

# **BECOMING THE “GOOD” LANGUAGE TEACHER THROUGH ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF TURKISH AND LITHUANIAN EFL INSTRUCTORS**

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Research has consistently shown that learner success in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction depends substantially on the effectiveness of classroom teachers. As a result, the profile of a “good” foreign language teacher has been the focus of considerable investigation (Çelik, Arikan, & Caner, 2013). To reach learners effectively, EFL teachers must have not only a good command of English, but also sound pedagogical knowledge and adequate classroom management skills; in addition, they must be good communicators and possess the ability to connect with their students on an affective level. In this respect, researchers such as Altan (2006), Daloğlu (2004), and Mačianskienė and Tuomaitė (2004) point to ongoing efforts at professional development as playing a major role, particularly in the case of language teachers in EFL settings who are themselves non-native speakers of English (Serdiukov & Tarnopolsky, 1999). In light of this concern, the researchers believed that teachers’ attitudes and efforts toward improving their practice should be explored in terms of whether they think professional development is important, how they go about improving their professional skills, and how they perceive its effects on their teaching given that these factors may have a significant impact on their motivation to continue seeking out formative opportunities. Accordingly, this comparative study was designed to analyze the viewpoints of English Language Teaching professionals working in EFL contexts. As the researchers felt that comparing the responses from two different cultural and linguistic contexts could provide a richer perspective on the issue, the participants included university-level EFL instructors from both Turkey and Lithuania. A detailed questionnaire was used to elicit the participants’ attitudes toward professional development, the types of activities they engage in, their attitudes toward their experiences, and their beliefs concerning the overall impact of

professional development on their practice. An analysis of their individual responses, in addition to a comparison of the data collected from the two groups of participants, may help us to better understand teachers' attitudes and expectations toward professional development, as well as the scope of their efforts, in differing cultural and linguistic settings. This, in turn, may draw attention to the ways in which existing professional growth opportunities are meeting or failing to meet EFL teachers' needs and highlight areas where reform may be necessary.