the sample. However, despite these limitations, this study sheds light on the field of teacher education, the development of ESL teachers and the CPD efforts. I will elaborate the implications in the following section.

9.5 Implications for the field of teacher education

I believe that this study provides important insights for ESL teachers across the globe, including Sri Lanka and other Asian countries with similar settings. As findings suggest, participants in this study recognised deficiencies in the CPD system, and expected more collegial interventions indicating that they are self-directed to some extent. However, as the majority of Sri Lankan ESL teachers are not autonomous and they are faced with quite different needs, depending on the contexts in which they work, they need more support through a different kind of CPD opportunity.

As highlighted in the literature review, there are fewer possibilities to receive the practical impacts of RP and AR in the Sri Lankan context as these practices are primarily used for evaluation purposes. When teachers complete their pre-service programmes and enter the system as teachers, they are unlikely to incorporate these tools for professional development. However, EP is a novel concept to Sri Lankan context. Although participants indicated a willingness to undertake collegial interventions for self-development with expert mediation, they were unaware of the possibilities available for CPD within their classroom context that foster autonomous teacher learning and teaching. Mann (2005) considers self- direction a key component in teacher development and states that the ultimate aim of teacher development is to create a “self-developing and autonomously functioning individual” (p.104). Thus, this study provides pedagogical implications for utilising self-directed development procedures to address teachers’ concerns regarding a lack of frequent expert support.

The findings will also offer new insights for teachers who lack English exposure in their context to understand the possibilities they have to enhance the “Quality of Life” in the workplace with collegial communication, as Nadee did to some extent (see section 7.6.2), despite being the only teacher in her rural-setting school. As Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) argue, teachers will lack learning opportunities if they work in isolation, without motivation for experimentation in their context. However, as Nadee identified what was missing for her development and found collegial support and inspiration, she was able to move forward. While this might not be a common case, attention should be given by authorities to support such teachers in advancing their careers.

The programmes aim to change teachers’ conventional thoughts and practices in the classroom and to develop their professional skills. The findings suggest that change is a precondition for development. Anjalee implemented new practices by embracing change. She demonstrated her understanding and development in self-directed decision-making in terms of why, what, how and when to change her classroom practices (see section 6.4.2.1). However, the findings indicated that not every participant immediately changed their practices despite a shift in their thinking process. They changed their practices to varying degrees due to the influence of interconnected systems. As Fullan (2007a) argues, educational change is not isolated to the individual classroom. It requires certain conditions to be met. As I suggested in Chapter 8, using the Web of Educational Change, interconnected systems influence change, either enhancing or impeding it. Consequently, authorities need to take steps to mitigate the influential factors to achieve expected goals in education. However, future research in this regard is recommended.

9.6 Future directions

The findings of the study suggest that future research will be needed for the development of the CPD of ESL teachers in Sri Lanka. According to the four-way transformation illustrated in Chapter 8, aimed at transforming teachers, there is a need for the proper functioning of RP, EP and AR to provide teachers with opportunities for autonomous teaching, teacher learning and student learning in the Sri Lanka context. As EP is a new concept in this context, further research will be necessary to explore its possibilities considering the contextual specifics. Furthermore, regarding RP and AR, I recommend further exploration of teacher perceptions and practical possibilities for implementing new classroom-based practices. Finally, as this study was conducted in one education zone in Sri Lanka, considering the limited scope, I suggest extended studies to cover other parts of the country involving more stakeholders. I hope this study will shed light on the development of CPD in the country and inspire future research endeavours.

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Appendix A : Survey Questionnaire

Survey questionnaire for selecting the sample population

Dear Teachers

I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds, UK. My doctoral research topic is 'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' classroom practices'. I am planning to conduct my fieldwork in four schools in Balangoda Education Zone, Sri Lanka. This survey questionnaire is designed to select six-eight willing participants out of 30 teachers for the sample population of this study. Participants should be iTESL trained ESL teachers. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you wish to take part in this study, you will be invited to attend the following research activities.

- Attend three online interviews to express your perceptions on your professional development experiences throughout your career journey, opportunities, and the support you currently receive for application of new CPD knowledge in their classroom practices. You will also be invited to express your perceptions on your future professional development expectations and talk about overall research experience.
- Two of your lessons will be observed by the researcher for data generation.
- You will be invited to attend 10–15-minute post classroom observation interviews.

If you would like to be a voluntary participant in this study, please complete section A of this questionnaire. Then, complete section B to give your consent. The questionnaire will not take more than 15 minutes to complete. The information you provide here is kept strictly confidential. Please send the completed questionnaire to the researcher to the following email address.

ml12dpe@leeds.ac.uk

Thank you in advance for your time and support of my research project.

Deepa Ellepola

2. **Did you attend iTESL three-day teacher training programme?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. **What is the most recent professional development programme you attended?**

....

4. **Please write what you feel about the recent CPD experience and the practicality of applying new knowledge you acquired in your classroom practice.**

....

....

....

....

....

....

Section B

Write your name and email address under the most applicable statement (1 or 2) for you.

1. I would like to be a voluntary participant in this research project.

Name - Email address -

2. I would like to receive further information relating to participation in this research project.

Name - Email address -

Dear Teacher,

I am Deepa Ellepola, a PhD student at the university of Leeds, Uk. My PhD reseach is on 'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' classroom practices'. I conduct my PhD field work in Balangoda Education Zone. I am conducting interviews, classroom observations, and post observation interviews. I am glad to invite you to be a participant in my reseach project.

Thank you in advance for taking part in my reseach project.

Sincerely,

Deepa Ellepola

Appendix B : Sample Participant Information Sheet

School of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences

Hilary place

University of Leeds

Leeds

LS2 9JT

Participant Information Sheet

The title of the research project

‘Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers’ classroom practice’.

You are being invited to take part in the research project conducted by Deepa Ellepola on ‘Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers’ teachers’ classroom practices’. Please do consider that your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any point up to 14th August 2022. (Two weeks after completion of data collection).Take time to read the following information before taking your voluntary decision to take part in the research. If there is anything you need clarification, please feel free to contact the researcher.

What is the purpose of the project?

Investigating perceptions of Sri Lankan ESL teachers’ professional development experiences, application of new CPD knowledge in their classroom practice and how they are supported for accomplishing expected change in their practices. The study specifically focusses on state school ESL teachers in Sri Lanka, and it has been planned to complete within three years.

Why have I been chosen?

Six-eight participants will be chosen from a sample of 30 ESL teachers who are consistent with my selection criteria. You are one of them.

Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide whether to take part this study or not. There is not any kind of penalty or lose of benefit that you are entitled to for refusing to take part. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time without giving any reason up to 14th August 2022. (Two weeks after completion of data collection). If you decide to

take part, you will be given a consent form to sign and a copy of this information sheet to keep with you.

What do I have to do? What will happen to me if I take part?

The researcher will invite you to participate in three online interviews, two classroom observations and post observation interviews. The first two interviews are planned for in-depth information related to your professional development history, your perceptions on CPD experience, iTESL experience and the support you receive for classroom practice. There will be post classroom observation interviews. Interview 3 will be held after the second classroom observation. You will be invited to express your perceptions on CPD experience and the support for implementation influenced the improvement of your current and future classroom practices. The data generation process will take seven months and it will take three years to complete the research.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

If you give your consent, the online interviews and the two lessons will be videoed and the post classroom observation interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be used only to gather data for this research, conference presentations, peer review journals and future publications. I will obtain your written consent if I need to use them for any other purposes. I assure that except the researcher, the supervisors and the examiners, any other outsider will not be allowed to access the recordings or data. Those recordings will be stored strictly confidentially for five years after completing the project.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

As this study investigates teacher perceptions, you may feel uncomfortable to reveal unpleasant experiences in your professional journey if there are any. You are free to withdraw any time if it is painful revealing your personal experiences or you can discuss with the researcher to clarify your doubts. Apart from this, there are not any other apparent or hidden risks in participating this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits for participating in this study, it is expected that this work will enhance your professionalism. There are no intentional materialistic benefits for participation. The professional experience you gain by participating will influence your professional development.

Use, dissemination, and storage of research data

I will use anonymised research data including direct quotes in my report, conference presentations, peer review journals and future publications. Therefore, I assure that you will not be identified in my report or publications. I will securly store anonymised data in password protected files in my M drive.

What will happen to my personal information?

Your personal data in the survey questionnaire will be used only for choosing you as a participant. Personal data will not be shared with any others and kept confidentialy after pseudonymising.

What will happen to the video and audio recordings?

The video and audio recordings will be used to get information and only the researcher, supervisors and the examiners will be watched or listened. The video and audio recordings will be stored safely in my personal lockable cupboard for five years and destroy carefully.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The findings of this research will appear in my doctoral thesis, conference presentations, peer review journals and might be in future publications. You will not be identified as a participant in any of those as I use pseudonyms instead of your name. I assure to keep personal data strictly confidential and to remove any kind of identifications of participants in my publications.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The purpose of this study is examining teacher perceptions on their professional development experiences and support they receive for application of new knowledge they gain through professional development opportunities. You will be invited to talk about your own professional development experiences, your worries, frustrations, if you wish to and success stories and how you perceive on teacher learning and application of new knowledge gained through available opportunities.

Who is organising/ funding the research?

This is a self-funded project.

Finally,

If you decide to take part in this research

You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep with you.

You will be requested to sign the following consent form and

You will be given a copy of the signed consent form.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact the researcher via ml12dpe@leeds.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read the information

Appendix C : Sample Participant Consent Form

School of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences

Hilary place

University of Leeds

Leeds

LS2 9JT

Consent to take part in the research project on

'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' teachers' classroom practice'.

Statements	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated [__/__/___] explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason until 14th August 2022 and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. I will contact the researcher at +94718434985 and inform about my decision asap.	
If I wish to withdraw from the study, I will withdraw all the data I provided for the study.	
I understand that the three online interviews and the two lessons I do for classroom observation will be videoed.	

I understand that the post observation interviews will be audio recorded.	
I understand that anonymised quotations from my data will be used in the research report, conference presentations and publications	
I understand that members of the research team may have access to my 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 or reports that result from the research. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.	
I understand that the data collected from me may be stored and used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.	
I understand that the researcher, supervisors, and the examiners may look at relevant sections of the data collected during the study, from the University of Leeds.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Deepa Ellepola
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.
Once this has been signed by all parties, the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents

Appendix D : Sample Information Sheet for Parents

School of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences

Hilary place

University of Leeds

Leeds

Information Sheet for parents (This consent form will be translated into Sinhala or Tamil – Parents' mother tongue)

The title of the research project

'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' teachers' classroom practice'.

Your child's school has been selected to carry out fieldwork for the research project conducted by Deepa Ellepola on 'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' teachers' classroom practice'. Your child will be in videoing lessons, but his/her back will be visible in the video. Please do consider that it is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse your child's appearing in videos. Please take time to read the following information. If there is anything you need clarification, please feel free to contact the researcher.

What is the purpose of the project?

Investigating perceptions of Sri Lankan ESL teachers' professional development experiences, application of new CPD knowledge in their classroom practice and how they are supported for accomplishing expected change in their practices are the main purposes. The study specifically focusses on state school ESL teachers in Sri Lanka, and it has been planned to complete within three years.

Why have my child's school and class been chosen?

One of the participants in this research is the English teacher of your child's class.

What will happen in my child's school?

The researcher will visit your child's school and observe your child's English teacher's lessons. The lessons will be videoed with the teacher's consent. Your child will be in those video recording lessons.

What will happen to the videos?

The videos will be used only to get information about the lessons. The videos will be stored safely in my personal lockable cupboard for two years and destroy carefully.

Finally,

- **You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep with you.**
- **You will be requested to sign the following consent form and**
- **You will be given a copy of the signed consent form.**

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact the researcher at ml12dpe@leeds.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read the information.

Appendix E : Sample Parental Consent Form

School of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences

Hilary place

University of Leeds

Leeds

(This consent form will be translated into Sinhala or Tamil – Parents' mother tongue)

Consent to be my child in the videoing lessons as secondary participants in the research project on

'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' teachers' classroom practice'.

Statement	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I agree my child to be in the two videoing lessons.	

Name of parent	
Parent's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Deepa Ellepola
Signature	
Date*	

Appendix F : Sample Information Sheet for Principals

School of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences

Hilary place

University of Leeds

Leeds

LS2 9JT

Sample Information Sheet for principals of the selected schools

The title of the research project

'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' teachers' classroom practice'.

The Zonal Education Office has recommended your school to carry out fieldwork for the research project conducted by Deepa Ellepola on 'Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' classroom practice'. Please take time to read the following information. If there is anything you need clarification, please feel free to contact the researcher.

What is the purpose of the project?

Investigating perceptions of Sri Lankan ESL teachers' professional development experiences, application of new CPD knowledge in their classroom practice and how they are supported for accomplishing expected change in their practices are the main purposes. The study specifically focusses on state school ESL teachers in Sri Lanka, and it has been planned to complete within three years.

Why have my school and the teachers in my school been chosen?

Your school is one of the schools the Zonal Education Office recommended to carry out this research as the participants in this research work in your school.

What will happen in my school?

I will visit your school 2 times within seven months to observe their lessons. The teachers will attend post classroom observation discussions. I will spend for 4-5 hours with your teacher during each visit. The lessons will be videoed, and the interviews and the post classroom observation discussions will be audio recorded with the teacher's consent.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits for participating your teachers in this study, it is expected that this work will enhance their professionalism. There are no intentional materialistic benefits for participation. The professional experience they gain by participating will influence their professional development. After completing my data collection process, I hope to conduct a professional development programme for your English teachers if I get your permission.

Finally,

- **You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep with you.**
- **You will be requested to sign the following consent form and**
- **You will be given a copy of the signed consent form.**

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact the researcher at ml12dpe@leeds.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read the information.

Appendix G : Sample Consent Form for Principals

School of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences

Hilary place

University of Leeds

Leeds

LS2 9JT

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Deepa Ellepola, a PhD student at University of Leeds, UK. I am doing my PhD on ‘Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers’ teachers’ classroom practice’. I have selected six-eight English teachers from Balangoda Education Zone as my participants. The Zonal Education Office has recommended conducting fieldwork for the research project in your school. One/Two of your English teachers voluntarily participate/s this research project. This fieldwork will last for seven months. I will observe two of their lessons during this period. The post observation interviews will be audio recorded and the lessons will be video recorded with the teachers’ consent.

The research activities will be beneficial for the professional development of your English teachers. Apart from the research activities, I hope to conduct a session for the English teachers in your school on “collaborative professional development strategies” with your permission.

If you give your consent to carry out the above research project in your school and taking one/two English teacher/s in your school as (a) participant/s, please complete the section below and email to ml12dpe@leeds.ac.uk .

Thank you in advance for your support.

Name of principal	
Principal’s signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Deepa Ellepola
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.
Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project’s main documents

Appendix H : Ministry of Education Approval 1

අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය
கல்வி அமைச்சு
Ministry of Education

'ඉසුරුපාය', බත්තරමුල්ල, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව.
'இசுருபாய', பத்தரமுல்ல, இலங்கை.
'Isurupaya', Battaramulla, Sri Lanka.
+94112785141-50 +94112784846
isurupaya@moe.gov.lk www.moe.gov.lk

මගේ යොමුව / எனது இல. / My Ref. } ED/03/56/18 ඔබේ යොමුව / உமது இல. / Your Ref. } දිනය / திகதி / Date } 21.04.2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Letter of permission to conduct a research

This letter is to authorise Ms. Deepa Ellepola, a doctoral student at the University of Leeds to initiate a research titled **"Effects of CPD (Continuing Professional Development) on Sri Lankan ESL (English as a second language) teachers' classroom practices".** She will liaise with the Ministry of Education, Zonal Education Office (Balangoda) and the principals of the chosen schools in Balangoda Education Zone for further assistance in conducting the study. The commencement of field study of the research is scheduled from June, 2021 as mentioned in the request letter.

Further, please note that this letter is issued upon the request of Ms. Deepa Ellepola.

P. M. Salaahudeen
Director of Education (Research & Development)
For Secretary
Ministry of Education

P.M. SALAHUDEEN
Director of Education
Research and Development Branch
Ministry of Education
"Isurupaya", Battaramulla.

Appendix I : Ministry of Education Approval 2

අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය
கல்வி அமைச்சு
Ministry of Education

'ඉසුරුපාය', බත්තරමුල්ල, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව.
'இசுருபாய', பத்தரமுல்ல, இலங்கை.
'Isurupaya', Battaramulla, Sri Lanka.
+94112785141-50 +94112784846
isurupaya@moe.gov.lk www.moe.gov.lk

මගේ යොමුව / எனது இல. / My Ref. } ED/03/56/18 ඔබේ යොමුව / உமது இல. / Your Ref. } දිනය / திகதி / Date } 21.04.2021

Zonal Director of Education
Zonal Education Office
Balangoda

Letter of permission to conduct a research

This has reference a request made by Ms. Deepa Ellepola, a doctoral student at the University of Leeds to initiate a research titled **"Effects of CPD (Continuing Professional Development) on Sri Lankan ESL (English as a second language) teachers' classroom practices".**

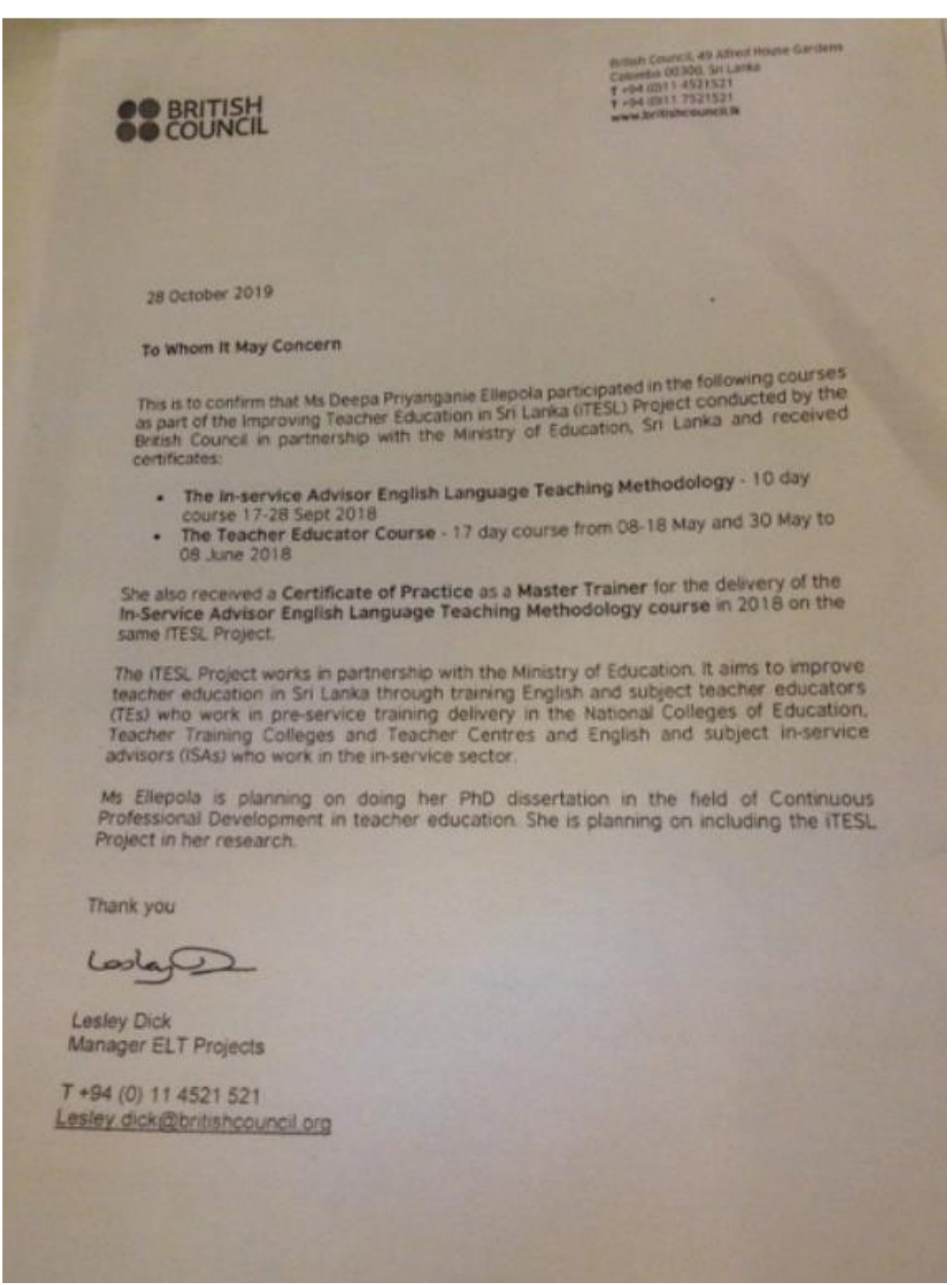
In order to conduct her research field study, she is of the view to select few schools from your zone as her research sample and she will liaise with you in future in this regard. Therefore, you are kindly requested to extend necessary support by granting permission to select schools from your education zone.

P. M. Salaahudeen
Director of Education (Research & Development)
For Secretary
Ministry of Education

Copy: Ms. Deepa Ellepola - For your information, pl.

P.M. SALAHUDEEN
Director of Education
Research and Development Branch
Ministry of Education
"Isurupaya", Battaramulla.

Appendix J : Letter from the British Council, Sri Lanka



BRITISH COUNCIL

British Council, 49 Alfred House Gardens
Colombo 00300, Sri Lanka
T +94 (0)11 4521521
T +94 (0)11 7521521
www.britishcouncil.lk

28 October 2019

To Whom It May Concern

This is to confirm that Ms Deepa Priyanganie Ellepola participated in the following courses as part of the Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka (ITESL) Project conducted by the British Council in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka and received certificates:

- **The In-service Advisor English Language Teaching Methodology** - 10 day course 17-28 Sept 2018
- **The Teacher Educator Course** - 17 day course from 08-18 May and 30 May to 08 June 2018

She also received a **Certificate of Practice** as a **Master Trainer** for the delivery of the **In-Service Advisor English Language Teaching Methodology course** in 2018 on the same ITESL Project.

The ITESL Project works in partnership with the Ministry of Education. It aims to improve teacher education in Sri Lanka through training English and subject teacher educators (TEs) who work in pre-service training delivery in the National Colleges of Education, Teacher Training Colleges and Teacher Centres and English and subject in-service advisors (ISAs) who work in the in-service sector.

Ms Ellepola is planning on doing her PhD dissertation in the field of Continuous Professional Development in teacher education. She is planning on including the ITESL Project in her research.

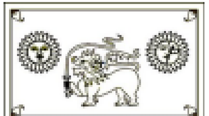
Thank you

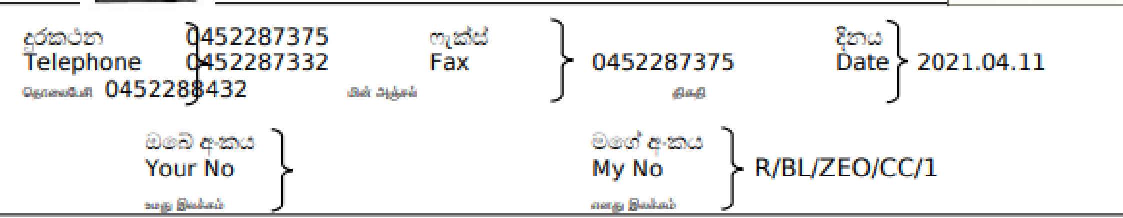
Lesley Dick
Manager ELT Projects

T +94 (0) 11 4521 521
Lesley.dick@britishcouncil.org

Appendix K : Approval from the Zonal Director of Education

කලාප අධ්‍යාපන කාර්යාලය - බලංගොඩ
Zonal Education Office - Balangoda
வலயக்கல்வி அலுவலகம் – பலாங்கொடை





දුරකථන / Telephone / தொலைபேசி: 0452287375, 0452287332, 0452288432
ෆැක්ස් / Fax / பெக்ஸ்: 0452287375
දිනය / Date / திகதி: 2021.04.11

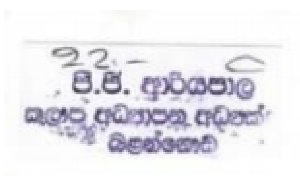
ඔබේ අංකය / Your No / உமது இலக்கம்:
මගේ අංකය / My No / எனது இலக்கம்: R/BL/ZEO/CC/1

Deepa Ellepola
Teacher
Zonal Education Office
Balangoda

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

Ms. Deepa Ellepola who is a doctoral student of University of Leeds has requested my permission to initiate a research titled "Effects of CPD (Continuous Professional Development) on SriLankan ESL (English as a second Language) teachers' classroom practices". As per her request letter, the commencement of field study of the research has been scheduled from June 2021.

This letter is issued to authorize the field study of the research and to gather required data from the Zonal Education Office and the principals of relevant schools that have been selected for the study.



Director
Zonal Education Office
Balangoda

Appendix L : Interview Prompts

Interview 1

Purpose **–** To generate information related to professional knowledge of the teachers, professional development experiences in career history and up to date and application of knowledge and skills in the classroom.

Please listen to me before we start.

The information you provide and the direct quotations from your responses will be used only for this research purpose, and you will not be identified anywhere as I use pseudonyms instead of your name before using the information you provide. I assure to store all data strictly confidentially. Only the researcher, the supervisors and the examiners will have access to recordings. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any point of the research process up to 14th August 2022. You do not have to give a reason for your withdrawal.

As you gave your consent to record, I am going to switch on the recorder. Are you happy for me to do so?

- I am going to tell you how I started my career as a teacher many years ago. Listen and then tell me your story. You may have a different story. Just tell me. I am ready to listen to you.
  You said how you received professional development as a beginner teacher (*anticipate*)………..Do you think about that situation differently now? Why?
  You said that you learnt to teach … as a beginner teacher. Can you tell me more about that?

- Close your eyes and reflect on any memorable professional development programmes you have attended. Did you learn something new? How did you feel about the programme?
  If you were the trainer, what would, you have done differently?
  How do your trainers expect you to apply what you learnt through professional development programmes? (*If the participant's answer is different from the following idea*)
  Some teachers say that the trainers expect the teachers to apply what they have learnt exactly the same way in their classrooms. How do you feel about that?
  How do you prefer, to apply your own methodologies or what the trainers ask you to do or mixer of both?

- I heard one of the teachers saying, “teachers must take the responsibility of their own learning and teaching”
- What is your idea about this view? (*if the participant agrees with the concept*)
  What are the requirements to make it possible in your context?
  What strategies do you use for your own professional development?
- You attended iTESL three-day teacher training. I would like to know about your experience. Please go on talking. I won’t interrupt.
  You mentioned that……….
  You believe………………
- Did you try out what you learnt at iTESL in your classroom?
  (If yes) Can you remember the last lesson you tried out? Please tell me the things you remember from that lesson.
  Did you face any problems when applying new methodologies and strategies?
  (If yes) Please explain the problems you faced, your worries and feelings about this change process.
  If you did not try out, what were the reasons for this?

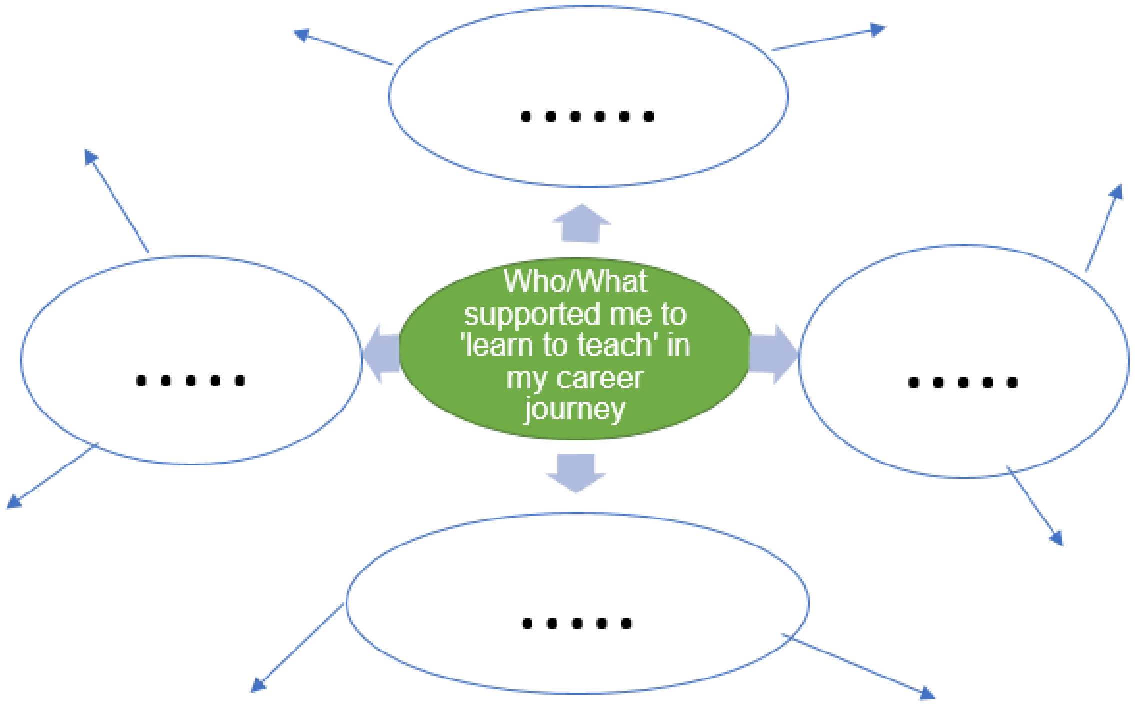
- Did you attend any CPD programme/s after iTESL?
  If yes, I would like to listen to your experience.
- What factors motivate you to gain new knowledge and apply those in the classroom?

- What factors motivate or/and demotivate you to attend available professional development programmes, if any?

Interview 2

Purpose – To generate information related to the types of support the teachers currently receive for CPD.

- In our last interview, you talked about how you learned to teach as a beginner teacher. Now you have …years' experience as a teacher. Let's focus on who/what supported you to learn to teach in your career journey. To reflect on your experience and generate your ideas take few minutes to complete this mind map.



- Can you explain your story using your mind map?
- We can categorize the types of learning into Self-learning

  and

  Supported learning.

  First, we will focus on supported learning. You have mentioned who has supported you. (*Anticipate*)

  Tell me,

  What types of support did you receive from outside experts?

What types of support did you receive from colleagues?

Tell me your feelings about the support that teachers receive for professional development. Any positive or negative experiences or both.
Are you saying that…..?
What kind of support do you expect from experts? How often? Once, twice, many times or continuous support?

- What is your opinion about the support required for a novice teacher and an experienced teacher? Same or different? Why? Would you like to explain more?
Do you support your colleagues or vice versa?
What types of support did you receive for classroom implementation after attending the iTESL programme?
Can you reach iTESL trainers whenever you need support?

Did your iTESL trainers visit you and observe your lessons? How many times?

What do you feel about your experience?

Would you like to share your feelings about trainers' visits and classroom observation generally?

Now, please tell me about your attempts for self-learning, if, any
Now, let's reflect on the lesson I observed last month. At the post lesson meeting, you said that ………….Tell me more about that
If you can recall, can you tell me about what you could do and what you couldn't do according to your plan.

Interview 3

Purpose – To generate information related to their perceptions on whether their CPD experience and the support for implementation influenced their current and future classroom practices.

After our last meeting, did you receive any type of professional development opportunity? If any, would you like to share your experiences?

- How do you feel about what you gained through the prevailing opportunities?
- Nowadays, people talk about quality and sustainability in everything. How can you apply these two concepts for professional development programmes in your context?
- Do you expect any improvements? If yes,
  What improvements do you expect?
- You have ….more years to work in this field as a teacher or you may become a trainer or a director/tress. Tell me what you think about the future of ESL teaching, teacher learning and improving teacher professionalism. I am going to listen to you without interrupting.
- You already know that the topic of my research is “Effects of CPD on Sri Lankan ESL teachers’ classroom practice”. Other than what we have talked about so far, what else you can tell me with regard to professional development and teachers’ classroom practice. Please speak out about your feelings, worries, fears, uncertainties or your positive thoughts, expectations for the development of Second Language Teacher Education in your context.
- In your story on professional journey, you have mentioned……………Can you tell me more about this?
- You believe that…….Why do you think so?
- Now, let’s talk about your research experience during these six months. How do feel about your experience in taking part in this research project?

Appendix M : Sample Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol – Interview 2

Good evening. Welcome to the second interview.

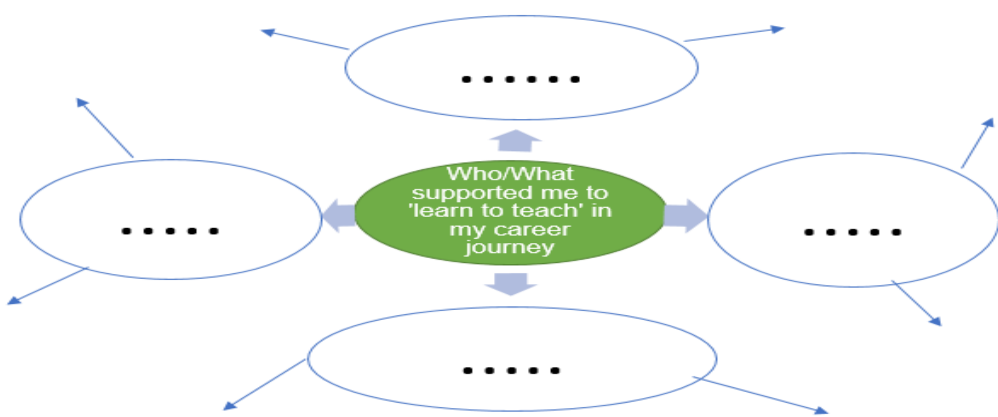
First, I will discuss the purpose of this interview.

Today, the purpose of the interview is to generate information related to types of support you received and currently receiving for CPD.

As you gave your consent, I will video record this TEAMs interview. Do you have any issues regarding video recording?

Let's get started.

1. In our last interview, you talked about how you learned to teach as a beginner teacher. Now you have …. years' experience as a teacher. Can you tell me who and what supported you to teach?
    - Let's do a simple activity to reflect on your experience. Please close your eyes and take few minutes to reflect. Then complete this mind map.
    - You can draw it in a piece of paper and complete.



- Can you explain your story using your mind map?

Can you tell me more about…?

2. Ok. Let's move on to the next question. We can categorize the types of learning into two as self-learning and supported learning. First, we will talk about supported learning. Please tell me what types of support you received from outside experts.

- Do you have anything to add?

3. What support did you receive from your colleagues?
   Please explain.

4. Tell me your feelings about the support that teachers receive for professional development. Any positive or negative experiences or both.

   Are you saying that…..?

5. What kind of support do you expect from experts? How often? Once, twice, many times or continuous support?

6. What is your opinion about the support required for a novice teacher and an experienced teacher? Same or different? Why? Would you like to explain more?
7. Do you support your colleagues?

8. Are there colleagues in your school who support you?

   Tell me more about

9. What types of support did you receive for classroom implementation after attending the iTESL programme?

10. Can you reach iTESL trainers whenever you need support?

11. Did your iTESL trainers visit you and observe your lessons? How many times?

    What do you feel about your experience?

12. Would you like to share your feelings about trainers' visits and classroom observation generally?

    Now, please tell me about your attempts for self-learning, if, any

13. Now, let's reflect on the lesson I observed last month. At the post lesson meeting, you said that ………….Tell me more about that

14. If you can recall, can you tell me about what you could do and what you couldn't do according to your plan.

That's the end of today's interview. Thank you so much for your participation. I will visit you for the second classroom observation. Finally, I would like to remind you that the information you provided today is confidential.

Appendix N : Observation Protocol - Anjalee

Flowers and Ornamentals

Anjalee

Grade 6. 36 students.
8.30 - 9.10. Grammar.

Date | Notes

19th May 2022 | Descriptive | Reflexive

Does the Tr. incorporated ITESL techniques | started with reminding prior knowledge. Yes, used MT. for instruction & explanatory | translatory instead using ICQs. used MT - instead ICQs

How does it adapted | Activity based. live class | Live classroom. very active. Tr. gave her lesson plan.

Activity 1 - individual task

Any amendments: ITESL Technique 1 - CR management technique. showed Yes/No using a symbol

Technique 2 - attention grabbing technique - 1,2,3 eyes on me

assigned pair work / after completion swap the answer sheets.

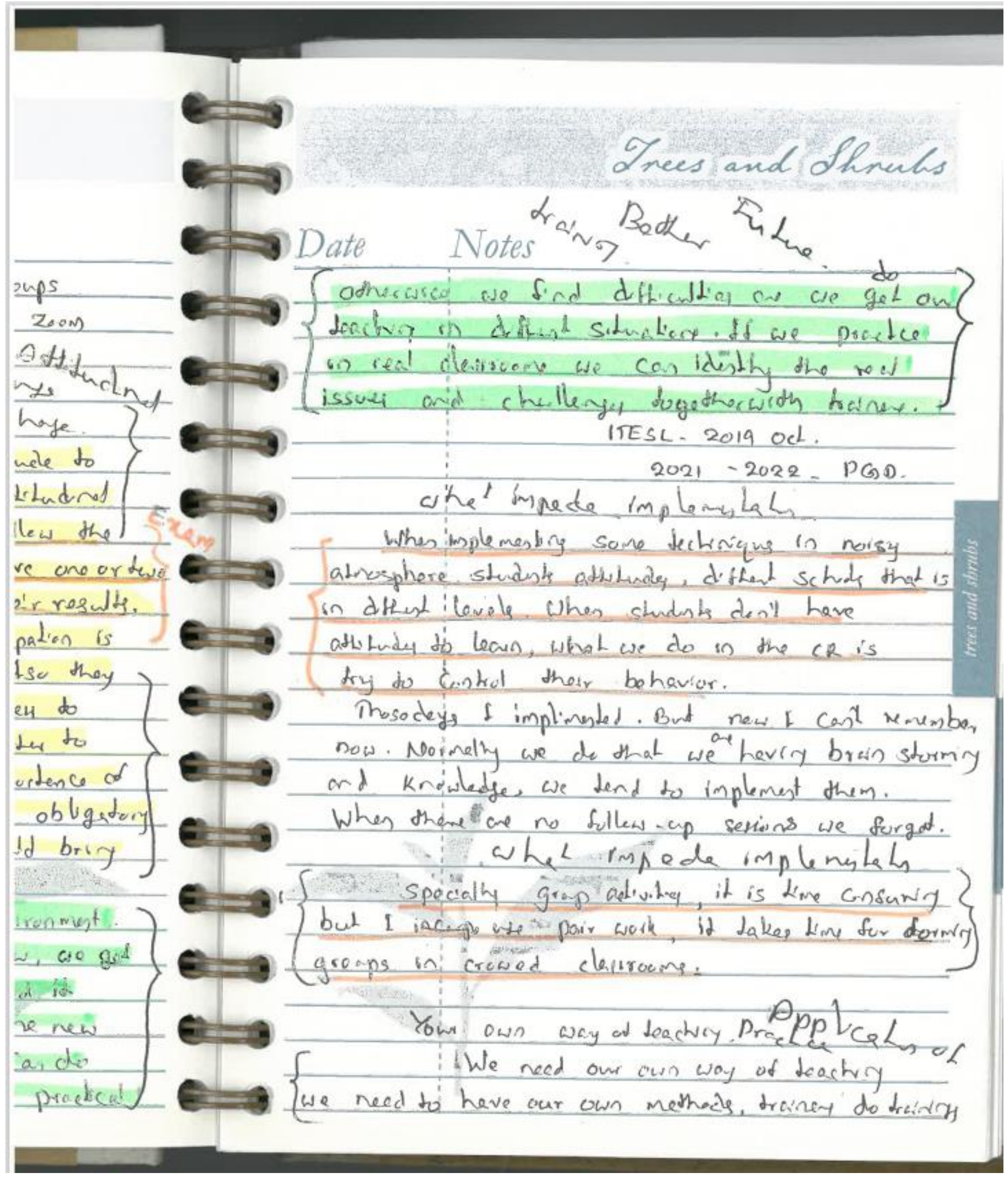
group work -

Sts familiarity | sts followed instructions without any confusion - they are familiar with the techniques

The lesson was not planned specifically for today's observing purpose

Grouping Techniques | Used time saving grouping techniques pre-planned | Sts behaved natural way, freely.

Appendix O : Initial Codes



Trees and Shrubs

Date Notes

training Better Future

otherwise we find difficulties or we get our teaching in different situations. If we practice in real classroom we can identify the real issues and challenges together with trainer.

ITESL - 2019 Oct.

2021 - 2022 - PGD.

What impede implementation

When implementing some techniques in noisy atmosphere students attitudes, different schools that is in different levels. When students don't have attitudes to learn, what we do in the CR is try to control their behavior.

Those days I implemented. But now I can't remember now. Normally we do that we are having brain storming and knowledge, we tend to implement them. When there are no follow-up sessions we forget.

What impede implementation

Specially group activities, it is time consuming but I ... pair work, it takes time for forming groups in crowed classrooms.

Your own way of teaching. Practice Application of

We need our own way of teaching

we need to have our own methods, trainers do training

Appendix P : Visualized Coding

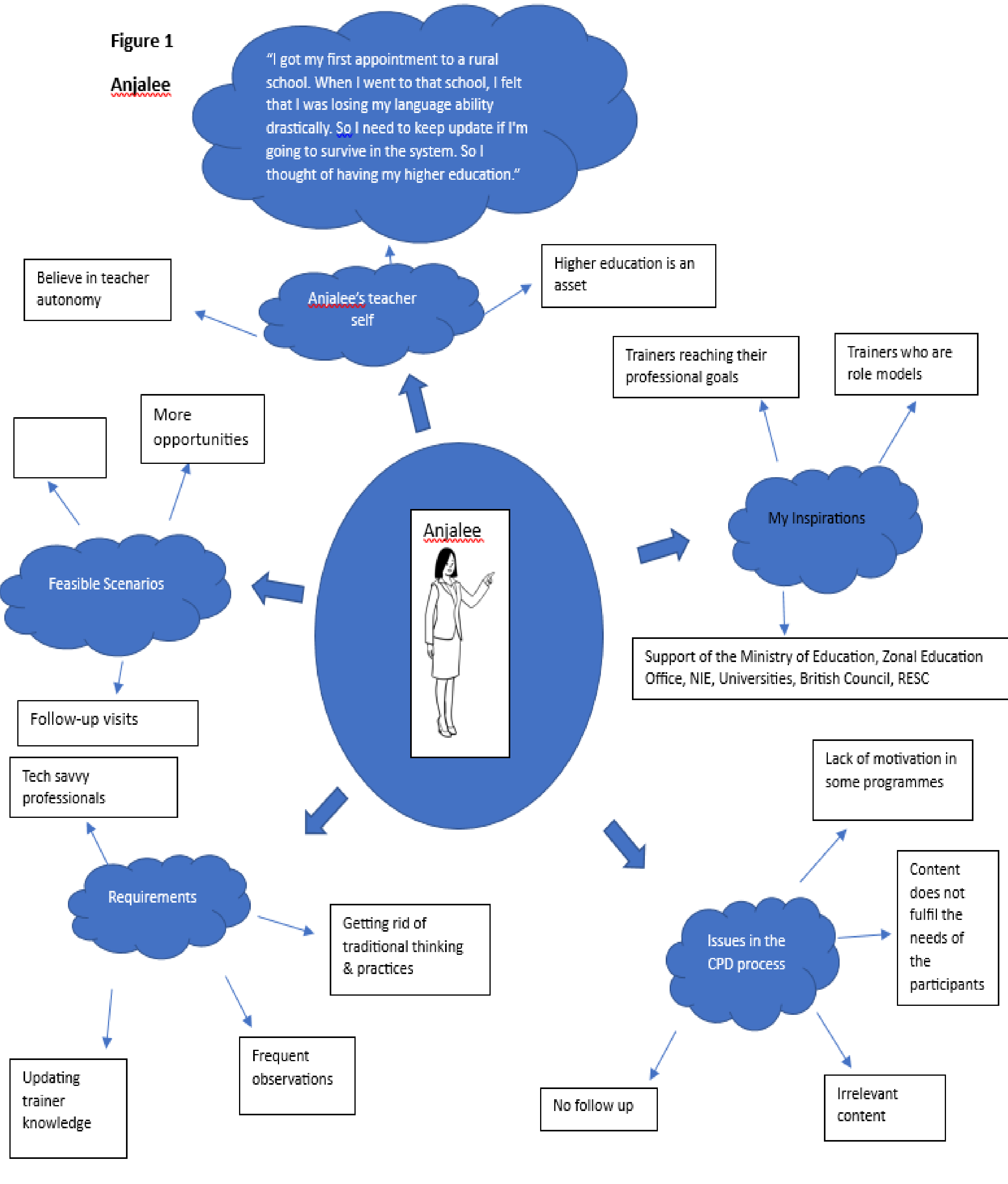


Figure 2

Figure 3

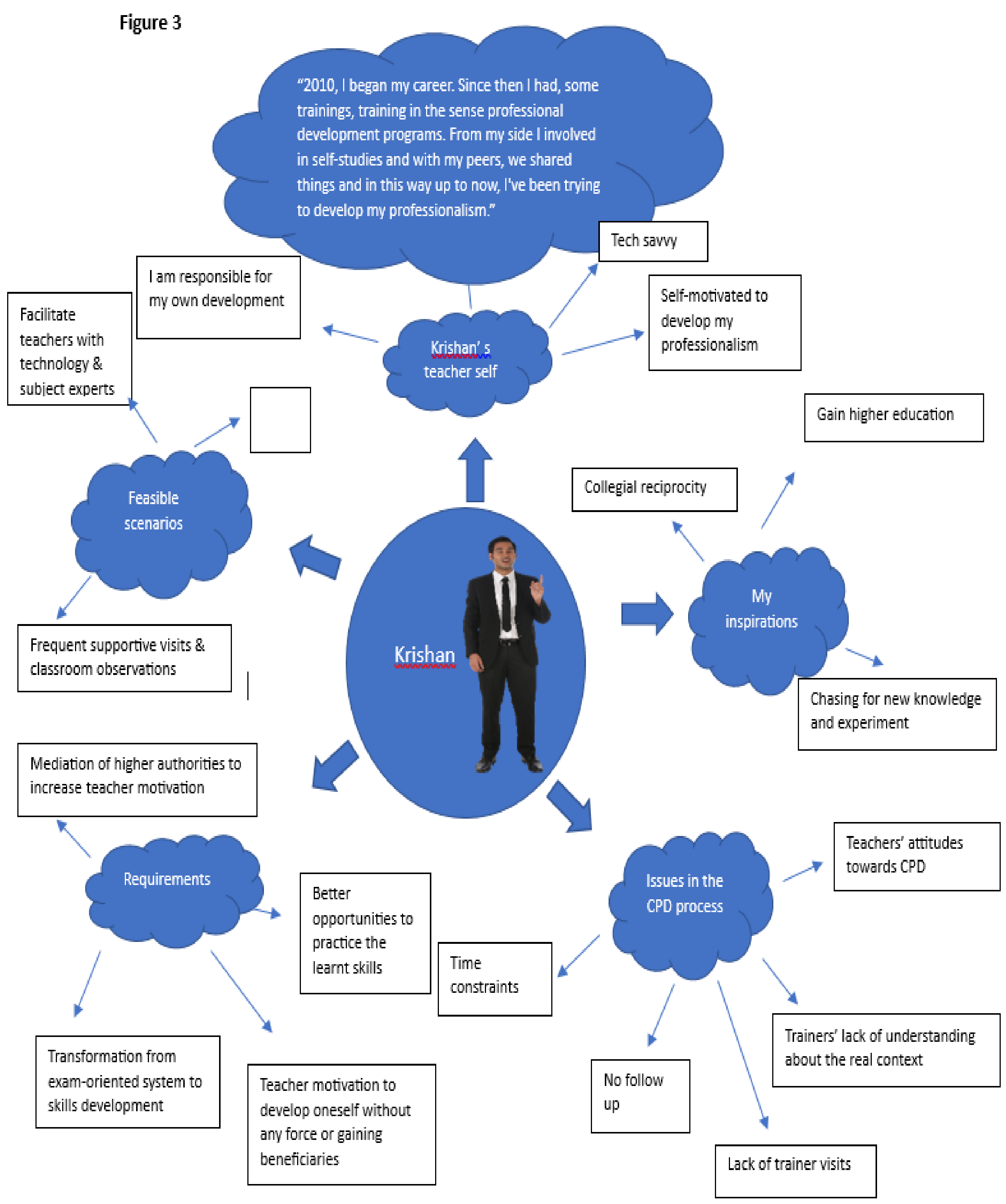
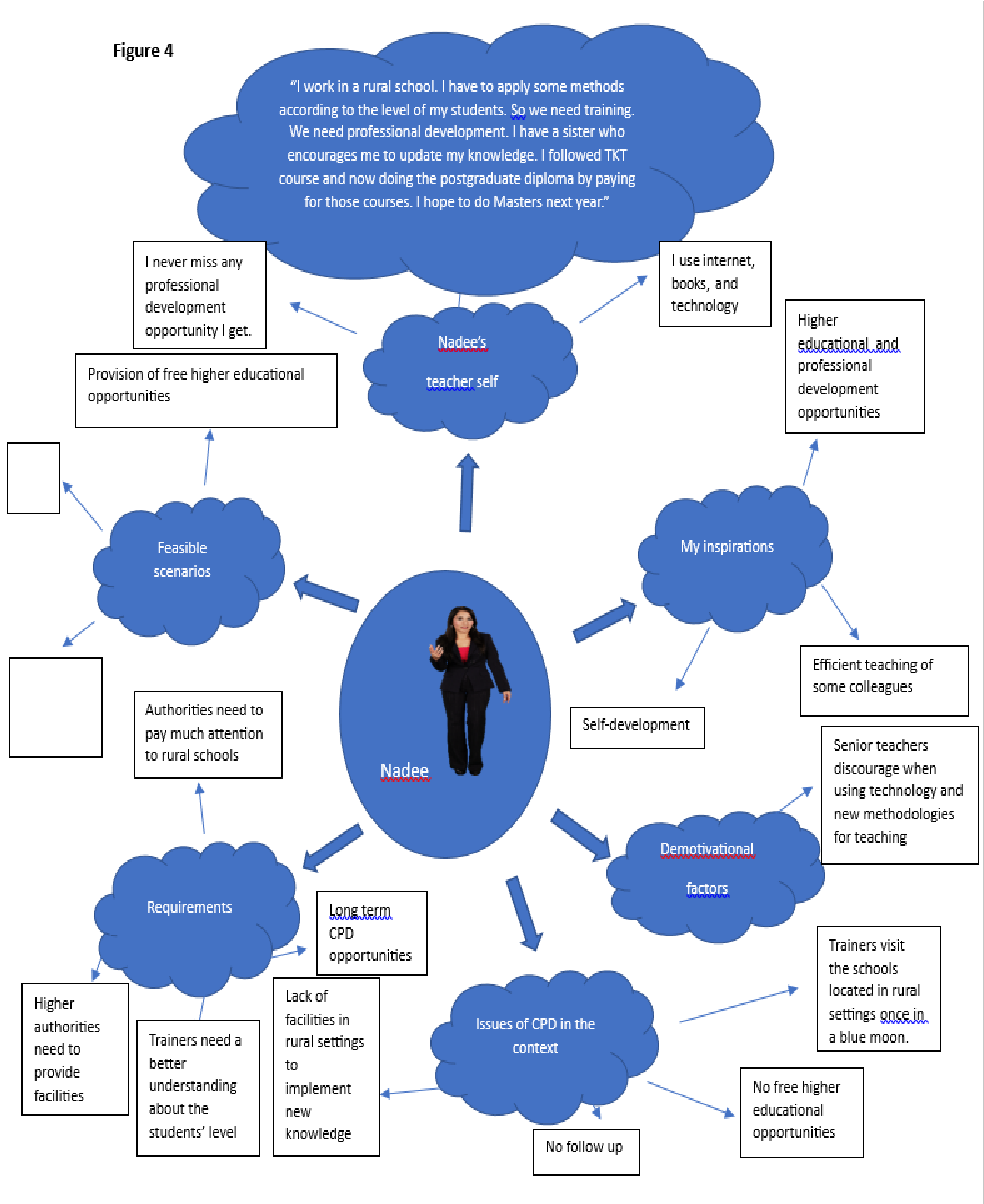


Figure 4



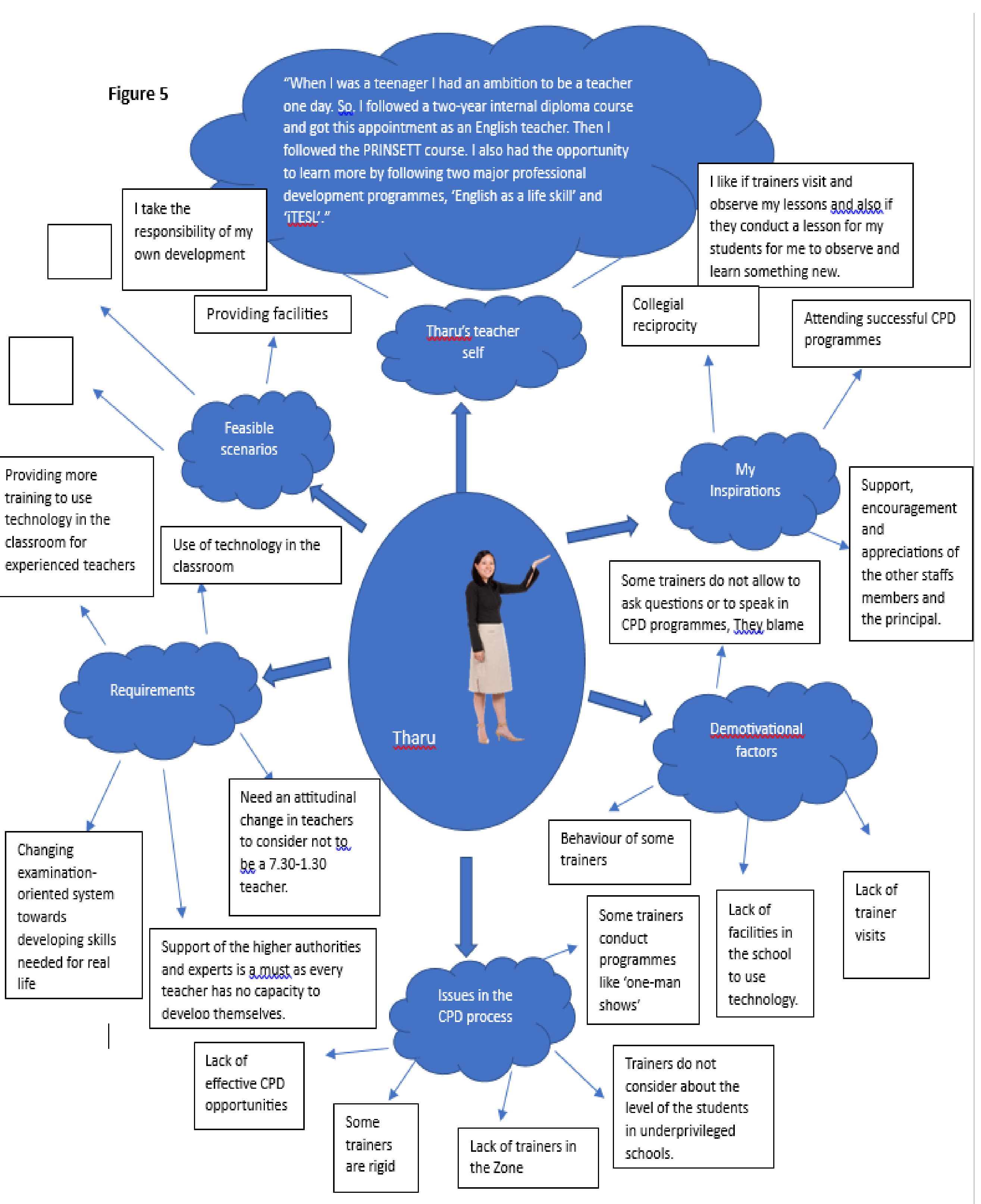


Figure 5
"When I was a teenager I had an ambition to be a teacher one day. So, I followed a two-year internal diploma course and got this appointment as an English teacher. Then I followed the PRINSETT course. I also had the opportunity to learn more by following two major professional development programmes, 'English as a life skill' and 'iTESL'."
I take the responsibility of my own development
I like if trainers visit and observe my lessons and also if they conduct a lesson for my students for me to observe and learn something new.
Providing facilities
Tharu's teacher self
Collegial reciprocity
Attending successful CPD programmes
Feasible scenarios
My Inspirations
Providing more training to use technology in the classroom for experienced teachers
Use of technology in the classroom
Support, encouragement and appreciations of the other staffs members and the principal.
Some trainers do not allow to ask questions or to speak in CPD programmes, They blame
Requirements
Tharu
Demotivational factors
Need an attitudinal change in teachers to consider not to be a 7.30-1.30 teacher.
Behaviour of some trainers
Changing examination-oriented system towards developing skills needed for real life
Some trainers conduct programmes like 'one-man shows'
Lack of facilities in the school to use technology.
Lack of trainer visits
Support of the higher authorities and experts is a must as every teacher has no capacity to develop themselves.
Issues in the CPD process
Lack of effective CPD opportunities
Some trainers are rigid
Lack of trainers in the Zone
Trainers do not consider about the level of the students in underprivileged schools.

Appendix Q : Ethical Approval

Deepa Ellepola <dpellepola@gmail.com>

AREA 20-149 - Ethics Application - APPROVAL
2 messages

ResearchEthics <researchethics@leeds.ac.uk> 26 July 2021 at 11:14
To: deepa Ellepola <dpellepola@gmail.com>
Cc: ResearchEthics <researchethics@leeds.ac.uk>

Dear Deepa

AREA 20-149 - Effects of Continuing Professional Development on Sri Lankan English as a Second Language teachers' classroom practices.

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application has been reviewed by the School of Business, Environment and Social Services Committee and on behalf of the Chair, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-ethics-and-integrity/applying-for-an-amendment/ or contact the Research Ethics Administrator for further information researchethics@leeds.ac.uk) if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study goes well.

Best wishes

Kaye Beaumont

On behalf of Dr Matthew Davis, CHAIR, AREA