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Exploring the contribution of teaching associations to the professionalism of teachers of English as a foreign language: a UK case study

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Wayne Rimmer

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Abstract

The motivation for this study is the putative link between teaching associations (TAs) and the professionalism of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). It has been assumed that TAs lead to professionalism but there is a knowledge gap within the EFL literature because professionalism as a construct has not been adequately conceptualised or operationalised in the few studies of TAs extant. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between TAs and professionalism empirically using a robust construct of professionalism. Accordingly, professionalism is operationalised via three interlinking constructs, identity, continuing professional development (CPD) and communities of practice (CoP), and the over-arching research question is: what are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers?

The methodology, qualitative and drawing on a relativist paradigm, is an exploratory case study of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) as the largest UK-based TA. The mono-method is face-to-face interviews (n = 17) conducted with IATEFL officers (n = 4), members (n = 6) and non-members of IATEFL (n = 7). The data are analysed through semi-grounded content analysis with the emergent themes linked to the constructs of identity, CPD and CoP.

The strongest and most consistent finding is that TAs are primarily perceived by stakeholders as a vehicle for CPD for EFL teachers. Identity is a much more complex phenomenon and at best the relationship between identity and TAs can be seen as aspirational. It is also found that TAs do supply a sense of community but fail formal criteria to qualify as CoP. The implications are that TAs can impact the professionalism of members and non-members alike through CPD activity but they need to generate much more awareness of their role and function. The original contribution of this study to a neglected area of research within EFL is that it offers a robust conceptualisation of professionalism and includes non-members of TAs in its sample.

Acknowledgements

At the outset, an EdD thesis seems essentially to be a solo undertaking. By the completion stage it is obvious that such projects are impossible without considerable support and direction.

My immediate debt is to my supervisors, Dr Alan Floyd, Dr Louise Courtney and, in the initial stages, Professor Andy Goodwyn. Their expertise and encouragement have been indispensable in shaping my thoughts, transmuting them to a practical research design and guiding me through the writing-up process. The perceptive and constructive feedback of my two examiners, Dr Naomi Flynn and Dr Jane Spiro, was also of great value. I am of course very grateful to the 17 people who took time out of their busy schedules to be interviewed for this project. They are people from rather different backgrounds but they are all united in their passion for what they do.

It would be futile to point out my many obligations to the literature. However, the work of Linda Evans on professionalism has been fascinating reading and deeply informative.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the many teachers I have met who work to the best of their ability in extremely demanding conditions. The plight of such teachers has raised my awareness of the centrality of professionalism to EFL because the goal of providing a quality language learning experience cannot be fully realised unless teachers are supported and valued.

Abbreviations

BALEAP	British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes
BELTA	Bangladeshi English Language Teachers' Association
CA	content analysis
CANTASOL	Canterbury Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
CELTA	Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CLIL	content language integrated learning
CLT	communicative language teaching
CoP	communities of practice
CPD	continuing professional development
EAL	English as an additional language
EAP	English for academic purposes
EAQUALS	The European Association for Quality Language Services
EFL	English as a foreign Language
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as a second language
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
FILTA	Film in Language Teaching Association
FIPLV	Professeurs de Langues Vivantes / International Federation of Language Teacher Associations
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
IAWE	International Association of World Englishes
JALT	Japan Association for Language Teaching
NATE	National Association for the Teaching of English
NST	native-speaking teacher
NNST	non-native speaking teacher
RATE	Romanian Association of Teachers of English
SIG	special interest group
TA	teaching association
TEA	Teachers of English in Austria
TESOL	TESOL International Association

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the relationship between teaching associations (TAs) and the professionalism of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). This introductory chapter begins by examining the relevance to EFL of professionalism and TAs, providing a definition of TAs and including a discussion of factors which act as barriers to perceptions of professionalism. At this point my own background as a researcher is included. Next there is an introduction to the conceptual/theoretical framework, which precedes a presentation of the research aims and questions and a preliminary outline of the methodology of the study. The significance of the study is then discussed and an overview of the thesis follows.

1.2 Identifying the problem

The argument of this thesis is that the assumed link between TAs and perceptions of professionalism is putative and lacks empirical corroboration. The connection between TAs and professionalism is that the former has claims to foster the latter. Thus, in Szesztay's (2006) list of aims for prospective TAs, first comes "to strengthen language teachers' sense of identity as members of a respected profession" (p. 17). The verb "strengthen" is sanguine as it implies that some degree of professionalism already exists, but one that needs bolstering. Unfortunately, there is evidence from the public sphere to suggest that EFL is not "respected", as illustrated in a non-fiction work describing an introduction to the world of teaching EFL:

> I found a job teaching English at a language centre on the outskirts of Chiang Mai.
> It was a pretty shabby outfit, run by a bunch of cowboys. They didn't even ask me if
> I had a criminal record. All they saw was the TEFL certificate, the smart pants, the
> red striped suit and smart tie. The hours were long and the money wasn't much but
> it kept me busy and the language centre was close to where I lived. (Moore, 2014,
> pp. 54-55)

This is anecdotal evidence but perhaps reflective of a poor public conception of EFL (see **1.2.2**). What needs to be investigated is whether TAs can influence perceptions of professionalism in the challenging environment that EFL teachers operate in. It is unlikely that many teachers belong to TAs (see **3.4**) or that TAs can change industry conditions such as poor working conditions and low salaries (Walsh, 2018). The motivation for the project thus comes from the repercussions of a perceived crisis of professionalism in EFL and perceived value of TAs in providing support for teachers and direction to a heterogeneous and

unregulated area of education. "Perceived" is apt because the literature on TAs is scant and empirical studies which evaluate their operations are few and limited in scope, creating an obvious gap for research.

It should be said at the outset that EFL (English as a foreign language) is preferred as a term to describe teachers' subject area. There are many competing terms, including ESL (English as a second language); EAL (English as an additional language); ESOL (English for speakers of other languages); EAP (English for academic purposes); and, somewhat of an umbrella term, ELT (English language teaching). EFL seems most suitable for the purposes of this thesis as the majority of English learners globally are learning English as a foreign language in foreign lands (Walker, 2010). Also, the TA chosen for the case study, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), has EFL explicitly in its title.

1.2.1 The relevance of professionalism

Professionalism and *profession* are distinguished in that profession is identified as an occupation, one generally seen as privileged in its expertise, knowledge base and degree of independence (Shattock, 2014, p. 729). Teaching generally suffers from comparisons with established professions, at best aspiring to what Goodwyn (2011, p. 12) calls "almost a top tier profession", Goepel (2012, p. 491) a "semi-profession", and, as discussed in **1.2.2,** EFL is in an even weaker position. Professionalism is a behaviour, typically one that characterises the performance, competences and beliefs of a member of a profession. Definitions of professionalism abound but a basic tension is between professionalism as communally-sanctioned and regulatory and professionalism as individualistic and context-dependent.

Commentaries on professionalism often seem to be at cross-purposes because of different conceptions of the construct. This study adopts the definition of professionalism in Evans (2008), a scholar who has written extensively on the topic (e.g., 2011, 2013). The definition is attractive first because it puts the onus for professionalism on individuals and how they perform and second because it highlights professionalism as perceptual, dependent on the expectations and requirements of others:

> [Professionalism is] professionality-influenced practice that is consistent with commonly-held consensual delineations of a specific profession and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice. (Evans, 2008, p. 29)

There is a contrast between "professionality", the values and behaviour of the wider professional community, and "professionalism", individual behaviour. The latter is primary and elsewhere in the paper and subsequent work (e.g., 2013, p. 484) Evans demands that professionalism be demonstrable rather than

abstract, i.e., you are only professional if you act professionally. One cannot be professional in a vacuum and hence the "professionality-influenced" criterion whereby the practitioner has to measure up to externalised demands and values in order to create perceptions of professionalism.

However professionalism is conceived and operationalised, the assumption in all cases is that professionalism is desirable (Evetts, 2003, shows this as a constant in the development of the notion of professionalism) but this is not incontestable. For example, as evidenced by Biesta (2015) and Wiebe & MacDonald (2014), contemporary accounts of professionalism often stress greater accountability on the part of teachers. The need to satisfy externally-imposed criteria erodes teachers' autonomy and can be used as a mechanism to intensify the work process. Nevertheless, professionalism is seen as being a largely positive force in general education and this can be extended to EFL as a field and the performance of individual teachers.

1.2.2 Barriers to professionalism

Discussion of the status of EFL constantly highlights its lack of credibility outside the field and the consequences of this on teachers' morale and working conditions (cf. the exchange between Unlu & Zemach, 2018). Several reasons can be proffered as to why EFL teaching has not joined the canon of recognised professions and why teachers do not enjoy the respect and rewards which professional acknowledgement would surely lead to. The issues in the four factors identified, poor working conditions, lack of regulation, status and chauvinism, interconnect to a large extent and collude in a negation of professionalism.

There is concern that EFL teachers do not receive enough material compensation. Wright (2016) polled 800 EFL teachers in France and found that 64% registered economic issues as their main concern. EFL work tends to be seasonal with fallow periods of little or no work. For those overseas, the summer period is difficult; for those in the UK, summer is the boom time with student numbers much lower the rest of the year. This seasonality would not matter if teachers were salaried but the majority are not on full-time contracts with the associated guarantees. The same survey (Wright, ibid.) had 25% of teachers working for one organisation, 45% for up to three establishments and 16% up to six. Obviously, few would choose to be so itinerant, only if this was the only way to make ends meet. The scramble for employment must take a toll on physical health and raise general anxiety.

EFL teachers can be treated very casually, employed when needed at hourly-paid rates, exempting the employer from a commitment to social benefits such as healthcare and pensions, and not retained when

work is slack. Marx (1890/1990, pp. 584-587) made much the same observation about the treatment of cotton workers in the industrial revolution. Rimmer (2009) warned that in an economic crisis EFL teachers were particularly vulnerable to cost-cutting measures and unemployment. Employers know that it is much easier, and cheaper, to stop offering work than to make teachers redundant. The long-term legacy of this casualisation is a high drop-out rate from EFL teaching with people forced to seek alternative means of sustenance. Mainstream teaching is not immune to the issues described, for instance, Fuller (2017) comments on record disillusionment, but they are more pronounced in EFL.

A second factor is the absence of regulation in EFL. The title of Thornbury's (2001) well-cited article *The unbearable lightness of EFL* sums up the situation and the points made would still seem apt, especially the lack of any entry barriers to the industry. It remains true that almost any native speaker can become an EFL teacher and trade their services in the unregulated private language school market. This marks a very sharp division between EFL and fields traditionally identified as professions. For example, in accountancy, whose professionalism Picard (2016) describes as redefining itself in a neo-liberal context, entry to the profession is rigorous and competitive. To gain Chartered Accountancy status even graduates with a degree in accountancy must take several rounds of professional exams as well as maintaining a professional portfolio.

There is no comparable route into EFL. A common entry-level qualification is the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA, Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2018). CELTA was set up in the 1960s as a short intensive course, at present it consists of four weeks' instruction, to meet the growing demand for EFL overseas. The title of the biography of the man who initiated the CELTA prototype, John Haycraft (1998), *Adventures of a language traveller*, suggests that non-educational motives play some part in entering EFL. Johnston (1999) picks up on this travel theme in his metaphor of the EFL teacher as a modern-day paladin. Of course, there are many teachers working in their country of origin who have done much more substantial qualifications, and CELTA teachers may advance their education, but the fact remains that one can become an EFL teacher with a recognised qualification in the matter of one month.

To illustrate, a search on the international jobs board of Dave's ESL café (www.eslcafe.com), a well-established and popular job-seeking site, found this vacancy high in the list: *Teach on Thai Beaches* (Open Book Teachers, 2018). Teaching qualifications are "a plus" and "[a]ll you need to do [provided you are a native-speaker] is pack your bags and be ready for a beautiful journey in South East Asia." This job advertisement is nothing extraordinary: Thomson (2004) also searched the same employment site and found that two thirds of postings did not require a teaching accreditation. Possibly standards have risen

since 2004, and Rimmer (2011, p. 6) notes that qualifications are not everything, "[t]here are great teachers without any pieces of paper", but when this remains the norm – almost half the teachers in France surveyed by White (op. cit.) were completely unqualified – it questions pretensions to professionalism.

Johnston (1997) remarks how "teachers presented their entry into teaching as accidental or as a second choice and did not draw on notions of vocation." (p. 691). In later work, Johnston (1999), quotes a teacher discussing their entry to EFL teaching:

> So it was decision time, do I stay in computing; and I decided that no, I didn't want
>
> to do that. I, it appealed to an obsessive streak in my nature that worried me
>
> [laughs]. So I went to Italy, where I had friends, and found myself a job as deputy
>
> head of a, it was a chain of language schools, who taught direct method. [emphasis
>
> added] (p. 268)

The move from an IT post to senior educational management is abrupt. The speaker seeks to justify this through a strong representation of their own motivation, as evidenced by the language: different forms of the first person pronoun, "I", "me", "my", "myself", occur nine times. Particularly striking is the reflexive "found myself as job"; a simpler verb + object construction *found a job* would render the meaning here. The reflexive stresses the self-agency, this is someone who wants to be perceived as proactive and autonomous. Thus, the question "do I stay in computing" is immediately answered by the speaker; it is not referred to an external perhaps more judgmental audience. In terms of self-identity, the speaker positions themselves as assured and in control. Also, the decision seems to rest on the rejection of one field, IT, rather than the appeal of another, EFL.

Referring back to Evans' (2008, p. 29) definition of professionalism, the porousness of EFL, the fact that there is no control over the credentials of practitioners, impacts a guarantee of appropriate "levels of service . . . and expertise". Furthermore, once employed, there seem no external mechanisms whereby EFL teachers need to demonstrate their performance in order to maintain employment. Individual organisations may have procedures in place, such as in-house training, and individual teachers may develop, with or without external stimuli, but there is no framework to guide and control quality assurance. Professionalism aside, the consequences appear severe for learners investing their own time and money in an educational process which may reflect a very dubious return on their investment.

The ease of entry into EFL affects salary levels as competition for teaching posts will be low if virtually all candidates meet requirements. On the basic commercial principle that employers will pay market rates,

there is simply no need to allocate large salaries when the supply of workers is so accessible. It would be naïve to suggest that money does not matter but perhaps the biggest issue is non-tangible, the question of status, mentioned specifically in Evans' (2008) vision of professionalism. Most people care about how they are perceived by learners, colleagues, other stakeholders and society at large. Teaching would seem particularly sensitive to the question of status, even at the highest levels of performance: a study of Advanced Skills Teachers showed them to be anxious for recognition (Fuller, Goodwyn & Francis-Brophy, 2013).

If mainstream teaching has its detractors, in some respects EFL is not seen as real teaching or even a real job. This is observable in public representations, for example in *Down and out in Paris and London* (Orwell, 1933/2001), the impoverished protagonist teaches English to French students to get by; in the language school spoof comedy series *Mind your language!*, any learning happening is very much secondary to the classroom antics. A stigma has evolved around EFL: Gonzalez (2015) describes how EFL teachers in Mexico are often referred to not as *profesores* (teachers) but as *pobresores* (the lacking), a wordplay jibe at their lack of proficiency; in the UK, Gower (2018) feels many EFL teachers are embarrassed by what they do. The result has been linked to low-esteem and stress with all their repercussions on health and job performance (cf. Nierenberg, 2015, reporting on a survey correlating stress levels with a lower quality of teaching in elementary schools) without the pecuniary rewards to compensate for the indignity.

It is difficult to escape from the question of remuneration but in any case status may not translate into financial benefits and the converse may be true, low salaries depressing status: a longitudinal study of lecturers in Russian higher-education worried that low incomes had reduced their status (Kolesnikov, Shipilov & Khvesiuk, 2013). However, status is surely worth pursuing independently of financial considerations in order to give one's work and personal contribution meaning. Particularly in the commercial context which many EFL teachers work in, where schools exist to make money and teachers can be seen as income-generators rather than educators (cf. Shacklock, 1998, for a Marxist characterisation of the dehumanisation of instructors through economic factors), it is imperative for teachers to retain their dignity and sense of self-worth. For professionalism, a lack of status could mean the field meets with attitudes hostile to its pretensions to practice.

Forming and projecting a professional identity is complicated in EFL by the long-standing distinction (cf. Holliday, 2004) between native-speaking teachers (NSTs), the minority, born in Anglophone countries, and non-native speaking teachers (NNSTs), those with English as a second or foreign language, the vast majority.

The prestige and favourable employment conditions long enjoyed by the former have been eroded by attacks on the NST model because of its inequity (Butcher, 2005) and dysfunctionality in the changing sociolinguistic landscape (see Kirkpatrick, 2007, on World Englishes). Thus, Alatis (2005) argues for a professionalism that is not based on country of origin.

However, it could be argued that the market place is far from a level playing field and Thornbury (2015) is probably rash in dismissing the NST model as irrelevant in this age of reason. For instance, there is still a marked preference for employing NSTs. The lack of acceptance faced by NNSTs is encapsulated in an anecdote by Thomas (2013), a teacher of Indian origin. Her first class about to begin, a student enters the room, sees her new teacher and asks, "Is this an English class?" The perception that English teaching is the provenance of the NST has proven very hard to dispel. The origins of the NST / NNST distinction are not difficult to trace. There is a huge literature on language acquisition which contrasts their linguistic competence, notably in the area of "ultimate attainment" by second-language learners, i.e., the upper limit of NNS proficiency (cf. Birdsong & Paik, 2008). If professionalism is seen as correlating with language mastery, NNSTs are always second rate.

Canagarajah (2013) is correct that the "native speaker fallacy" (p. 84) both underrepresents the skill of teaching and damages the pretensions of EFL to a profession by "[valuing] linguistic competence over wider pedagogy" (ibid.). Still, the "fallacy" persists and those exploiting the EFL market tend not to let academic niceties stand in their way. In this clash between the idealistic egalitarianism of the commentators and the realities of the EFL workplace, Richardson (2017) posits that TAs may have a role in correcting a distorted market, although Braine (2013) criticizes the TESOL TA for not doing enough to defend NNSTs against employment discrimination. If TAs can confirm for individuals, and more importantly the work place, that the true mark of professionalism is practice rather than fortuitous criteria such as country of origin, this is a considerable achievement with very practical outcomes.

By way of a conclusion to this section, there is an argument that the organic growth of EFL, market-led and largely unregulated, has generated a significant set of barriers to professionalism. There is nothing intrinsically "wrong" about EFL. Ironically, it is a victim of its own success as the domination of English and massive demand for a global workforce of teachers has, it could be claimed, made it necessary to shortcut teacher education processes and circumvent the conventional safeguards against exploitation. Inevitably, EFL is compared to the established professions such as law and medicine but their history is much longer

and they have engaged more fully with issues of professionalism. EFL has not got to this stage of reflection yet, perhaps because as a still-emerging field it is preoccupied with more basic issues such as methodology.

1.2.3 The relevance of teaching associations

In a special edition of *English Language Teaching Journal* devoted to TAs (Hall & Paran, 2016), the editorial hails TAs as "a central, yet often overlooked, part of our profession" (Hall, 2016, p. 125). In introducing the contributions, Paran (2016, p. 128) uses Lamb's definition of a TA to provide a common reference point:

> [TAs] are thus conceptualised as networks of professionals, run by and for professionals, focused mainly on support for members, with knowledge exchange and development as well as representation of members' views as their defining functions. (Lamb, 2012, p. 295)

Lamb's definition of TAs is also adopted in this study, for two reasons. First, it is the only definition of TAs that has been offered in the literature, as recognised in the collection of Hall & Paran (2016). Second, the central idea is that of a community of teachers aimed at further development, which complements the conceptual framework previewed in **1.4**. The most problematic part of the definition, raised by Paran (op. cit.), is the final function, "representation of members' views", as advocacy is more controversial an element than development and interaction. Still, this remains the only articulated definition of a TA.

TAs are actually quite common in EFL and come in different shapes and sizes. The majority are local, i.e., they represent teachers in geographical regions, for example, Teachers of English in Austria, TEA, (http://www.tea4teachers.org/joomla). There are also TAs which define themselves by discipline, for instance, British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes, BALEAP, (https://www.baleap.org/). A step up in scale are international TAs, the largest being TESOL International Association, TESOL, (http://www.tesol.org/) with 12,000 members in 156 countries (TESOL, 2016). TESOL has a broad target market:

> Membership in TESOL is open to anyone involved in the ESL/EFL field. Whether you are a teacher, student, teacher educator, administrator, researcher, author, materials writer, or curriculum developer, there is a place for you in TESOL. (ibid.)

Teachers are only one part of TESOL and the association's work must cater for groups who have no classroom contact, as is often the case with researchers. On the one hand, the broad appeal might attract teachers interested in seeing other perspectives; on the other hand, teachers may prefer a TA which is exclusive to their needs.

Lamb's (2012) definition of a TA includes the term "professionals" and TAs often make explicit reference to teachers as professionals in their promotional literature, presenting the activity of their TA as part of a

process of professionalism. The "professionality-influenced practice" of Evans (op. cit.) could incorporate involvement in TAs. This would not come simply through being a member of a TA per se, Evans is strict on professionalism through service not allegiance to ideals, but through being part of a community with a shared commitment and investment in best practice. This would enable teachers to base their practice on a sound framework which they could justify to, and model for, fellow practitioners. However, it has to be established whether TAs actually provide the conditions for the professionalism as defined by Evans, for professionalism cannot be taken for granted. An alternative hypothesis must be considered whereby TAs have no significant impact on perceptions of professionalism.

1.3 Origins of the research

The story of this project began in 2001 when a member of administration met me on the Moscow metro to take me to my new teaching job. She asked me my name, shortly followed by, "Are you a professional teacher?" The question confused me on two accounts. First, I wondered what the opposite of a professional teacher was. Second, I was curious what her reaction would be if I answered her in the negative. As we walked to school, I asked myself if it was something about me that prompted the question, my appearance or behaviour perhaps. Later on, I looked at this with a wider compass and decided that as she didn't know me her cynicism must came from a wider source, perceptions of the professionalism of EFL teachers as a body and the industry as a whole.

Possibly the reason why her question struck a chord with me was that I had come across similar perceptions before, from employers, colleagues and people in general I'd come into contact with during my itinerant career: at that stage Russia was the fourth country I'd taught in. Professionalism was something I was conscious of, albeit on a very abstract level, and I had taken two steps to deal with it personally and autonomously. The first was to do courses and qualifications to make myself an effective teacher and enhance my credibility. The second was to join IATEFL, which I did very early in my teaching career (Appendix E, a personal response to the interview questions in this study, gives more details on my relationship with IATEFL.)

The years went by but I never came up with a satisfactory answer to the administrator's question. As my involvement in IATEFL increased, at one stage I was co-ordinator of one of the special interest groups (SIGs), I started to cogitate on a link between IATEFL and professionalism. Being inside the TA, I was aware that a connection was espoused in the organisational literature and proclamations. However, I wondered what the link actually was and how teachers experienced it. I was also conscious that very few teachers were

members of any TA, which suggested that they were unconcerned with or unpersuaded by the version of professionalism which TAs promote. Doing research into this area thus offered an avenue to combine my experience of EFL and TAs in addressing the issue of professionalism.

1.4 Statement of personal position

I am not an objective party to the issues discussed. Firstly, and most obviously, I am an EFL teacher myself with twenty-five years of experience of working in a variety of locations and contexts where I have witnessed at first hand the barriers to professionalism presented in **1.2.2**. More specifically, as a NST I have undoubtedly profited, in both the metaphorical and literal senses of the term, from the advantages of an accident of birth. I have also been party to, as has Richardson (2017), situations where NNST colleagues more qualified and more competent than myself have received inferior employment terms and conditions for doing parallel work. Hence, I am very sensitive, with no small feeling of guilt, to the issues of identity arising from the NST / NNST distinction as explored in **2.5.1**. Thirdly, as indicated in the previous paragraph, I am an active member of the TA IATEFL and have been involved both as a member and SIG co-ordinator, the latter involving contact with key players in IATEFL, such as officers and trustees, with a limited degree of influence over IATEFL activity and policy. My participation in IATEFL firmly marks this project as an insider study, the ethical consequences of which are discussed in **3.9**.

1.5 Introduction to conceptual/theoretical framework

This study is framed by three interlinking concepts: identity, continuing professional development (CPD) and communities of practice (CoP). To offer preliminary definitions in advance of **2.2**, identity is understood as how teachers perceive themselves as practitioners (Floyd & Morrison, 2014, p. 45); CPD is the on-going process of enhancing knowledge and skills (Bubb & Earley, 2007, p. 4); CoP are groups of people who interact to discuss common interests and achieve common goals (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). The three constructs are not discrete but inter-dependent as they inform an understanding of professionalism.

The ontological position is that of relativism, the belief that reality is separately constructed by individuals on each occasion it is encountered. As such, teachers do not formulate and follow a preconceived notion of professionalism but arrive at their own interpretation of professionalism depending on the context they work in and their individual beliefs and values.

1.6 Research aims and questions

The research aims and questions emanate from the Literature Review. This found insufficient evidence to support a relationship between professionalism, operationalised as identity, CPD and CoP, and TAs. The stakeholders in establishing a relationship between professionalism and TAs are identified as officers of TAs (those with official positions in TAs), members of TAs and non-members of TAs.

Accordingly, this project has four aims:

1. To investigate stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of how TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers.

2. To investigate stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism.

3. To investigate the extent to which TAs are perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers.

4. To investigate the extent to which stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers.

These aims are translated into an overarching research question:

What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers?

This global question is broken down into the following four questions:

1. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?

2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

1.7 Introduction to methodology

As the research questions pertain to perceptions and experiences, the approach was qualitative. The methodology was that of a case study and the method interviews. The case study was of IATEFL as the largest UK-based international TA (Rixon & Smith, 2017). Interviews were preferred to questionnaires

because they capture richer and fuller data. The sample size was 17, consisting of three sets of stakeholders: IATEFL officers (n = 4), IATEFL members (n = 6) and non-members (n = 7). The interview data were interpreted through content analysis (CA), namely the identification, labelling and quantification and development of themes within the data. The methodology and methods employed in this study are fully discussed in Chapter 3.

1.8 Significance of the study

Professionalism is laudable because, addressed in terms of Evan's (2008) definition, it leads to optimum performance and coherence with other examples of best practice in the field. Discussion of professionalism begins from this premise. As matters stand, the barriers to professionalism presented in **1.2.2** would be difficult for TAs to hurdle. The factors are complex, context-dependent and it is important not to present TAs as a solution to problems which are rooted in issues that in reality demand a multi-stranded approach, not just TAs, to resolve, if they are resolvable. TAs are not offered as a remedy here but potentially they could reaffirm teachers' sense of purpose and fulfilment and help them become better educators. A stronger identification with professionalism could end a stigmatisation of EFL teachers which is socially inegalitarian and hence corrosive to aspirations for self-realisation (Rush, 2004).

If TAs were to foster a notion of professionalism, either on an individual or, more challengingly, an industry level, that would be a valid justification for their existence. This project aims to investigate the link posited in the literature chapter which follows between TAs and professionalism. The major significance of the study is that the claims of TAs to impact professionalism have rarely been empirically tested. Evans (2013, p. 477) refers to the "fragility" of the reputation of educational research and this is no more true than in discussions of professionalism in EFL. Of course, there are many ways that a professionalism can be established and TAs, if they offer that avenue, are but one stimulus or resource. This is all the more reason that pretensions of TAs should be critically examined in order to understand their relative contribution, if any, to the complex jigsaw which defines a teacher and their perceived professionalism.

1.9 Overview of the thesis

The Literature Review derives the research aims and questions from the work on professionalism in both general and EFL education. The Methodology justifies and details the case study method, the interviews method and the CA data analysis. The reporting of the data and discussion of the results is split into two Results chapters, the first dealing with research question 1 and the second with research questions 2, 3 and 4. Finally, the Conclusions chapter summarises the study, draws implications and makes recommendations.

1.10 Summary

This thesis investigates the relationship between TAs and perceptions of professionalism of EFL teachers. While TAs make claim to promoting professionalism, the exact contribution, if any, has not been established. The practice-orientated definition of professionalism by Evans (2008) is adopted together with a definition of TAs as communities principally aimed at CPD (Lamb, 2012). Four barriers to professionalism in EFL are discussed: poor working conditions, in particular low salaries and job insecurity; lack of regulation, for example the phenomenon of under-qualified practitioners; status, teachers identified as workers rather than professionals; and chauvinism, the preference for NSTs over NNSTs. The origins of the research stem from my trying to reconcile the activity of TAs with professionalism. Within a relativist paradigm, professionalism is operationalised via three constructs: identity, continuing professional development (CPD) and communities of practice (CoP). The four research questions tie into an overarching question: what are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers? The methodology is briefly introduced as that of a case study of IATEFL involving content analysis of 17 interviews of IATEFL officers, members and non-members. The significance of the study is that it offers an empirical contribution to a topic which is severely under-researched.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The chapter begins with expounding its aims and scope. Professionalism is conceptualised as identity, continuing professional development (CPD) and communities of practice (CoP). Each of these is discussed in the context of first general teaching and then EFL. A definition of a TA is supplied followed by sections describing the relationship between TAs and professionalism in general teaching and EFL. On the basis of this the research questions are formulated.

The aim of this literature review is to present the research extant on professionalism within EFL, as informed by relevant studies in mainstream education, and link this to research on TAs in EFL, again with reference to general teaching, in order to establish whether TAs have any impact on perceptions of the professionalism of teachers of EFL. The key argument is that the putative link between TAs and professionalism needs confirmation as it is not self-evident. It is contended that the main reason for this is that professionalism, as related to EFL, has not been conceptualised robustly enough to operationalise it in the few empirical studies of the relationship between TAs and professionalism in EFL.

Professionalism is first profiled as a concept. It is argued, in line with the definition of Evans (2008) adopted in **1.2**, that an account of professionalism must be based on perceptions rather than absolute values and that it must be sensitive to the diverse environments which characterise global EFL. Evans maintains that the advancement of professionalism is possible only through personal development, especially intellectual and attitudinal growth. This emphasises a connection between identity, CPD and performance that arguably is missed by teaching standards in their zeal to prescribe. Accordingly, professionalism is operationalised through identity, CPD and CoP as well-attested constructs which allow professionalism to be demonstrable in an EFL context.

In general, there is a dearth of studies in the literature related to professionalism and TAs, for while professionalism has been the subject of much debate in general (i.e., non-EFL) education and other disciplines, particularly medicine (e.g., Gutshall, 2011; Youngson, 2011) and care work (e.g., Blair, 2014; Hugman, 2005), TAs have been but of marginal interest. Rixon & Smith (2017) in their history of IATEFL devote less than two pages (pp. 150-151) to a section "The importance of IATEFL and other teacher associations" and begin by admitting that "[t]he few previous studies of the history of ELT and its role in the global context are disappointingly sparing in their discussions of IATEFL or other teaching associations" (p.

150). In contrast, the construct of professionalism as relating to education is well recognised – it is referenced as a "key concern" in Wallace's (2009) glossary of educational terms and an empirical study in two continents showed teachers to be very conscious of their pretensions to professionalism (McGunnigle, O'Connor, Waggoner, Treasure, Cranley & Davie, 2005) – but there is the problem that the concept has come into such common currency that it is incorporated into academic discourse without a proper understanding of the issues involved or how the construct is defined. As Evans, an authority on professionalism in education, puts it, "there remain considerable lack of clarity and disagreement over how professionalism should be conceived" (2013, p. 472).

2.2 Conceptual framework

In the current study professionalism is operationalised via three constructs: identity, CPD and CoP. These are well-attested constructs in the literature on professionalism, examined in turn in **2.4** and **2.5** in general education and EFL respectively, which are demonstrable in an EFL context and applicable to an understanding of the relationship between TAs and professionalism.

Identity, as pertaining to professionalism is understood as how teachers would describe themselves as practitioners, which "derives from their self-perception, their self-image, and their self-efficacy in relation to their work and career." (Floyd & Morrison, 2014, p. 45). The relevance of identity to professionalism is that how teachers regard themselves, their work and their own contribution thereto is central to perceptions of themselves as practitioners and EFL as a field. Thus, the concept encapsulates the "sense of purpose and status" which is central to Evans' definition of professionalism (2008, p. 29). A lack of identity would challenge pretensions to professionalism while a strong and coherent identity would bolster perceptions of professionalism. Identity is multi-faceted and combines both personal and work-based attributes. An example of the former would be values based on life experience; of the latter, beliefs about best practice informed by external research. The argument made in this chapter is that the literature, largely under the guise of standardisation, has pursued a version of professional identity which arguably has sought to limit self-expression and to deny the complexity of identity formation, thus impoverishing identity as a concept relevant to professionalism. Key issues for the current study are the nature of professional identity that EFL teachers subscribe to and the role that TAs play in the formation of this identity.

CPD is strongly related to professionalism given the emphasis on continuous learning in order to deliver satisfactory outcomes and maintain a skilled and motivated workforce (Crandall & Christison, 2016). Referring again to the definition of Evans (2008, p. 29), CPD empowers teachers to perform to the required

"levels of service [and] expertise". The heavy responsibility on CPD means that it must be multifarious in order to meet different needs. Bubb & Earley (2007) provide a definition of CPD which reflects its range:

> [A]n on-going process encompassing all formal and informal learning experiences that enable all staff in schools, individually and with others, to think about what they are doing, enhance their knowledge and skills, and improve ways of working so that pupil learning and wellbeing are enhanced as a result. It should achieve a balance between individual, group, school and national needs; encourage a commitment to professional and personal growth; and increase resilience, self-confidence, job satisfaction and enthusiasm for working with children and colleagues. (p. 4)

This description is school-based but the definition is wide enough to admit multiple contexts. CPD takes on particular relevance in EFL because, as discussed in **1.2.2**, the low-entry requirements for teaching posts (native-speaker status may guarantee a job) and variable in-service training provision, particularly in the unregulated private language school sector, put the onus on EFL teachers to source, and usually fund, CPD for themselves. TAs position themselves as compensating for a lack of school-based CPD but, as will be discussed in **2.6.2.2**, it is therefore crucial to investigate to what extent this is appreciated and taken up by teachers.

The basic notion of CoP as socially-situated learning was conceived by Lave & Wenger (1991) and later developed by Wenger (1998), who offers this definition:

> [CoP are] groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4)

Wenger is not referring specifically to teachers but instructors constitute a target group as people with issues and interests. CoP, whether formal or informal unions, are relevant to professionalism because they are ultimately focused on improving performance through developing the "knowledge and expertise", again of direct application to Evans's definition of professionalism (2008, p. 29), of the individuals involved. There is also a sense that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The relevance of CoP to professionalism are that they offer a robust conceptualisation of a communal dimension whereby practitioners liaise and learn from one another. This aspect is well recognised in the academic literature and advertising material of TAs but often poses under the nebulous denotation of community, networking or the like. To illustrate, two polls which have tried to establish the relationship between professionalism (which is not defined in either) and TAs are Aubrey & Coombe (2010) and Puchta (2012). The former represented TESOL Arabia and posed the direct question "What is the value of the TESOL

Arabia association?" The authors carried out content analysis on the 36 responses – a mere 2% of the 1800 members – and found that the most popular reasons were "networking" and "community", with community coming up again in Puchta's survey of IATEFL members, in "to belong to a teacher's community" (ibid, p. 281).

Identity, CPD and CoP have often been discussed separately but it can be argued that they interact as crucial components of Evans' (2008, p. 29) definition of professionalism, as shown in Figure 1. Identity comes in part from the sense of knowledge and worth gained by participation in CPD and CoP. CPD, at least in contemporary understandings of the term, is informed by teachers' personal values and beliefs, i.e., identity, and may be aimed at and carried out in CoP. As for CoP, the agenda for their activity and goals will depend on the identities of the separate participants and CPD is likely to be either an aim in itself or a desirable by-product. All three constructs feed into Evans' (2008) definition of professionalism because they are based on practice with the ultimate objective of improving students' learning experience. Starting from a premise that identity, CPD and CoP are mutually complementary, a key question is whether any of these constructs are perceived as of more significance than the others in relation to the professionalism of EFL teachers.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework
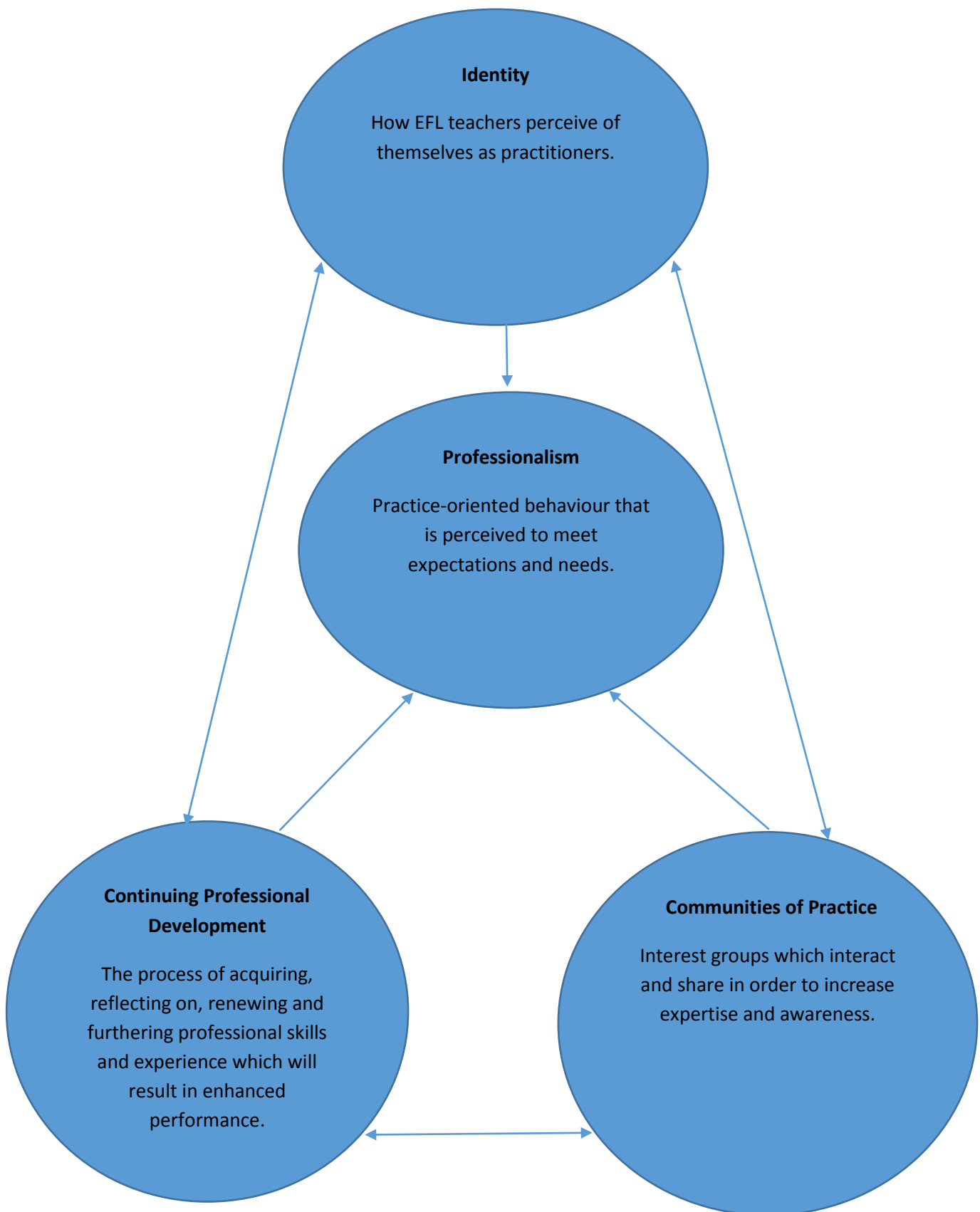
2.3 Conceptualisation of professionalism

According to Goodwyn (2011, p. 12), the thinking behind notions of professionalism has gone through several stages, in an occupational sense beginning from the late 1700s and reflecting socio-political change as much as epistemology. In a seminal article, Evetts (2003) notes a general movement from identifying professions to a discourse of the nature of professionalism. The former was tied up in deconstructing the hallmarks of a privileged cluster of occupations, law and medicine being awarded the most prestige.

To illustrate, Glazer (2008) retains the concept of a privileged set of occupations and introduces the concept of "jurisdictional strength". This is a portrayed as a force which cuts across all professions to reassure the public and make their services in demand. Glazer posits that jurisdictional strength has three strands: congruence, how a profession frames its goals in accordance with prevalent socio-cultural values; consistency, the homogeneity of practice (at least good practice); effectiveness, to what extent services offered get results. All three strands are problematic for EFL. With congruence, there has been much interest in aligning teaching to a social-cultural context (cf. Purpura, 2004, as relating to grammar instruction), but a very mixed picture of how this translates into the classroom; concerning homogeneity of practice, there are numerous competing methodologies with none proven to be superior (Ur, 2013a); as for effectiveness, this is all too often judged through test scores although the backwash of assessment may disadvantage test-takers (Merrifield, 2015) as part of an "obsession with measurement" (Goodwyn, 2011, p. 25). Glazer's model may function in other fields but being based on privileged occupations it does not take into account the specific character of EFL.

Evetts (2003) has shown the way forward in treating professionalism as more central than profession and identifies two periods in the second half of the twentieth century in the elaboration of a professionalism which was not occupation-bound. The first was the treatment of professionalism as a values system where shared expertise and a commitment to best practice, as interpreted in the context of performance rather than legislated, generate a trust relationship with users of the services provided. The second, more cynical, viewed professionalism as an ideology aiming to protect a group as purveyors of a specialised knowledge and insulate them from market forces. Professionalism as a values system and professionalism as ideology may have been historically distinct reactions but the development of these ideas was not linear and they were never mutually exclusive. Evetts posits that both are actually facets of the same phenomenon and furthermore that the realities of the workplace, especially fragile public confidence in educators and the systems they endorse, have forced a new element into the mix, that of internal and external regulation, with the consequent struggle between the desire for autonomy and the call for transparency.

Indeed, Evetts (2003) has proved a convincing account of professionalism which is based on practice, for example, Sachs (2016) concurs that performance is the key dimension to interpreting professionalism, while remaining sensitive to contextual factors. Crucially, professionalism is perceptual rather than absolute, consistent with Evans (2008) definition of professionalism adopted in **1.2** and repeated below:

> [Professionalism is] professionality-influenced practice that is consistent with commonly-held consensual delineations of a specific profession and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice. (p. 29)

"Perceptions" is important because it is hardly possible to delineate and define the exact nature of "service" or "expertise" in a field as diverse as EFL in terms of, inter alia, global presence, workforce and function. Any list of competences would not be finite or equally applicable. Furthermore, professionalism is viewed as much more than an accumulation of tasks or accommodation to external standards, it includes personable properties, such as beliefs and values, which are qualitative in nature. Thus, professionalism will have a strong element of the subjective so long as it is perceptual. Regarding the theoretical framework forming the basis of the current study, identity is manifested through the importance of individuals adopting a sense of "purpose and status"; CPD is a means by which teachers will prove their ability to deliver the expected "range and levels of service . . . and expertise"; CoP supply the joint activity whereby the "commonly-held [and] consensual" can be agreed, negotiated and communicated so that identity and CPD are not isolated phenomena with no connection to the experiences of others.

2.4 Professionalism in general teaching

2.4.1 Identity in general teaching

To reiterate, identity is central to professionalism because of the role of (self) perception in evaluating the credibility of practitioners, their ability to deliver, and their actual results, the learning outcomes of their students. The direction that CPD takes and the formation of CoP very much depend on the individual identities of teachers because they will have differing agendas. However, there are two main issues with the conceptualisation of identity. The first concerns the complexity of the term. What aspect of identity is most relevant to teachers in general education, and does this aspect differ again when applied specifically to EFL teachers? Second, do teachers themselves, both in general education and EFL, see any connection between the development/formation of their professional identity and TAs? Both questions are addressed in this section and the corresponding section on identity in EFL (**2.5.1**).

In reviewing the concept of identity in education, Gee (2000) tracks four broadly historical directions in constructing an identity: *nature-identity* (the attributes we are born with), *institutional-identity* (an official position sanctioned by society), *discourse-identity* (how we are perceived though our interactions with people), *affinity-identity* (a set of distinctive social practices generated through relationship building). Gee claims that a complex of sociocultural, political and epistemological factors has emphasised different manifestations of identities in different contexts at different periods. For example, institutional identity has remained influential in the church because of its hierarchical structure and didacticism. Gee goes on to argue that in the contemporary connected world, affinity-identity has particular resonance because we "[build] identities (often several different identities) through net working with others in joint activities, causes, virtual communication, shared consumption, and shared experiences" (p. 120). Whatever one's allegiance to this statement, identity clearly has a multiplicity of interpretations and the contributory factors are difficult to tease out.

Identity in professionalism is challenging to define precisely because it is so embracing. It bridges personal and occupational values and is heavily dependent on teachers' individual biographies and circumstances. To illustrate, Canrinus (2011) surveyed 1214 secondary-school teachers and found professional identity to load on to four factors: job satisfaction (a sense of appreciation of one's role); occupational commitment (loyalty to the teaching career); self-efficacy (confidence in one's skills and competencies); motivation (a desire to initiate and direct work-related behaviour). Canrinus showed teachers to have a range of personal profiles and concluded that "professional identity is not an identity which is attributable in a similar fashion to all teachers. It is shaped through continuous interaction between person and context." (p. 65). As such, this corresponds to affinity-identity (Gee, ibid.) because identity is formed through a series of events and transactions with people, a process which is not finite. Due to the primacy of context, external variables such as length of experience and contract status were found not to be reliable indicators of a teacher's professional identity profile.

Floyd & Morrison (2014) note the difficulty of differentiating between a personal and public identity: "professional identities not only relate to what being a teacher/nurse/social worker means for the individual, but also how they perceive their identity in relation to their specific role/s within their profession" (p. 46). In other words, Gee's (ibid.) institutional identity may not be definitive and the official nomenclature of occupations is a poor guide to identity. Certainly, the clash between personal and public identity can create role confusion for teachers, as illustrated by Blair's (2014) case study of professionalism

in trainee teachers (liberal arts and science) and care workers within the same university. Employing content analysis of interview data and official departmental publications, for example information on the website, Blair found two major themes, collective professionalism and individualistic professionalism, i.e., professionalism endowed by accepting a group identity and professionalism reliant on personal identity. Blair found a much looser sense of professionalism amongst the teachers compared to care workers. The former had divergent views of professionalism, highlighting issues ranging from dress code to intuition, with little continuity of theme. Individualistic professionalism was much more dominant than collective as teachers either did not feel the need or have the resources to support their position by referring to a wider professional community. Blair concludes that there is no "consistent frame of reference" (p. 48) for teachers in how they interpret professionalism. Therefore, it appears that this amounts to a rejection amongst teachers of Gee's (ibid.) discourse-identity and affinity-identity because teachers seem not to relate to the behaviours of others in identity formation.

If teachers find it difficult to consistently articulate professionalism, this may be because identity consists of intangibles which are non-demonstrable. A prime example is status. Goodwyn & Francis-Brophy (2013) in their survey of Advanced Skills Teachers, a (now defunct) category of teachers deemed expert enough to assist and train peers, report that these teachers feel their status to be enhanced because of their position, a form of institutional-identity (Gee, ibid.). According to Bowman (2013), status brings in turn better performance and hence professionalism, and the study focuses on personal characteristics and beliefs, such as emotional intelligence and integrity, rather than observable behaviours. It is interesting that most of Bowman's bibliography consists of management literature as trait theories – the great leader, born not made, successful by virtue of personal excellence – run deep in discussions of leadership: Germain (2012) claims her study of management traits is founded on "a century of research" (p. 33) on this topic. The born-not-made argument is a manifestation of nature-identity (Gee, ibid.). As with management, in the literature on professionalism there is credence to this notion that personal qualities are of prime importance to identity. However, these qualities are not truly equivalent to nature-identity because they are malleable and they develop throughout life. If personal values do develop due to the influence of CPD and CoP, it is conceivable that this process is instigated by TAs.

Personal qualities would fall under what Blair (2014) termed individualistic professionalism because they are not generalisable across the teaching community. It is argued that they are relevant to professionalism if they have best practice as a goal. Indeed, in Klechtermans (1996), a study of teacher vulnerability, the personal cannot be separated from professionalism and Hugman (2005), including teaching amongst other

"caring professions", sees such personal manifestations as integral and complementary to professionalism and unfavourably contrasts individuals and organisations that have eliminated them. Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) and Youngson (2011) also acknowledge the weight of non-rational factors such as role models and life history in shaping professionalism. This narrative supports Gee's (ibid.) affinity-identity because a set of shared experiences are formative.

Akkerman & Meijer (2011) would account for the reevaluation of personal values in professionalism as a development of historical conceptualisations of identity. They conceive of a dialogical identity which combines the modern (individualistic) and post-modern (fragmented) conceptualisations of identity by reconciling self-identity with socially-constructed identity. The term dialogical comes from the constant internal questioning, the creation of a narrative, arising from a stability of values with situations which bring them into conflict. Examples are given of teachers' voices in these situations, for example (p. 312), Carrie struggling to reconcile her sexuality with an educational system which seems to repress her personal identity and demands an alternative commitment, echoing an identical plight faced by a gay female teacher in Tonningsen (2002). Thus, "[i]dentity can be considered as a narrative about ourselves" (Akkerman & Meijer, op. cit., p. 313) as we attempt to interpret our identity in the light of multiple personae and contexts. In this process the boundary between the personal and professional becomes blurred and actually a false dichotomy. The socially-constructed slant on identity formation is in keeping with Gee's (ibid.) affinity-identity because the process is fluid and context-dependent.

However, the celebration of an affinity-identity does not reflect the main direction in the portrayal of identity and professionalism in teaching. More common are attempts to objectivise professionalism by either connecting it to spheres which meet public approbation or providing a strong theoretical base for practice. To illustrate the former, Edmond & Hayler (2013) in a study of teaching assistants' beliefs on professionalism note that what they call organisational professionalism, roughly equating to Gee's (ibid.) institutional-identity, is predominant in their study and beyond. To exemplify the latter, a well-cited discursive article by Hargreaves (1994) marked the rejection of a professionalism shaped by personal attributes and the introduction of "the new professionalism" (ibid, passim). The definite article in the coinage, compare simply *new professionalism*, is striking because this usage often denotes "areas of study . . . or expertise" (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 407), making the term more robust scholastically. Hargreaves moved professionalism in teaching into the realm of a science with the associated notions of objectivity and academic rigour. Reliance on individual values was perceived as isolationist, often aimed at

self-preservation and maintenance of a comfortable status quo which may conflict with the needs of learners and the establishment.

The new professionalism of Hargreaves (1994) promoted collectivism and collaboration as instrumental to the creation of stronger models of performance for teachers to adhere to. Related was an augmented sense of accountability, an example given being appraisal schemes based on peer observation. This interpretation of institutional-identity is predicated on that fact that teachers represent a model system where convergence is professionalism and divergence is malpractice. Hargreaves presented his vision as a post-technocratic model where competences were estimated over a privileged knowledge base. In other words, not education but performance would give licence for professionalism and the focus of pre-service instruction would need to be more practically orientated, taking it outside the traditional hold of the universities. Essential to the new professionalism were frameworks for coordinating and evaluating the work of teachers; the regulation component of professionalism as discussed in Evetts (2003). This became framed in terms of competences and performance levels generated from examples of what is deemed best practice.

The outcome, the teaching standards ubiquitous in many educational contexts from individual schools to country-level policy, are strictly functional and positioned as more generalisable and objective than individual teachers' interpretations, which tend to be actively discouraged (Mulcahy, 2011). This direction is in line with "[the] new set of values and [the] new moral environment" (Gewirtz & Ball, 2000, p. 266) which has emerged with neo-managerialism and its dedication to accountability and customer service. In parallel, unionisation is considered the antithesis of professionalism because it seeks to protect and expand teachers' autonomy (Larson, 2014). The learner, usually now a fee-payer, is portrayed as a customer and education as a service. Accountability and customer service can only be reconciled if the latter is measurable so standards, guidelines, scales, frameworks, the nomenclature can be changed in line with public taste, are necessary to calibrate professionalism. In particular, this includes setting thresholds of minimal and optimal performance in order to reprove and reward individual teachers.

There has been a counter-reaction to regulation in favour of an individualised affinity-identity. For example, arguing from a historical perspective of the educational system in Australia, Connell (2009) concedes that the Australian Standards document in place at the time has face validity as a "public demonstration of professionalism" (p. 220). However, Connell perceives a neo-manageralist agenda behind the Standards with competencies catalogued akin to units of work in order to position teaching as an industrialised

process. The competencies described are accordingly fashioned as technical skills and there is minimal reference to qualities more difficult to assess such as pastoral care. Connell (p. 222) makes the critical point that descriptors of professionalism are rarely framed from the teachers' perspective and they actively discourage autonomy or any freedom of interpretation. An institutional identity is imposed in a purely top-down process, leaving the construct emasculated. Regulation is not rejected but it needs to be tempered if identity is to be allowed to develop independently. Affinity-identity depends on building relationships and using feedback from these events to remould one's identity. This means that if teachers are not given space to challenge the official line, they could either fall back on institutional identity, which denies their individuality, or, probably worse, not develop any sense of identity at all, which seems the case in Blair's (2014) study.

For all the talk of standardisation and publications of guidelines, Evans (2011) would argue that proclamations of professionalism are largely irrelevant unless they are connected to practice. Evans posits a tripartite model of professionalism: behavioural, what teachers actually do; attitudinal, teacher's beliefs and motivations; intellectual, content knowledge. Evans believes this model to be more reflective of a professionalism that is enacted, despite reliability problems in mapping existing standards on to a new framework. However, she acknowledges that what is written on a piece of paper cannot capture the complex and dynamic realities of teacher cognition and, crucially, performance. Again, this supports Gee's (ibid.) affinity-identity because identity arises and evolves from interaction, with the teacher as instigator of their own identity formation. Identity is hard to stipulate: teachers can be told how to behave but it is much more difficult to tell them how to be.

Goepel (2012) quotes extensively from Evans' work and is similarly hostile to the lure of professional standards in successive UK educational reforms. She sees standardisation as detrimental to teacher identity because it removes autonomy and turns educators into administrators. Goepel emphasises the trust relationship between teachers and other stakeholders, including parents and inspectors, the enforcers of standards. Goepel is concerned that standards over-impress teachers with a sense of accountability, leading to a contractual arrangement where rewards and sanctions depend on conformity. Evans (2008, p. 33) has also questioned a conformist agenda and dismissed the search for uniformity of values, arguing that a broad consensus is more realistic. Goepel (ibid.) goes on to say that real trust does not depend on a quid pro quo relationship where the formalisation of responsibilities is seen as necessary check on teachers' perceived natural waywardness. There is a theme in the paper that the public are quick to castigate teachers as naturally lazy, unskilled and undisciplined. Goepel can see standards only leading to a "tick-box" (p. 500)

professionalism as teachers scramble to comply to a list of largely technical skills, leading to cynicism and an erosion of identity.

To conclude, as Floyd and Fuller (2014) acknowledge at the outset of their study of school leaders in Jamaica, "exploring a person's identity, or who they are in a particular context, is a complex process involving a range of social, cultural, political and historical factors" (p. 3). In particular, workplace considerations merge with personal values and are difficult to disambiguate in an occupation essentially people-orientated. The affinity-identity of Gee (2000) is the most relevant construct because it recognises that identity formation is context-bound, interaction-based and dynamic. However, the more established institutional-identity remains pervasive and efforts to disassociate personal values from professionalism have been channeled through attempts to regulate teaching performance and thus neutralise individualism (Goepel, 2012). Yet, both on theoretical grounds, the changing conceptualisation of identity, and practical grounds, the highly context-dependent nature of performance, attempts to objectivise professionalism are unconvincing.

2.4.2 CPD in general teaching

As stated, CPD is strongly linked with professionalism and enjoys a symbiotic relationship with identity and CoP in that it shapes the formation of both constructs and is itself determined in content and scope by the beliefs and activities of individuals and groups. This section supports the centrality of CPD in professionalism and illustrates links to the two other parts of the theoretical framework, identity and CoP, arguing that shortcomings of CPD may in part be down to under-consideration of these related constructs. The question is not whether CPD is important to professionalism but whether identity and CoP can play a larger role in the process.

The premise of CPD is that human resources, i.e., teachers, are the most important variable in the learning experience and that maintaining the functionality of this resource is essential to meet the ever-changing needs of the classroom (Bubb & Earley, 2007). The definition of CPD provided in **2.2** demonstrates that the concept encompasses many types of learning. Stoll, Harris & Handscomb (2012) review the literature and identify nine themes which characterise CPD. They claim that CPD should be: goal-orientated; cognitively challenging for teachers; based on the assessment of individual and school needs; a combination of work-based learning and external expertise; varied, rich and sustainable; research-driven; collaborative; both intra- and inter-school; dependent on effective leadership. Their conclusion (p. 8) is that as CPD ultimately aims at improved practice, the focus of activity should be in the environments where teachers operate: schools. The focus on practice is consistent with the construct of professionalism in this study. Similarly, a

case is made that teachers will re-interpret their roles and behaviours better by being involved in highly-contextualised, i.e., school-based, activity, which is relevant to affinity-identity. Also, the stress on collaboration evokes the potential of CoP to enhance CPD.

While the importance of CPD is unchallenged, the mode of delivery has been controversial in terms of delivering effective outcomes. This may be because identity and CoP have not been utilised sufficiently, with the former understood in the least useful sense of institutional identity. Robinson (2014) presents a chronological study of CPD (termed professional development in her writing) in the twentieth century and the question mark in her title, *A learning profession?*, shows her to be cynical of the direction taken. Using a mixed-methods methodology combining archival work, case studies and interviews, the, contentious, conclusions include concern over the reach of CPD, access to funding and dispute over the construct of professionalism to be operationalised in CPD. As regards the latter, CPD has been too divorced from issues of identity, particularly what is understood by Gee (2000) as affinity-identity, exacerbated by the move in focus of activity from individual teacher to whole school performance and local context to national priorities. Also, there are not enough incentives, and possibly resources, for CoP to contribute.

2.4.3 CoP in general teaching

The purpose of this section is to show that the attributes of genuine CoP, as distinguished from just groupings, are relevant to the theoretical framework described here. CoP are a valuable concept in this study because they have as crucial components both the identity, affinity-identity to be more specific, and CPD constructs.

The term community is of wide application and CoP should probably be differentiated from general discussion of teaching / learning communities which are formulated primarily "to enhance student learning" (Stoll & Seashore Louise, 2007, p. 5) through curriculum goals. For example, Grossman & Wineburg (2000) outline a project undertaken by a teaching community to create an interdisciplinary curriculum; Stoll, Harris & Handscomb (2012, p. 7) include learning communities as opportunities for CPD. As discussed in **2.4.2**, CPD is often encouraged as a group endeavour but CPD activity within groups does not denote them as CoP. Farnsworth, Kleanthous & Wenger-Trayner (2016, p. 143) are explicit that conditions need to be met for CoP.

CoP, a notion developed and disseminated by Wenger (1998), are meaningful to professionalism because they actually define the construct. It is claimed (Wenger, 2000) that by interacting with others, we negotiate and establish an agreed set of competencies based on a common skills base and set of shared experiences.

CoP are applicable to a range of contexts, pedagogy not receiving special emphasis. Examples of tasks carried out by CoP in Wenger (2004, p. 3) include arranging a more flexible purchasing system and establishing an after-school programme. However, the three critical elements in any CoP (Wenger, 1998) are joint enterprise, members understanding the nature of their work and their contribution; mutual engagement, maintaining relationships of trust; shared repertoire, a common discourse as well as a bank of tools and techniques which members can draw upon in practice.

CoP were not originally related to education specifically (Wenger, 1998) but a recent article by Farnsworth, Kleanthous & Wenger-Trayner [previously Wenger] (2016) confirms that CoP have great potential in pedagogy. Most fundamentally, CoP in education are marked in that they involve practitioners learning about learning so that identity and knowledge become linked as knowing about education gives practitioners legitimacy and status as educators. However, this goes beyond institutional-affinity as interaction in different contexts causes participants of CoP constantly to reinvent themselves, the domain of affinity-identity. In terms of CPD, the establishing of a shared repertoire requires members of CoP to learn from one another and for themselves in order to access this resource. Furthermore, in education, practice is primary. While educational research, whether emanating from academia or policy decisions, can inform CoP, it is the way that CoP engage with issues which defines core competencies and the adequacy of those involved to deliver them. The authors talk of a "local geography of competence" (p. 157) which means that attempts by management and curricula to dictate practice need to recognise that teachers will respond to external demands in complex ways based on their interpretation of the situation, a process which is exactly within the description of affinity-identity.

2.4.4 Summary of professionalism in general teaching
Of the three interdependent constructs, identity, CPD and CoP, identity is the most challenging to define, in large part due to, as noted by Floyd & Morrison (2014), the issue of disentangling personal and public identity. The most relevant description is the affinity-identity of Gee (2000) because the principle is that identity is a sum of experiences interpreted according to context and applied to the teacher's individual circumstances. Affinity-identity defies attempts at standardisation to minimise individual responses to practice. Two questions remain unanswered: is affinity-identity relevant to EFL teachers and do TAs impact identity formation? CPD is strongly associated with professionalism and in terms of the research framework is identity-forming while conducive to CoP, a connection that deserves to be highlighted more. Do teachers, in general education and EFL, also make the link between CPD, identity and CoP? Concerning CoP, these are ideal vehicles both for the establishing of affinity-identity and CPD. To what extent are teachers, again in

general education and EFL, cognisant of the stated role of CoP in professionalism and can TAs be conceived as CoP?

2.5 Professionalism in EFL

Regarding professionalism as a whole, there are two immediate parallels between this section on EFL and the previous on general education. The first is the "scarcity of empirical research on teacher professionalism" lamented by Blair (2014, p. 30). In an EFL context, Smith & Sky (2015) would concur based on their survey of research into professionalism in EFL in the UK. The second parallel is teachers' disengagement from professionalism as a concept. Johnston (1997) interviewed 17 EFL teachers in Poland about their individual career choices and from the data argues that there is no discourse of professionalism available to teachers. They have a sense of their identity shaped on their experiences but do not buy into a shared vision of professionalism and even seem to react against this.

2.5.1 Identity in EFL

As with general teaching, this section argues that affinity-identity is the most relevant construct within professionalism because it evokes an identity which is sensitive to a context which is often challenging on an emotional as well as a technical level. The strength of institutional identity is weakened, but not absent, in EFL because of, as discussed in **1.2.2**, the lack of regulation and consequent discrediting of EFL as an occupation in many contexts. One aspect of identity that has strong resonance in EFL but not in general teaching is that of nature-identity, the advantage of being born a native-speaker. Nature-identity is roundly condemned in the literature (see **1.2.2**) as damaging to perceptions of professionalism so it would be problematic if this was the dominant projection of identity.

As in general education, identity is a key concept relating to professionalism within EFL:

> Becoming a second language teacher involves the development of a teacher identity, identifying with language teaching as a profession, and, over time, becoming the type of teacher one desires to be. (Crandall & Christison, 2016, p. 11)

One aspect of this which has attracted attention is the development of what Gee (2000) deems affinity-identity, learning and evolving personal values from a series of interactions. For example, Pishghadam, Zabihi & Shayesteh (2014) conducted a survey (n = 92) to establish a relationship between EFL teacher burnout, a real danger given the poor working conditions in the field (Rimmer, 2016), and beliefs about teaching. The results showed that teachers who interpreted their jobs as more than language instruction and invested into the process their own selves and learners' full cognitive-emotional profiles avoided disassociating from teaching as a profession, here seen as a mark of burnout. Teachers with a narrower and

more traditional categorisation of their work aspired to institutional affinity and focused on the observables such as syllabus milestones and assessment targets. This group of teachers drifted into burnout more readily and as a consequence their commitment to their work waned. A healthier approach is affinity-identity, which results from indulging non-tangible values in the classroom.

Two studies in this direction collected richer data through interviews, albeit with much smaller sample sizes. Yazan & Peercy (2016) found teachers' emotions to be key in identity formation, conceptualised socially-culturally, as the three pre-service teachers involved expressed a highly personal reaction to their work, which fed back into a classroom persona. Data from four Sudanese teachers (Elsheikh, 2016) are interpreted as reflective of the development of identity, conceptualised as emerging from social-cultural discourse and interaction, amongst teachers based on their classroom experiences. For example, they described teaching as "spiritually rewarding" (p. 43) and altruistic. Interestingly, this sense of vocation is despite economic factors, low salaries in the main, regarded as antithetical to a positive identification with teaching, an issue also raised by Raza (2010) and Wright (2016) in countries much richer than Sudan.

In the corresponding section on general education, **2.4.1**, increasing regulation, posing as accountability and quality control, was seen as a throwback to institutional identity. The regulation aspect of professionalism is less pronounced in EFL because it is not subject to state control or supervision. Membership of accreditation schemes such as that operated by the British Council in conjunction with English UK (https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) is optional. The absence of effective regulation, as well as the global nature of EFL, distinguishes general education from EFL very clearly and there are repercussions on different aspects of identity. In particular, Glazer (2008) mentions the proliferation of unlicensed schools and teachers as damaging to professionalism. While there is no real degree of external regulation in EFL, there is allegiance to the principle that performance criteria lead to professionalism, not least by protecting students and teachers from rogue schools. The absence of enforceable teaching standards in EFL carries mixed messages for identity. On the one hand, institutional identity carries less weight in EFL as EFL teaching is often seen as inferior to the established professions, including general teaching (Gower, 2018). On the other hand, freedom from regulation may allow teachers to develop affinity-identity.

However, EFL has not given up on institutional identity and standards are seen as bolstering this. One organisation which publishes criterion-referenced scales of core competencies is EAQUALS (The European Association for Quality Language Services, www.eaquals.org), and their pioneering work has fed into a

multilingual European project on language teachers' standards (Mateva, Vitanova & Tashevska, 2013). These standards have multiple uses but their main functions are as an accreditation scheme for aspiring EAQUALS members and in curriculum development. Members are periodically inspected and so, as explained in Rossner (2008), EAQUALS developed criteria to standardise, inter alia, the assessment of teachers. One criterion which was formalised was "professionalism" but this is not defined as a construct so its relationship to identity is indeterminate.

Farmer (2006) in her exploration of the relationship between clients and EFL providers shows the influence of the new professionalism of Hargreaves (1994), particularly the ideals of collaboration and non-isolationism, in seeking to contain affinity-identity by restricting teachers' autonomy. Farmer advocates a service industry approach with the analogy of learners as clients. A service framework considers aspects beyond the traditional focus on the classroom including administrative tasks such as building adequate resource banks. The argument is that professionalism is only possible via a more complete picture of how clients are serviced, and that teachers are often reluctant to take on a fuller job description. For Farmer, teachers are too focused on education and not mindful enough of the learner experience. It is envisaged that a service approach provides a comforting transparency to both clients and teachers. Farmer is surely overly sanguine about defining the exact nature of the service offered but more pertinently she seems to be writing about the professionalism of EFL as a field rather than individual teachers. The latter are depicted as cogs, albeit important ones, in a machine.

Nevertheless, by far the most developed strand in discussion of EFL teacher identity, and one that does not feature in mainstream general education, is that of the relative status of native-speaking teachers (NSTs) and non-native speaking teachers (NNSTs). This was discussed in **1.2.2** and concerns the advantages which NSTs enjoy in the labour market over NNSTs purely because of their historical positioning as the best models of English. Of course, this relates completely to Gee's (2000) nature-identity because language heritage is an accident of birth. Richardson (2017), a NNST herself, expresses the issue passionately from first-hand experience:

> The author [Richardson] has personally experienced discrimination in the workplace on the basis of not being a 'native speaker'. She has also been the reluctant witness of incidents where highly competent professionals she worked with were either rejected or considered less competent than their 'native speaker' colleagues by both managers and students espousing a firm belief in the native speaker fallacy. (p. 81)

A sad admission, previewed in **1.4**, is that I have personally been one of the benefactors of such "incidents", effectively collaborating in the denigration of NNSTs. Probably the most prolific advocator, as recognised by Rixon & Smith (2017, p. 44), against such prejudice is Medgyes. He traces (2017) the establishing of separate NST and NNST identities to Kachru's (1985) hugely influential delineation of an inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle of English speakers respectively populated by native speaking countries, for example, the UK and the USA, countries where English is an established second language, for example, India and Singapore, and countries where English is a foreign language, for example, China and Brazil. The argument is that, irrespective of their actual competence or activity, the status of teachers is augmented the closer they are to the centre of the circle. Medgyes believes that nature-identity distinguishes NSTs and NNSTs because of their different paths towards language proficiency but he claims that NNSTs need not suffer any inferiority complex and argues for CPD as a way of eliminating the gap in linguistic competence.

To summarise, this section on identity in EFL, identity is recognised as a key concept relating to professionalism. In terms of Gee's (2000) three concepts of identity, nature identity is the most discussed in the EFL literature as this reflects the very passionate NST vs. NNST debate. Institutional identity lacks the force it has in mainstream teaching as EFL is largely unregulated but the development of performance standards represents an attempt to assert this. Affinity-identity seems more relevant to professionalism as it takes account of the emerging experience of EFL teachers and their rationalisation of personal and work-based values but the empirical literature on this is not large.

2.5.2 CPD in EFL

This section argues that CPD is strongly associated with professionalism and is particularly important in an EFL context because many teachers lack formal training and possibly motivation, evidenced by their perceived reluctance to engage in research (Ur, 2013b). Also, as with general teaching, CPD potentially pulls together identity and CoP. The question is what forms of CPD are most relevant to the professionalism of EFL teachers and whether this accords with what they are actually offered.

In a recent overview of the area, Crandall & Christison (2016) report considerable interest in CPD in EFL over the last forty years. This has emerged as an antidote to the poor preparation and support many teachers receive at pre- and in-service level (Marks, 2014; Nobre, 2011). In terms of mode of delivery, the authors claim that CPD has moved from a top-down approach of short one-off seminars to activities set up by teachers themselves. They report the main areas of enquiry into CPD by researchers to have been teacher cognition, i.e., teachers' beliefs and values, reflection, how teachers process the feedback they get from their teaching experiences into meaningful outcomes, and teacher research. What follows is necessarily a

very brief and selective account of each of these three areas: teacher cognition, reflection and teacher research. All three are seen as complementary, they are not exclusive, routes to CPD that are well evidenced in the literature.

Borg (2003) reviewed 64 studies on teacher cognition published in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The studies, from both EFL and ESL, are international in range and come from multiple contexts. Borg notes a wide diversity of theme, indicative in his opinion of a lack of direction in the field. However, he does pick out three broad themes. The first is connected with prior language experience, for instance, the substantial influence of the teacher's own learning of English, and other subjects, on beliefs about education; the second concerns teacher education, for example, the often unrealistic expectations held by novice teachers during pre-service training; the third is connected to classroom practice, the relationship between cognition and teaching, such as decision-making in the classroom. The third theme has clear relevance to affinity-identity as cognition concerns the interpretation of classroom practice, which is recycled into personal values. As part of his conclusion (p. 106), Borg feels that teacher cognition should be part of the CPD agenda as there are significant implications for teaching and learning. The implication is that too many EFL teachers are still uninformed and making CPD decisions in isolation – a clear opening for CoP.

In terms of reflection, Richards (2010) states its chief characteristic as a constant drive to understand and improve your practice (pp. 119-120), which he envisages as independent of external stimuli. Thornbury (2006) similarly champions reflection over formal mechanisms, such as conferences, in teacher development, seeing reflection as teacher-initiated. Both Richards and Thornbury seem to underplay the role of external training in CPD. To take conferences, two surveys of teachers (Raza, 2010; Borg, 2015) have found that teachers value conferences very highly in CPD. Richards and Thornbury may adopt their position due to the realisation that most teachers lack the means or initiative to take advantage of external training (cf. Nobre, 2011, on funding issues). To illustrate reflection in action, one form currently in vogue is critical incident analysis (cf. Farrell & Baecher, 2017) whereby teachers reflect on pivotal moments in their day-to-day work; one example is a stand-off with a belligerent student (ibid, pp.66-68), and subsequent attempt to interpret the crisis in order both to solve an immediate problem and arrive at an understanding of the larger issues involved. Critical incident analysis is also an example of how reflection ties into both identity and CoP: self-understanding comes from understanding the external. As a shared exercise, critical incident analysis can be a tool in CoP because it supplies a task and methodology to give group endeavour cohesion.

Teacher research is the most autonomous direction of CPD and consequently it carries inherent prestige, especially when leading to publication (Lee, 2014). The research process with its questioning of data and personal position can foster affinity-identity. Also, research is frequently a joint enterprise, which favours CoP. However, teacher research is somewhat controversial as to some commentators it would seem more aspirational than practised. Ur (2013b) argues that EFL teachers do not even use research let alone carry it out:

> Practising teachers do not, on the whole, read the research, partly because they do not have the time and partly because they find it inaccessible and impractical. (p. 53)

For this reason pedagogical guides, for example Harmer (2015, p. 124), often orientate teachers towards action research as being more practical and relevant. Julian Edge is viewed as a pioneer of action research in EFL and his (2001) volume contains multiple case studies in a range of contexts. Edge for one would argue that research is a valuable component of CPD even in environments where teachers lack training and resources to complete formal research with its stringent codes of reliability and validity. To illustrate, Talandis & Stout (2015) report an action-research study reporting an intervention to improve students' speaking skills. The reporting of quantitative data would be more robust with the aid of proper descriptive statistics but the authors testify that the research process had been of great value to their CPD.

To summarise, CPD is strongly associated with professionalism in EFL. CPD has been broken down into three components: teacher cognition, reflection and teacher research. Cognition is relevant to affinity-identity as it involves the changing nature of values and beliefs. Similarly, reflection is an important mechanism for translating input into classroom practice. Teacher research is probably the least accessed form of CPD.

2.5.3 CoP in EFL

The argument in this section is that CoP have not featured enough in discussions of professionalism in EFL. In particular, TAs are not de facto CoP. Their claims have to be considered in the light of Wenger's (1998) criteria.

CoP as such have not made a large impact on the literature on professionalism in EFL although there is acknowledgement that CPD can be a social and multi-participant process (e.g., the reading group activity described in Lefever, 2015). A rare study dedicated to CoP in EFL is Nishino (2012), who follows one teacher that participates in multiple groupings that are designated as CoP. These include TAs and collections of people who would not call themselves a single entity but just colleagues. It is claimed that the teacher's participation in different CoP equates to CPD. However, the conclusion that CoP are a route towards increased affinity-identity is weak because of the theoretical framework and methodology. First there is no

justification provided for treating the TAs and other communities as CoP. Second, one teacher represents the minimal sample size so the external validity of the study is limited.

Other studies mostly refer to CoP obliquely. As a dated example, Naidu, Neeraja, Ramani, Shivakumar, & Viswanatha (1992) – the scarcity of material makes it impractical to rule out non-contemporary work – describe how teachers organise themselves into a group to research the dynamics of large classes. This study pre-dates the notion of CoP developed in Lave & Wenger (1991) but the three elements of CoP identified in Wenger (1998 are present: joint enterprise, mutual engagement, shared repertoire of resources. A similar CoP seems in operation in Vinogradov (2016) with the formation of a study group to improve literacy in adult ESL through observation of classes with pre-school learners but the group does not define itself as a CoP, not that self-definition is a criterion. Here there is a CPD outcome and also implications for affinity-identity as collaboration across age groups causes participants to break down traditional barriers set up by the assignation of teachers to year groups. There is a similar cross-boundaries effect in Fernandes & Vieira (2014) as a teacher-led research group moves from a language teaching to multi-disciplinary focus, although again there is no explicit reference to CoP.

While the EFL literature has not fully committed to exploring Wenger (1998), it has offered alternative frameworks which can be seen to challenge CoP or perhaps suggest a reinterpretation in an EFL context. For example, Edge (2002) has conceived of co-operative learning whereby individuals work with colleagues in a structured pathway towards CPD goals. Participants use a special discourse framed to identify CPD targets and establish a healthy relationship for disclosure. This method could certainly be incorporated within CoP, and there is the advantage over Wenger (1998) that the scenarios described are aimed specifically at language learning. Also the emphasis on CPD outcomes in a localised context is in line with the professional commentary found on the websites of many local TAs, for example the English Teachers' Association Switzerland mission statement (https://www.e-tas.ch/about/mission-statement), the Japan Association for Language Teaching constitution (https://jalt.org/main/constitution) and the Malaysia English Language Teaching Association mission/vision (https://www.melta.org.my/index.php/about-melta/mission-vision).

However, arguably, co-operative learning is more of a CPD tool than a full conceptualisation of community and as such it is narrower in scope than Wenger (1998). This is particularly striking in the emphasis on the technical skills and discourse needed for participants to collaborate (cf. Edge, 1992, for an early blueprint). As discussed in **2.4.1** and **2.4.3**, a link can be made between CoP and affinity-identity because in CoP identity is socially-constructed. Still, a clear advantage of collaborative learning is that it offers a well-

articulated toolkit for CPD and it can be locally situated. This practical approach may appeal to EFL teachers more than the rather abstract notion of CoP.

To provide an emergent angle on CoP, the technological revolution has spawned an interest in community from the vantage point of the insider experience of the vast and growing number of EFL teachers who are users of various digital platforms. For example, Yang (2009) used a qualitative methodology to explore trainee teachers' use of blogs as tools for reflection. The data reflect teachers' testimony to digital media as facilitating interaction and it is claimed this develops into a community of practice. Similarly, Shin (2016) describes an online platform for CPD and concludes that the project "was successful because it built a community of professionals from many different countries who could share ideas, learn from each other, and build meaningful ties" (p. 146) and makes the same claim for a "virtual community of practice" (p. 158). However, the extent to which a new medium changes the fundamental nature of CoP is not clear, nor whether the convenience of the digital could actually make CoP more attractive to EFL teachers.

To summarise, professionalism in EFL has hardly been explored through a CoP lens, which is curious given the emphasis on CPD as a joint venture and, as illustrated by Shin (ibid.), the potential for technology to make the logistics of CoP easier. This may be because there are features of EFL which make it less fertile ground for CoP, i.e., a missing component from the requirements of joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire. It remains to be established whether TAs function as CoP or if EFL provides an environment which places specific demands on the notion of CoP.

2.5.4 Summary of professionalism in EFL

The findings in this section should be tempered by the meagre amount of literature on professionalism in EFL. Professionalism has not been operationalised adequately enough to make the studies that do refer to the construct completely relevant. From the evidence available, as concerns identity, institutional identity is weaker in EFL than in general education because the lack of quality control besmirches EFL as an occupation. On the other hand, nature-identity assumes a role absent in mainstream education due to the propagation of the myth that native-speakers are ideal teachers. Affinity-identity is the most relevant construct within professionalism because there is evidence that it gives teachers a more healthy self-identity that results in better learning outcomes. CPD has been strongly identified with professionalism and has particular relevance in EFL because teachers often have a poor grounding in theory and practice. Such is the wealth of CPD activity, teachers need more impetus to pick out the activities which are of most personal benefit, for example affinity-identity enhancing. CoP have great potential to impact professionalism through both affinity-identity and CPD but their role is relatively unexplored in EFL.

2.6 Professionalism and teaching associations

The connection between professionalism and TAs is that TAs sell themselves to members as bodies which promote professionalism (e.g., Szesztay, 2006). The argument of this section is that the existence and nature of any relationship between professionalism and TAs needs to be determined empirically, something that has not been done in the literature to date. A link between professionalism and TAs cannot be established until professionalism is defined as a construct and this construct is operationalised in studies of TAs.

In any case, in previous studies TAs rarely figure in discussion of professionalism amongst teachers. None of the teachers quoted in Johnston (1997) even mention TAs. A participant in the Blair (2014) study referred to earlier illustrates:

> When the instructor asked how many students belonged to a professional organization, most responded that they did not. Most seemed unfamiliar with the idea of a broader professional community; some struggled to understand the relevance of membership in professional associations. One [teacher] asked, "I don't even know those people. I don't interact with them every day. How can they be my community?" (p. 40)

"Community" for these educators was confined to the classroom and school, where day-to-day interaction does take place, not to an abstract notion of a TA. Nevertheless, TAs could conceivably be relevant to the constructs of identity, CPD and CoP. For example, by providing a forum for teachers to liaise and gain new experiences, TAs could impact affinity-identity; conferences and resources provided by TAs would seem to contribute to CPD; a TA and its special interest groups (SIGs) could constitute CoP. But the question remains as to whether there is any empirical evidence to show that TAs do indeed have an impact on identity formation, CPD and CoP for EFL teachers.

2.6.1 Research into the influence of teaching associations on professionalism in general education

The argument is that there has not been enough research into professionalism and TAs (cf. Rixon & Smith, 2017, p. 150) to warrant a causative interpretation of the relationship, i.e., that TAs develop perceptions of professionalism. For the purposes of this project, the literature can be broken down into two categories, that which deals with general TAs and that which investigates TAs within EFL. There should be overlap here as variation in subject specialisation is balanced by issues universal to any teaching situation. One would think that TAs for English as a first language could bridge the curriculum divide but curiously there is no evidence of this happening. An attempt is made to further divide these two categories, general TAs and TAs

within EFL, according to the constructs of identity, CPD and CoP, but this division is hard to maintain due to overlap and imbalance of coverage.

2.6.1.1 Teaching associations and identity in general education

Given that the literature on TAs is limited even in non-EFL contexts, an empirical study of particular relevance is Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, & Cunningham (2010). In a large-scale longitudinal study of teachers in primary and secondary schools they collected data from a 33-item Likert scale instrument eliciting teachers' perceptions of professionalism. The construct of professionalism, derived from content analysis of research literature and government policy statements, was operationalised as a list (p. 556) of 13 concepts judged to be instrumental in professionalism, for example, expertise and altruism. Using factor analysis, most of the 33 items were found to load on to five main factors from the original list of 13, namely teaching as constructive learning (which aligns with CPD), autonomy in teaching (affinity-identity), teaching as collaboration with others (CoP), teaching as a complicated job (affinity-identity), a trusted profession (institutional identity). However, this still left 62% of the variation between individual teachers' responses as disconnected to a unitary model of professionalism. Interestingly, one of the items which did not load on to a factor was item 26 dealing with TAs, "[a]n influential and independent professional organisation for all teachers is desirable" (p. 564). This does not mean that teachers saw TAs as irrelevant, rather that TAs fitted outside the model. At this juncture it would have been useful to have qualitative data, i.e., teachers' comments, exploring the variation. Unfortunately, this is not a criticism of the study because it is beyond its scope, there are no data to explore the statistical reporting.

Several studies highlight TAs as a reaction against industry forces which seek to compromise affinity-identity by, as discussed in **2.4.1**, minimising individualism in favour of standardisation to meet market expectations. The success of TAs is then measured by the extent to which they protect the identity of their members. For example, Cunningham (2001), using a methodology drawing on her personal experience and interpretation of events best described as phenomenology (cf. Tonningsen, 2002, for a comparable approach), presents a case study of an adult-learning TA which is claimed to have failed to represent the field and members, in particular to challenge commercialisation in education. Other criticisms include a lack of engagement with members and policies designed to protect and perpetuate its own interests. Even if this TA were better motivated and run, Cunningham doubts its sustainability because of a fractured and diverse membership. The threat of market forces is a theme picked up in Shieh (2012), this time in an association of music teachers.

But is it possible for a TA to maintain members' affinity-identity if this means challenging the status quo? EFL in particular is openly commercial with the vast majority of students paying for their studies and it has spawned a huge industry, for example materials writing, language assessment, study abroad programmes and foundation courses, generating further profits for Anglophone countries. Salusbury (2011) estimated the value of ELT to be worth 14 billion pounds to the UK back in 2009 and predicted this to rise to 16 billion by 2025. Teaching is not inevitably compromised in this environment but Damon, Colby, Bronk & Ehrlich (2005, p. 30) see professionals needing to reconcile "market-oriented" forces with identity. This article is not specific to teaching so they do not provide concrete examples but within EFL a common scenario is pressure to accept students with low English proficiency to demanding course types, often against the teacher's recommendation, in order to increase student numbers. The result is invariably student failure and teacher frustration but the books balance. In this situation and others, it is difficult to see how TAs could actually intervene or even if they should. Education is not in a vacuum, it is part of wider society, and obstructing the perceived natural course of a market-led economy could be fatal to the health of the organisation. Possibly the price of keeping education competitive is to accept that affinity-identity will be compromised.

Nevertheless, there are voices for TAs to have an advocacy role and thus defend affinity-identity. Whitney (2010) seems to overstate the case that there is "a long and dynamic history of teacher inquiry, professional advocacy and reform" (p. 1), but the context is limited here to the US-based National Council of Teachers of English [as a vernacular], a TA dating back a century. Indeed, advocacy seems to have a stronger basis in North America. For example, Thompson, Lyons & Timmons (2015) study the role of TAs in Canada in raising awareness of inclusive education, especially the accommodation of children with disabilities. They interviewed the heads of TAs and concluded that while the activity of the TAs probably made members more aware of issues involved in inclusive education, more could be done by TAs in canvassing the appropriate authorities on related matters such as provision of resources for marginalised children. The study is predicated on a belief that TAs can have a wider impact on education, including impacting affinity-identity by giving teachers new perspectives, and the issues dealt with are clearly non-trivial.

Contemporary UK examples of meaningful advocacy from TAs appear rare. Goodwyn (2012) attributes this to teachers' lack of resolve: "it appears that many English teachers are sufficiently conditioned by the demands of standards to prefer to stay within the confines of those expectations" (p. 39). According to Goodwyn, a state-led obsession in the UK with performance criteria and incessant meddling with day-to-day issues have fatigued teachers and made them passive followers of the system. For Goodwyn, the collapse of

advocacy allows little space for TAs, as demonstrated by the decline in membership of the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE), although its website (www.nate.org.uk) does make claim to an advocacy role. However, NATE may not actually be so pertinent to this study for the nominalisation in the name of the organisation makes it clear that it is about "teaching" not teachers. Teaching issues are not the same as teachers' issues, at an extreme there could be quality teaching from an ill-served teaching force, so any advocacy from NATE would primarily be aimed at improving practice, not teachers' affinity-identity.

2.6.1.2 Teaching associations and CPD in general education

NATE would seem to follow the trend of a general decline in the membership of TAs in the UK. This may be because their CPD provision is becoming less attractive to members. Mansell & Rogers (2008) demonstrate with figures from a variety of TAs and they surmise three reasons for falling memberships, two of which, the strongest, relate directly to CPD. The first is a switch in interest from subject-specific issues to general pedagogy (CPD); the second is demographical, with older teachers being more experienced, feeling more secure in their teaching and not needing to renew membership, as well as retirement (identity); the third is the Internet making teaching resources more available (CPD). Dwindling numbers in TAs is significant and worth remarking upon in that CPD may no longer be seen as being met by TAs, either because of different priorities or a failure to deliver.

Thus, examining these causes in turn, assuming the downwards trend has continued from the time of the Mansell & Rogers (2008) data, the first, the movement from subject to general teaching issues, would indicate a sea change in teachers' perceptions. Some would see this negatively as downplaying subject specialisation, others would see it as a move to break down curriculum boundaries and unite teachers. However, while mainstream education may be taking a more holistic direction, this is hardly viable in EFL because it is generally much more isolated from the teaching of other subjects. There is a content-integrated movement (e.g., Deller & Price, 2007) but this is usually restricted to the rare environments where EFL teachers can refer to subject specialists, for example secondary education in international schools.

The second factor, demographic change, seems the weakest argument and it is not backed up by any statistics of the ageing of the teaching profession. Actually, the latest Government UK figures show that as of November 2017, 82% of teachers in publicly-funded schools in England were under fifty years old, with a trend towards a younger staff profile (Department for Education, 2018). The problem seems to be teachers leaving the profession mid-career and schools not having the benefit of experienced educators. Of course,

there are no comparable statistics for the EFL industry. However, the "teach and travel" mentality described in **1.2.2** suggests a young profile and little scope for TAs to be over-represented by mature teachers.

The third factor, the impact of the Internet, is the most persuasive. The Internet has certainly expanded the range, but not necessarily quality, of resources available to teachers, many of them being free. An example at the quality end are the BBC resources for learners and teachers (http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/). No TA could compete with the ever-expanding online world of materials and it becomes increasingly difficult to position member-only resources as a selling point. This signals a change of function since historically resources must have been a real benefit for neophyte teachers desperate for practical help and TAs would have been a direct source. Teachers are unlikely to pay for something they can now get free so TAs have effectively lost this market. The implication is that TAs are having less of an impact on CPD in the area of resources, although there is no clear evidence for this.

2.6.1.3 Teaching associations and CoP in general education

Tellingly, no literature has been found that makes an explicit connection between TAs and CoP. This is despite a recognition, discussed in **2.4.3**, that CoP are relevant to professionalism and inter-connected with identity and CPD. It would seem that more research needs to focus on CoP, as a construct in isolation and in connection with TAs. For example, Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, & Cunningham (2010) in their empirical study of professionalism included TAs as a factor but not CoP.

2.6.1.4 Conclusions of research into the influence of teaching associations in general education

The literature base is too limited to provide evidence that TAs support the development of professionalism in general education. The one major empirical study reported into perceptions of professionalism (Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, & Cunningham, 2010) did not find TAs to be a factor. Considering the constructs in turn, the thorny question of advocacy suggests limitations in the way TAs can affect affinity-identity because TAs generally do not position themselves as opponents to the industry pressures which seek to compromise teachers' individual beliefs and values. Falling membership of TAs hints at the fading attraction of the CPD that TAs offer. CoP are not used as a framework for justifying TAs despite their wide currency in the general literature on professionalism.

2.6.2 Research into the influence of teaching associations on professionalism in EFL

The argument in this section is first that the limited literature linking TAs and perceptions of professionalism is compromised by the absence of a construct for professionalism; second, that studies have been written by and about the perspectives of members of TAs, ignoring non-members, and thus skewing the data; third,

that there seems to be a gap between idealism and reality in describing TAs, for example, while there is aspiration towards affinity-identity, the fact that native-speakerism is still rampant shows that institutional identity remains in force.

The literature on TAs in EFL is sparse as Paran (2016, p. 127) admits when introducing a number of papers on TAs (Hall & Paran, 2016). This volume is referred to heavily in this section and the connection with professionalism is that it is claimed all the papers "provide insights into the infrastructure of the *profession* and into opportunities for teachers' and other practitioners' *professional* growth" (Hall, 2016, p. 126 [emphasis added]). Elsewhere, what literature that exists is primarily discursive in nature rather than based on empirical research.

2.6.2.1 Teaching associations and identity in EFL

To coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of IATEFL, several studies were commissioned to explore the contribution of IATEFL and TAs generally to EFL (Hall & Paran, 2016). Based on two chronologically separate surveys of the IATEFL membership, Motteram (2016) investigated how TAs construct members' identity, understood as the degree of association with a community, here the TA, that would seem to straddle both the discourse and affinity identity of Gee (2000) in that group practices and relationship building are components. Using a grounded content analysis approach, Motteram identified an "Instrumental" theme and a "Belonging and identity" theme. Instrumental incorporated reasons for joining IATEFL, the prime example being to attend the annual conference. Belonging and identity comprised the sense of relationship between members and IATEFL, illustrative codes were "community" and "networking". Motteram notes a less prominent category of "demonstrating professionalism" (professionalism is not defined), which suggests to him that members feel "IATEFL membership is part of a trajectory towards being a professional member of the community of ELT teachers" (p. 155). Motteram concludes that being a member of a TA creates a professional identity which remains current despite competition from online resources.

This upbeat conclusion needs to be read with caution. First, Motteram is a trustee of IATEFL and cannot be called disinterested. With qualitative analysis the objectivity of the researcher is always an issue. Second, the content analysis itself is not detailed enough in the report to disambiguate the two themes: it is not clear why the category "personal development" is subsumed under "Belonging and identity" rather than "Instrumental", as development is presumably telic. Third, both surveys are based on modest response rates, 12% and 19%, but more importantly, the respondents are all members. As with all research of this ilk covered in this literature review, the views of non-members are not solicited. The fact that the vast majority of teachers are not members of IATEFL or any other TA does not mean that they eschew professionalism; it

means that they, presumably, do not share Motteram's vision of the benefits of membership. Regarding the construct of identity adopted here, Motteram's study leaves open the question of the relationship between professionalism and identity. Is identity synonymous with or subordinate to professionalism? If the latter, what are the other contributors?

Motteram does not refer to advocacy although it was argued in **2.6.1.1** that the reluctance of TAs to engage with issues threatening teachers' values was detrimental to affinity-identity. Indeed, advocacy is less marked in an EFL context. In a survey of the function of six Japanese TAs, Stewart. & Miyahara (2016) note almost in passing that only one TA has any pretensions to advocacy and this theme is not considered developed enough to be explored in their discussion. Their main point is to map the evolution of TAs in Japan and their attitude to teacher development. In line with the earlier commentary, advocacy is more of a phenomenon in North American-based TAs. To illustrate, Murray (1992) reported on a TA based in California which adopted position statements and actively canvassed the authorities to protect employment conditions; Thomson (2004) reports on the attempt by the TA TESL Canada to act as an accreditation body for the multitude of programmes that offer initial EFL training, concluding that the recognition scheme of TESL Canada is well motivated but severely undeveloped, damaging the prospects of the trainees, their learners and the profession.

It should be borne in mind that Murray (1992) and Thomson (2004) do not present typical scenarios for the work of TAs. Barfield (2016, p. 223) claims that TAs have "the potential to act as a core driver of grassroots educational change" but provides no examples. Change within EFL has come from sources other than TAs. Historically this was enlightened individuals and recently it has been sociopolitical forces. As an example of the former, Howatt & Smith (2014) describe how the reform period in late 19th/early 20th century, inspired by figures such as Harold Palmer, who put language teaching on a more scientific basis, saw (successful) pressure on school systems in Europe to adopt new oral-focused methodologies for teaching EFL. The best illustration of the latter is the preoccupation with accountability realising itself in a proliferation of language tests and a teach-to-the-test backwash. Wendel (2009) notes that in an increasingly competitive educational market, the influence of testing systems is only growing and represents the main impetus for change in education today, transpiring to a change-the-test-and-make-things-better culture. As noted in **2.5.1**, this environment may negatively impact affinity-identity because it takes away teachers' sense of self-determination. Whatever the supposed merits of these transformations, TAs have not been involved. TAs in EFL generally have more modest aims and veer away from politicizing, as evidenced by Paran's discomfort with a definition of TA which references advocacy (2016, p. 128).

A further point is that TAs have not been successful in eradicating the NST / NSST distinction, discussed in **2.5.1** as divisive and appealing purely to nature-identity. In a case study of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT, www.jalt.org). Oda (1999) criticised the fact that English had become the working language of the TA, even though JALT is based in Japan and most members are Japanese, as this led to NSTs becoming privileged in decision-making simply because of their language proficiency. Ironically, in **1.2.3**, it was touted that TAs may erode the traditional discrimination against NNSTs. The practice of JALT seems to show that the NST / NNST distinction not only remains but is consolidated. Almost two decades on from Oda (ibid.) all seven directors of JALT are non-Japanese NSTs and Stewart & Miyahara (2016, p. 140) confirm that it is NST-dominated. If TAs countenance nature-identity, that seems damaging to perceptions of professionalism because it disadvantages the vast majority of teachers of EFL.

To summarise, the literature on TAs and identity is not large enough to warrant strong conclusions. Based on this limited literature sample, three points can be suggested. First and foremost, identity needs to be conceptualised more fully and operationalised in empirical studies in a variety of contexts involving TAs in EFL. Second, the relevance of advocacy to identity and the role of TAs in advocacy remains problematic. Third, it may be the case that nature-identity still figures as a barrier to perceptions of professionalism.

2.6.2.2 Teaching associations and CPD in EFL

The argument of this section is that CPD is strongly associated with TAs in EFL, with the traditional face-to-face conference having pride of place, and that this is in no small measure due to the lack of teacher support from other sources. To illustrate, an earlier edition of the best-known handbook of teaching practice (Harmer, 2007) states two main functions of TAs, conference attendance and opportunities to present at them (pp. 421-422). Conferences, seminars and other forms of input play an especial role in EFL TAs because the average teacher has such a poor background with short initial training and a dearth of further CPD opportunities (cf. Thornbury, 2001). Marks (2014), in the context of pronunciation teaching, which is an area teachers feel least confident about (Baker, 2014), notes that TAs compensate for the lack and inadequacies of formal courses. The knowledge which TAs could pool and provide would seem most valuable to specialist areas, which are almost completely uncatered for in the already shaky qualifications and training framework, EFL management being an example (cf. White, Hockley, Van der Horst Jansen & Laughner, 2008, pp. 20-23).

An important empirical study, much quoted in the special collection of Hall & Paran (2016) on TAs, is Lamb (2012), who investigated how TAs conceptualise themselves, how they conceptualise the challenges they

face, and how they address these challenges. This was done through a mixed methods study of questionnaires, focus groups and case studies within the context of the TAs affiliated to the Professeurs de Langues Vivantes / International Federation of Language Teacher Associations (FIPLV). The key finding in this study is that of TAs providing a space for CPD, understood in a physical and virtual sense:

> Such a space offers opportunities to contribute articles on practice to [TA] publications and to become actively involved in the association, simultaneously fulfilling the desire for networking and enhanced professional status and profile, which may bring career benefits and higher salaries. (p. 296)

There is also an emphasis on advocacy, particularly curriculum reform, which seems at odds with the previous observation of the general non-identification of TAs with advocacy until one understands the specific features of FILPV. Many of the members of FILPV teach languages which are in competition with English for a place in the curriculum and express a real anxiety that the dominance of English is threatening not just their profession but their livelihood, representing an erosion of institutional identity. Teachers of English within TAs are probably not as desperate for reform because work is so plentiful (see Guo & Beckett, 2012, for the explosion of demand for English in China since its transition from a planned economy). In terms of challenges to TAs, Lamb identifies falling membership. As the fees of members fund the activity of a TA, the level of services is affected, particularly the important, in this multilingual context, ability to campaign for policy shift. Lamb offers two solutions to attracting members: the increasing use of new technologies, this being particularly amenable to a younger generation of teachers otherwise largely unimpressed by TAs, and the opportunity to engage in research which will benefit individuals and the field. If these challenges are met, Lamb envisages TAs as being the embodiment of professionalism, manifested in an obligation if not requirement for authorities to consult TAs on major policy.

Turning to other motivations for members to join a TA, the two other main benefits from an IATEFL poll (Puchta, 2012) are "to join a SIG [Special Interest Group]" and "to go to the annual conference". The former offers more personalised CPD opportunities. For example, TESOL Arabia offers ten SIGs, from testing to young learners, all of which supply add-ons to main membership such as newsletters and training events. In fact, conferences organised by TAs are seen as strongly connected with CPD. The two handbooks released by IATEFL on developing local TAs (Falcao & Szesztay, 2006; Gomez, 2011) thus give much weight to the running of successful conferences. These two benefits, SIGs and conferences, are not of equal take-up value to members because while everyone can join a SIG, the cost of traditional face-to-face conferences always makes them exclusive. It is debatable whether TAs remain attractive as CPD opportunities if there is no opportunity to attend their conferences.

Borg (2015) examined the impact of EFL conferences by surveying 66 attendees post-event. There was a general positive response and one theme that emerged from the content analysis was an augmented professionalism, a construct which, again, is not defined. One subject commented:

> The fact that you come back with new ideas, this will add importance to my role as a trainer and made me look like someone who has more expertise and who's changing his work all the time . . . I felt more confident, I felt I had some more authority. (p. 41)

The conference has cemented the trainer's authoritativeness. However, the change in pronouns from second person, "you", to first person "my", "I', to third person "his", reveals a vulnerable identity. The wording suggests that this teacher needs reassurance that they are who they profess to be. The fear that they are undervalued is omnipresent. One wonders how long the glow from a conference would last in this regard. It may be a quick fix solution to a much deeper problem – the cynicism endemic in the field (Clandfield, 2004). Nevertheless, the overall picture from Borg is that the backwash of conferences is effective. There are two limitations to the study which urge a cautious reading. First, it is constrained geographically, to the middle-east. Second, and more compromisingly, it is funded by the organisation that sponsored the subjects to attend the conferences, so they may have felt a negative reaction inappropriate. A larger and more neutral replica study would be useful.

Not mentioned in the polls referred to, is the possibility for members to engage in research through the agency of TAs, which supports the claim in **2.5.2** that teacher research plays a minor role in CPD, whether independently or through TAs. As a counter-example, Kuchah (2016) gives the example of a TA in Cameroon being involved into research into large class sizes. The advantage of this for Kuchah is that an insider view, all the members know the local circumstances, is preferable to idealised models imported from so-called experts without sufficient consideration of context. Certainly, the globalisation of English and the range of destinations it reaches poses a challenge to TAs. The single monolithic TA based in an Anglophone country may not be responsive enough either to local needs or niche areas. Alatis (2005) illustrates this in the anecdote of how the International Association of World Englishes (IAWE, http://www.iaweworks.org/) split from its parent organisation TESOL because it felt that the agenda of TESOL did not match that of its own members. The critical question of what members want is getting ever more complicated.

2.6.2.3 Teaching associations in EFL and CoP

There is not enough evidence to align TAs with CoP. The most significant and cited empirical work on TAs, Lamb (2014), does not refer to Wenger's work at all. Two studies in the Hall & Paran (2016) collection do: Motteram (2016) and Herrero (2016). Motteram (2016, p. 155) makes a bold claim that membership of

IATEFL propels teachers into an "ELT community of practice". It is extremely doubtful whether the whole of ELT, a broader concept than EFL (see **1.1**), can be categorised as a single community of practice, unless the construct is distorted to mean any kind of grouping, which is definitely not in line with Wenger (1998). Motteram needs to make a case that Wenger's three criteria of joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire are observed. Herrero (2016) follows Wenger much more strictly in describing the Film in Language Teaching Association (FILTA) as a community of practice. FILTA is a young TA, formed in 2010, and was modelled on CoP from inception. Given its on-screen content, not surprisingly FILTA attributes its success in impacting affinity-identity and CPD through its online presence and sophisticated digital tools, which ties into the point made in **2.5.3** that technology has the potential to expand the reach of CoP.

2.6.2.4 Conclusions of research into the influence of teaching associations in EFL
As with general education, there has not been enough research to support a connection between TAs and the development of perceptions of professionalism. Much of the work in this section rests on one volume, Hall & Paran (2016), which is very much an insiders' view of TAs. While professionalism is treated as both a goal and member benefit of TAs, the construct is not described in relation to the large body of literature debating its significance. Identity may be a motivation for joining TAs but it is not clear the extent to which TAs can foster affinity-identity if they are reluctant to engage with larger issues which compromise teachers' values, including the lingering presence of native-speakerism. CPD is seen as the main force behind professionalism with TAs supplying an under-resourced industry, although allocation of these resources is not equal. CoP figure little in descriptions of TAs.

2.7 Conclusions

Disagreement over the definition and scope of professionalism have not deterred wide debate over its application to general (non-EFL) teaching. Critical discussion of professionalism features much less in the EFL literature. The core construct used in this study, professionalism, takes into account historical perspectives on the term and current trends shaping the debate. The theoretical construct arrived at is of professionalism as practice-oriented behaviour that is perceived to meet expectations and needs. Hence, this is a study of perceptions of professionalism. Professionalism is operationalised through identity, continuing professional development (CPD) and communities of practice (CoP).

Identity, CPD and CoP were examined first in the context of general education and then EFL. In both areas, it is recognised that identity is a complex mix of professional and personal considerations and heavily dependent on biographical and contextual factors. From the work of Gee (2000), the most relevant construct of identity is affinity-identity as this acknowledges the fluid and multiple nature of identities as

they are negotiated through interaction and cumulative learning experiences. A theme more marked in general teaching is the tension between affinity-identity and regulation through the attempt to criterion-reference professionalism to standards mapping key competencies, an approach amenable to those seeking greater accountability for the teaching profession and the primacy of institutional identity. A consideration unique to EFL is the tension between NSTs and NNSTs, a blatant regression to nature-identity. Turning to CPD, this is valued in both general education and EFL although there is controversy about the optimal delivery of CPD. A difference is that EFL, being unregulated, has been less dependent on the changing priorities of policy-makers in the provision of CPD. The disadvantage of autonomy in CPD is that some EFL teachers are likely to have been under-exposed to CPD in any form. Regarding CoP, the concept, arising from business fields (Wenger 1998), has been embraced more fully by general education with EFL referring to a vaguer notion of community. When it comes to TAs, this literature review has been fragmentary and by necessity has had to make inferences from an impoverished range of sources, some of them dated and limited in scope. There is no full-length treatment of the TA, either in general education or EFL, extant.

In particular, the literature to date is not in a position to substantiate a link between perceptions of professionalism and TAs. On a practical level, it would seem that there are different expectations from members. For example, advocacy as a route towards affinity-identity is not uncontentious and many TAs choose safer options as part of their membership package with a heavy emphasis on the traditional showcase conference. More fundamentally, professionalism has not been defined as a construct adequately enough for its operationalisation in an EFL context. Discussion of Glazer (2008) showed that EFL has special characteristics which distinguish it from the established professions. Furthermore, as in Motteram (2016), professionalism and related words like professional have been used indiscriminately as if there is a common understanding of what they signify. In fact, the literature, for example, Johnston (1997), indicates strongly that teachers especially have individual perspectives on professionalism and struggle to articulate even this. Without a clear identification of the construct, the framework for data analysis must be suspect.

In terms of methodology, the standard instrument in empirical research has been the survey, for example, Borg (2015). Questionnaires potentially yield a volume of data and they can generate qualitative responses through open questions. However, it is doubtful whether they are the ideal instrument for eliciting data which can be used to interpret the complexity of the construct of professionalism. Of more import, every empirical study to date on TAs, including the much-quoted Lamb (2012) and all the articles in the special edition of Hall & Paran (2016), targets teachers who already belong to TAs. No provision is made for teachers, the vast majority, who have never been members of TAs and probably never even heard of the

main players such as IATEFL or TESOL. In a sense the extant research is preaching to the converted, those who are already convinced of the value of joining a TA. The literature lacks a neutral study which includes non-members.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between TAs and professionalism as operationalised as identity, CPD and CoP. There is an obvious gap in the literature for an empirical study of TAs in EFL which draws upon a considered definition and articulation of professionalism. The significance of this study is that it allows for an informed discussion of professionalism in EFL within an environment where the growing globalisation and commercialisation of the EFL industry are putting pressures on the integrity of teachers and the whole field. In particular, the putative link between TAs and professionalism needs confirmation as it is not self-evident. The methodology progresses scholarship by being purely qualitative in nature and, a complete innovation, including the input of both members and non-members of TAs.

What we do not know is to what degree teachers are concerned by perceptions of professionalism and if they connect identity with TAs; what aspects of CPD are most valued by teachers and if TAs are perceived to supply them; whether TAs are perceived to operate as CoP and how this impacts professionalism; what the relative contributions of the constructs of identity, CPD and CoP are to professionalism; whether the different stakeholders, particularly members and non-members, would respond to these questions differently. The next section formulates research questions to address these issues.

2.8 Research questions

The literature review has identified professionalism as a core concept informing discussion of general teaching. However, professionalism has not merited enough attention within EFL as a separate field of enquiry. The purpose and activities of TAs have not been defined nor have they been treated within a sound framework of professionalism. Despite this, analysis of the potential contribution of TAs suggests that they may play a role in perceptions of the professionalism of EFL teachers, operationalised as identity, CPD and CoP.

Accordingly, this project has four aims:

1. To investigate stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of how TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers.

TAs maintain that joining a TA creates and maintains a professional identity. This claim needs to be evaluated from the viewpoint of the key stakeholders in TAs: officers, members and non-members.

2. To investigate stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism.

CPD is the most manifest aspect of membership. The aim is to substantiate EFL teachers' reception of the CPD provided and how this relates to perceptions of professionalism, again from the perspective of stakeholders.

3. To investigate the extent to which TAs are perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice.

Stakeholders may not articulate TAs as CoP in Wenger's (1998) terms but their perceptions and experiences allow the correspondence to be examined.

4. To investigate the extent to which stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers.

It is likely that the contribution of professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice is not perceived as equal, for example, there is much more literature on CPD than Communities of Practice. The relative degree of their contribution and how they combine and operate in isolation is of interest.

These aims are translated into an overarching research question:

What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers?

This global question is broken down into the following four questions:

1. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?

2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

Because of its size and status, IATEFL has been chosen as a case study to answer these questions, as elaborated upon in the Methodology chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to justify and describe the methodology and methods adopted to answer the research questions identified at the end of the Literature Review (**2.8**). These research questions are restated, beginning with the over-arching question:

What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers?

This is broken down into the following four questions:

1. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?

2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

The chapter begins by showing how the methodology selected is linked ontologically and epistemologically to the research questions. Then there is elaboration of the context and participants in the case study approach. The procedure of data collection and analysis is described. This is followed by discussion of criteria impacting the quality of the data and the ethical issues involved.

3.2 Paradigm rationale

There has been a basic distinction between absolutism, a commitment to unquestionable truths, and relativism, the belief that reality is separately constructed on each occasion it is encountered, at least since Plato's theory of the forms whereby the ideal represents but a reference point for multiple conceptualisations (Plato, trans. 2007). Ontology as a "specification of what exists" (Newby, 2014, p. 35) determines the worldview informing research, in particular what, if anything, can be known. The number of factors involved in interpreting reality make any notion of truth elusive. Findings are always challengeable as the background to human interaction is so complex. Hence, relativists do not "believe in a 'truth' free from the compromising complications of the nature of language, culture, power relations, rhetoric, discourse, racism, and so on [emphasis in original]" (Rich, 2007, pp. 6-7).

The two contrasting paradigms, positivist vs. interpretivism, that have dominated epistemology in educational research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013) mirror the ontological distinction between absolutism and relativism. Positivism acknowledges that there are universal truths which can be logically proved or disproved. This position reflects a commitment to what Kotzee (2014) calls "veritism" in epistemology, i.e., the search for truth. Veritism distinguishes between fact and beliefs and rejects methodologies which are inadequate in establishing the truth or are deemed to be less efficient. In contrast, interpretivism derives meaning from the subjective experience of individuals engaged in a sociocultural context. Interpretivist paradigms deny a fixed version of reality because of the multiple factors involved in analysis, the subjective and changing nature of the human experience being primary. Historically, positivism has been associated with research into natural phenomena and interpretivism into humans, '[t]he distinction [being] . . . that the latter, but not the former, interpret, or attach meaning to, themselves and others" (Pring, 2010, p. 98). Humans are special in the animal world in their capacity for reflection and hence articulation of the cognitive process.

The overarching research question from **2.8**, What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers?, predisposes the ontological position towards that of relativism because this is an investigation into "perceptions", which are personal constructions of reality by the protagonists. Specifically, in relation to the first research question, as argued in **2.4.1**, identity is not a single or fixed construct but is dependent on, inter alia, the factors listed in Rich (op. cit.). Professionalism is enacted in situ depending on a localised reality and there is no a priori projection of what it means to be professional – how could there be given the numerous factors which interact to condition response to a situation? We cannot reify the individual experience of professionalism and cast it as a universal. Thus, incorporating Pring's (ibid, p. 59) enumeration of key ontological factors: reality does not exist independently of experience; a causal relationship between phenomena can never be assumed; when truth is invoked, a particular version of the truth is meant; the validity of any theory is limited by its context; knowledge does not equate to verification but to understanding of the processes involved which favour a particular interpretation. The ontological position directs the epistemological stance towards interpretivism. The participants are not observing a preconceived notion of professionalism but supplying multiple reactions to the construct.

3.3 Approach

The research questions relate to perceptions of professionalism, which consist of what individuals think and feel. As such they are the traditional provenance of a qualitative approach because this "allows you to identify issues from the perspective of your study participants, and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviour, events or objects" (Hennick, Hutter & Bailey, 2010, p. 28). Understanding how EFL teachers interpret professionalism is crucial to this study and this can only be investigated through analysing their responses. The epistemological stance hence excluded quantitative methods such as experiments and tests as positively orientated. Instead the approach was qualitative and, as justified below, the methodology was that of a case study and the method interviews.

The basic design feature was of a case study of IATEFL. Woodside (2010, pp. 1-2) defines a case study as the following:

> [An] inquiry that focuses on describing, understanding, predicting, and/or controlling the individual (i.e., process, animal, person, household, organization, group, industry, culture, or nationality) . . . For a given study, focusing the research issues, theory, and/or empirical inquiry on the individual (n = 1) is the central feature of [a case study].

The "individual" in this instance is IATEFL and the constructs of identity, CPD and CoP are investigated through the prism of IATEFL. What this means is that the collection, analysis and interpretation of data were carried out with IATEFL as a reference point and that the research questions are answered by application to IATEFL.

Case studies can be used for different purposes. This study falls into what Newby (2014, p. 47) classes as exploratory rather than descriptive, the difference being that the latter is an unmotivated capture of the data while the former is framed by an agenda, the research questions and critical theory approach. Of the four features of case studies provided by Newby (ibid.), namely unusual/typical scenarios, issues (processes or relationships), critical incidents or longitudinal studies, it is the issues criterion which characterises IATEFL. This is because the constructs of identity, CPD and CoP are all related in this study to the workings and environment of IATEFL as an organisation. IATEFL represents itself as developing perceptions of professionalism through activities which bolster professional identity, disseminate CPD and create CoP. The question is how far this claim is valid.

The epistemological premise is that people do not make choices in a vacuum, what they do and how they feel takes place in a context. In an interpretivist approach, context is understood as what "causes . . . the

construction of meaningful realities" (Wendt, 2003, pp. 95-96), a combination of the surrounding physical, social and mental factors which lead us to interpret our condition. Hence, methodologically, the value of interpretivism is enhanced if background factors to the data can be described in sufficient detail to allow judgement to be more informed. To facilitate the reading of the data, participants are quoted at length so these instances need to be framed by an appreciation of where the views expressed are coming from. In the same way, Ashley, Fenwick, Minty & Priestley (2013) featured quotes from participants in their investigation of how school culture and leadership affected curriculum development; and Oda's (1999) case study of a TA included excerpts from TA meetings, showing that the turn-taking conventions were manipulated in favour of native-speaking teachers. As here, both studies would have been much weaker if the words of the participants could not be related to the context of their utterance.

Gillham (2010, p. 11) lists six advantages of a case study methodology: (1) it can substitute when other methodologies are not viable; (2) it can act as a preliminary to more formal research; (3) it can investigate subjective conditions; (4) it can discover a reality only observable by insiders: (5) it can empathise with insiders; (6) it can have a process rather than product orientation. Points (3), (4), (5) and (6) constitute the main considerations for the adoption of a case study here. Dealing with them in turn: (3), the research questions relate to perceptions, which are subjective; (4), understanding the impact of TAs necessitates drawing back their veil and seeing the reality of their workings; (5), their impact should be interpreted through the voices of those involved in them; (6), the construct is of professionalism as fluid not fixed.

A case study limits the data by imposing boundaries. The advantage of this is that it allows variables to be controlled more rigorously (Bell, 2010, p. 8). For example, Teven (2001) researched student notions of teacher care by focusing on English classes in one university, hence generating a more homogenous data set than would have been obtained by targeting all sorts of students in all sorts of schools. However, within this deliberate selectiveness lies the main limitation of a case study approach: the validity issue as to how far the results can be extrapolated to different environments (Denscombe, 2010, p. 62). Every context is unique and the number of factors which differentiate one from the other is not finite. Case studies offer depth not breadth and by doing so perhaps fail to represent a bigger picture. It can thus be argued that case studies provide a sanatised version of a reality which is much messier than a single case could portray.

For this reason, it is important to acknowledge that the case study is not an end in itself but a means to an end, a scholastic clarification of the relationship between TAs and professionalism. Therefore, while great care was taken to choose the case study, the research questions are directed not to IATEFL per se but to the

perceptions manifested through this medium. Nor is a case study a denial of the complexities of the issues or an attempt to represent a particular case as one with unique significance. Within this interpretivist epistemology, there is no absolute truth and no single methodology has privileged access to the truth. The best that can be done is to treat each case study as making a contribution to understanding and the extent of this contribution will depend on the skill in which the data are interpreted, which brings us to methods.

Case studies allow a variety of methods available (Pring, 2010, p. 41). The paradigm was qualitative and in eliciting perceptions and experiences of a TA the only conceivable strategies, almost default in a study of this type (cf. Robson, 2011, p. 235), were questionnaires and interviews. A decision was made to use interviews only so the study can be described as mono-method. Although mixed methods approaches can be effective because they combine and triangulate data, a process that Mertens & Hesser-Biber (2013, p. 7) deem "synergy", in this study it was felt that surveys could not contribute data which would reflect its ontological and epistemological premises. Firstly, perceptions of professionalism cannot be gauged on a scale and quantified as this disguises the process by which it is socially constructed. Secondly, surveys are used to collate data about groups and the aim is to increase sample size rather than capture an individual experience fully. Thirdly, and most potently, surveys are not interactive and even open well-designed questions elicit a limited response.

The literature furnishes instances of how surveys can fail as methods in studies of professionalism. For example, Gutshall (2011) uses a "Caring Abilities Inventory" questionnaire to measure what equates to the values facet of professionalism but the method is flawed for two reasons. First, while the scores from nurses and teachers look very similar, there are no descriptive statistics beyond the mean and standard deviation, so no way of eliminating a hypothesis that the difference between the two sets of answers is actually statistically meaningful. Second, several items in the questionnaire seem (no formal reliability measures are reported) unreliable. Question 32 illustrates:

32. I do not like to be asked for help.

Participants should indicate their degree of agreement 1-7 on a Likert scale, the higher the score, the higher the degree of care. Not only is this statement difficult to answer without any context, there are situations when help is more welcome than others, but intuitively it sounds odd that resentment of requests for help should link to a high level of care. The onus is on Gutshall to justify dubious items like 32 but this is not done because the Caring Abilities Inventory has been plucked from the literature, one feels without enough evaluation of its fitness of purpose. As a second example, Chen & Chen (2013) also use a questionnaire as an instrument in measuring professionalism, which is undefined, and the method also falls short. They have

designed their own questionnaire rather than adopting one from the literature but frustratingly none of the questions are provided in the article and the references to the research instrument are to unpublished theses. It is impossible then for the reader to know how the results have been obtained.

Surveys are no doubt attractive to scholars because they yield numerical data from a large amount of respondents. The slipperiness of the notion professionalism must pressurise some towards the objectivity which quantitative studies promise. Questionnaires appear as near to a scientific approach as you can get in measuring attitudes to professionalism. Well-constructed research of this nature, like Pishghadam, Zabihi & Shayesteh (op. cit.) and Swann et al. (op. cit.), critiqued in the Literature Review, is no doubt informative but there is often the feeling that validity is being sacrificed for reliability. Brooks (2015) admits this in his case study of job motivation amongst teachers in a private language school. He used questionnaires (n = 14) for efficiency but acknowledged (p. 35) that interviews would have been more revealing. His method shows that questionnaires may give clear indications of patterns of responses but they are inherently superficial. Brooks also faced the dilemma of an insider study and the possible embarrassment in interviewing colleagues, which is not a factor here.

In this study, interviews were chosen as a method primarily because they are appropriate to the epistemological stance adopted in this study of knowledge as socially-constructed. Kvale (2007) discusses epistemological issues in interviewing and highlights that the purpose of an interview is to "understand the meaning of central themes of the subjects' lived world" (p. 11). This is because interviews mark knowledge as negotiated by individuals:

> The use of the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013, p. 409)

Interviews thus allow participants to describe topics from their own perspective and give the researcher the opportunity to read meaning into the responses. 'Meaning' of course is subjective in a relativist paradigm but it involves levels of fact and interpretation, both of which are available to the interviewer. As Seidman (2013, p. 8) notes, humans "symbolize their experience through language", and so exploiting participants' language choices, which is possible much more skillfully through interviews than surveys, is a natural mode of enquiry.

Hence, this is a mono-method not mixed-methods study. Questionnaires would only have been useful if the study aimed at a large sample size or generalisability was a key aim. Neither of these holds true. The sample size was sufficient to answer the research questions and in a relativist paradigm reliability becomes less relevant because individual experiences are inherently variable and open to multiple interpretations.

Gillham (2007) in a book-length manual of interviewing techniques distinguishes between face-to-face methods and distance methods, primarily telephoning. In the current study, because of the geographical spread of the participants, face-to-face interviewing was only possible in the piloting stage and distance interviewing, through Skype calls, was used in the main study. Gillham (ibid.) also contrasts unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. In unstructured interviews, the interviewer goes into the interview without an agenda and asking a series of open questions is content for the interviewee to control the interaction, direction and content. At the other extreme, structured interviews, the interviewer collects data on pre-determined, often closed, question types. In between is the semi-structured interview, often preferred because it combines rigour and responsiveness to the complexity of the issues expressed, in Gillham's words, "flexibility balanced by structure, and the quality of the data so obtained" (ibid, p. 70). In practice, semi-structured interviews typically consist of an interview schedule informed by the research aims, with space left for follow-up questions to probe and clarify. Semi-structured interviews were adopted in this study because research questions have been formulated and their interpretation depends on gathering a quality data sample, which necessitates open questions and opportunities for the interviewer/ participant to expand their responses.

The semi-structured questions in the interview schedule (Appendix C) were designed to elicit responses that would answer the research questions. They emanated from the literature review and were revised after the pilot study (**3.6**). Obviously, simply asking participants the research questions directly would be ineffective because most participants were unlikely to be aware of constructs such as CoP or indeed professionalism as operationalised here. The interviews began with unambiguous questions about the speaker's background (for example, "What do you do?") to introduce the interview gently and get information about the speaker which could illuminate points made further on. Later questions related to the research questions directly but were posed in layperson's terms ("Why do you think teachers do join TAs?"). There was a final question ("Is there anything else you would like to add?") designed to give speakers an opportunity to make points which they felt hadn't been covered. As participants were divided into three groups, officers, members and non-members (see **3.5**), questions were modified to suit each group, for example members were asked "Why did you join [IATEFL]?" but not non-members. Follow-up questions were not scripted and included in

the interview schedule as it was anticipated that these would be formulated according to the direction and flow of an individual interview.

The nature of the speech act in interviews is rather specific and Kvale (2007) is at pains to distinguish an interview from a conversation. The former as a research instrument has stricter goals and it is less symmetrical in terms of power relations. The interviewer as the one who asks questions dominates and controls proceedings. This asymmetry is most marked in police interviews (cf. Coulthard, Johnson & Wright, 2017, Chapter 4) but it is a feature of research interviews too. Opdenakker (2006) identifies this risk and recommends the interviewer using an interviewing schedule and generally being aware of the issue. In addition, there is the tension of a NST interviewing NNSTs because a NST has an immediate linguistic advantage which could discomfort participants. Cauldwell (2018) notes that the speed and fluency of connected speech can be a problem even for very advanced learners. As the NNSTs spoke different first languages, there was no realistic option of interviewing each of them in their native language. To counter this effect, the interview schedule was sent to participants beforehand and I graded my own language.

3.4 Context

IATEFL was a logical choice for a case study because of its size and significance. The patron of IATEFL is David Crystal, considered the upmost authority on the English language alive (Absalom, 2010), and its activities are reported quarterly in a special section of *English Language Teaching Journal*, one of the most distinguished journals dedicated to pedagogical issues. Scrivener (2005, p. 372) in his well-known manual to EFL teaching deems IATEFL "perhaps the largest [TA]". He is wrong in that the North American TESOL International organisation is bigger with circa. 11,500 members compared to 4000 for IATEFL (Amy Stone, IATEFL membership officer, personal communication). However, originating and based in the UK, IATEFL is more relevant to a research project in this country. There was also the personal consideration that as a long-time member of IATEFL and volunteer on one of the committees, I have access to key people and data that facilitated the research process, albeit with some ethical considerations (see **3.9**).

The definitive history of IATEFL was published to mark the organisation's fiftieth anniversary in 2016 (Rixon & Smith, 2017). IATEFL is a registered charity and a potted history shows it to have been founded in 1967 by William Lee with the first annual conference in London. At present there is a paid staff of nine working from their Head Office in Kent but the executive management, a President elected biannually and a board of trustees, are volunteers. The 1980s saw an expansion of activity and at the end of the decade the first special interest groups (SIGs) were formed. At the end of the 1990s a Wider Membership Scheme (WMS)

was started incorporating TAs from around the world, termed Associates, with a reduced membership fee and package. The constants over the years have been the annual conference held in the UK and the newsletter now called "Voices".

The internationalism of IATEFL is actually not very pronounced as in 2016, 63% of the membership was in Europe, including 25% in the UK, whereas demographically only about 10% of people are Europeans. IATEFL would certainly not like to think of itself as parochial. A past president of IATEFL, Marjorie Rosenberg, highlights the global reach of the organisation:

> For me, Iatefl [sic] offers a unique opportunity to be a member of a supportive and international community where people with different backgrounds but shared interests can come together to exchange ideas and find a professional home. (Rimmer, 2015, p. 11)

In fact, IATEFL seems very UK-based. Aside from the over-representation of UK members, the Head Office is in England, the annual conference is always in the UK and the majority of the Advisory Council and trustees are British citizens. The "professional home" Rosenberg, herself a US citizen, enthuses about has its foundation stone in a UK environment. The "international" in the title of IATEFL should not be taken as granted. Nor should the reach of the TA: with a speculative 11.5 million teachers of English operating globally (Greenall, 2014, p. 86), the combined membership of TESOL and IATEFL represents less than 1% of teachers. These statistics do not undermine the credentials of IATEFL but the impact of the organisation needs to be read in this context.

In fact, IATEFL may not represent a typical TA. Most EFL teachers do not belong to any TA but if they do it is probably to a small and localised organisation that offers a rather different experience. An example of this is the TA described by Oshchepkova (2007) in that it has no formal membership but organises activities on an ad hoc basis in response to requests and developments in the region. Teachers may be involved in such activity without even realising they are part of a TA. IATEFL as a case study offers a context which may not be universal but methodologically it is valuable as it incorporates most elements of the TA experience.

3.5 Participants

The epistemological position is that of different conceptions of reality so the research incorporated multiple participants, all stakeholders in the research questions. The whole population of people with vested interests is inaccessible, in any case it would be impractical, so that population had to be sampled. In this study ontological absolutism was rejected so the sample did not need to be representative in this sense of

modelling a population exhibiting a uniform set of behaviours (Thompson, 2012, p. 3). The aim was for principled selectiveness rather than representativeness.

This selectiveness identified three key groups of stakeholders. The first group was members of IATEFL, those with paid-up membership dues; the second was IATEFL officers, both trustees and Head Office staff; the third was non-members, those not currently registered as members. The first category is obviously of interest to a study of EFL teachers' professionalism. The second category, officers, included two people, Head Office staff, who were not teachers. Their voice was important because they claimed to represent teachers' perceptions and orientate the TA accordingly. As they only had information about the EFL industry second-hand through their, not insignificant, interchange with teachers, their words have to read in that context: they are observers rather than participants in EFL. The third category represents an innovation in the research design as previous studies referred to in the Literature Review, e.g., Aubrey & Coombe (2010), Lamb (2012), Motteram (2016), have not targeted the position of non-members. Indeed, participants are often rather privileged members. Paran (2016, p. 134) admits this in the context of a journal devoted to TAs (Hall & Paran, 2016) where the majority of contributors, Paran included, are officers rather than rank and file members. The exclusion of the voice of non-members is an important omission as the vast majority of teachers are not members of IATEFL or probably any TA. A sample without non-members is positively skewed towards the defence of TAs as it represents the converted so to speak, i.e., those sufficiently convinced of the value of TAs that they retain their membership.

The three stakeholder groups, members, officers and non-members, represent different interests towards IATEFL. For example, a trustee, as someone elected to showcase and protect the organisation, would be expected to have a faith in IATEFL, and perhaps TAs generally, that could not be taken for granted with a member, let alone a non-member. There is also variation within these three groups. The 4000 IATEFL members vary enormously in personal characteristics and length of membership. As noted, IATEFL officers comprise trustees, volunteers with a substantial background in EFL, and Head Office staff, paid employees usually without previous involvement in EFL. Non-members belong to an almost unlimited population of those who have heard about IATEFL but not joined and those who have never heard of it. The eventual sample included two renunciates, ex-members who had left IATEFL, and this is highlighted when appropriate in discussion of the results.

Participants were targeted equally divided between these three categories of IATEFL members, IATEFL officers and IATEFL non-members. The projected sample size of 18 was fairly arbitrary, large enough to

generate a substantial body of data and small enough to make the study manageable. In planning interviews, the question of how many is enough always comes up and is rarely answered wholly to satisfaction. Baker & Edwards (2012) put this golden question to 14 established and five early-career academics and, unsurprisingly, the consistent answer was "it depends" on a platform of methodological, epistemological and logistic factors. For example, sometimes a single interview may suffice if that participant's role and experience holds the key to a phenomenon, what Gillham (2007) calls an expert interviewee; on other occasions, no amount of interviews will do, i.e., this is the wrong method. In this instance, the quality of the sample trumps its quantity: the selectiveness, the tripartite division, and the method, the contextualisation of the case study, give confidence that a lower number of interviews can yield sufficient data to answer the research questions. An additional consideration is the face validity aspect of satisfying the academic community. In this regard, two relevant studies have been quoted with similar sample sizes, namely Thompson, Lyons & Timmons (2015) and Johnson (1997), both n = 17. Also, the literature shows much smaller sample sizes, for example, Rintoul & Goulais (2010) interviewed just three participants in a study of management style in education.

The 18 participants were selected according to personal familiarity, what amounts to convenience or non-probability sampling (Müller & Ball, 2012, p. 43). None of them were friends as such (cf. Brewis, 2014, who specifically targets friends) but we were acquainted enough for me to approach them. Using contacts seemed more efficient than cold calling and it was hoped that some degree of familiarity would make interviewees more responsive. Naturally, a larger number, circa. 40 were contacted, but not everyone could or would contribute. Aside from personal commitments and the right not to participate, with a geographically diverse membership, practical considerations such as time zones and Internet access made some participants unavailable for data collection. The eventual sample came to 17. Only four rather than six IATEFL officers could be interviewed and seven rather than six non-members participated.

As IATEFL distinguishes itself as international, the aim was to reflect this in the sample with participants of different nationalities, native-speaking teachers and non-native speaking teachers (important in the identity construct, as discussed in **2.5.1**). This was achieved as the 17 participants covered five continents. Other factors that could not be controlled included gender, age and EFL experience. These factors did not appear in the Literature Review but they were included as characteristics of the sample in case they became relevant in the data. With age for example, early career teachers and established teachers may have different expectations of TAs and constructions of a professional identity. Tables 1 – 4 detail then

summarise the sample. All names are pseudonyms to preserve the participants' anonymity. The exact positions of the officers within IATEFL are not given for the same reason.

Table 1: IATEFL members

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Residence	Employment	Years of membership
Gabriela	Female	32	Brazilian	Brazil	Academic co-ordinator in private language school	3
Akiko	Female	39	Japanese	Japan	University lecturer	17
Ragna	Female	46	Egyptian	Egypt	University lecturer	4
Sara	Female	64	New Zealander	New Zealand	ESL teacher in community college	10
Mei	Female	35	Chinese	UK	EAL teacher at secondary school	7
Orpita	Female	57	Bangladeshi	Bangladesh	University lecturer	11

Table 2: IATEFL officers

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Residence	Employment	Position
Clare	Female	58	USA	Austria	Freelance EFL teacher and trainer	Trustee
Sylvia	Female	58	British	UK	IATEFL	Staff
Rachel	Female	33	British	UK	IATEFL	Staff
Gerald	Male	49	British	UK	University lecturer	Trustee

Table 3: IATEFL non-members

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Residence	Employment
Natasha	Female	23	Russian	Russia	University lecturer
Steven	Male	26	British	UK	Freelance EFL teacher
Gaia	Female	49	Italian	Italy	University lecturer
Adriana	Female	35	Romanian	Romania	EFL teacher and teacher-trainer in British Council
Wanda	Female	47	USA	Ireland	Freelance EFL teacher
Olivia	Female	35	Australian	Czech Republic	EFL teacher and teacher-trainer in private language school
Robert	Male	30	USA	USA	Freelance ESL teacher

Table 4: Sample characteristics

Number of participants	17 (4 officers, 6 members, 7 non-members)
Female	14 (82%)
Male	3 (18%)
Age range	23 - 64
Nationalities	12: Australian, Bangladeshi, Brazilian, British, Chinese, Egyptian, Italian, Japanese, New Zealander, Romanian, Russian, US

There is a notable gender imbalance but this reflects the demography of EFL, where the higher proportion of female English teachers is even more pronounced outside the UK: Drudy (2008) gives global supporting statistics, for example circa. 95% of teachers in Russian are women.

Because of the extreme spread of locations, interviews, which were simultaneously audio recorded, were conducted remotely via Skype as a reliable and cost-effective alternative to face-to-face.

Aside for the two Head Office staff who have not taught English, the sample also has a wide interpretation of "teacher". Six participants identify themselves as university lecturers and their work with adults presumably differs significantly from the archetypal school classroom context best represented by Mei in a British state school giving language support to teenagers with English as a second language. Mei's teaching situation would again probably not match those working in private language schools, which have a very

mixed client base, such as Olivia in the Czech Republic and Gabriela in Brazil. The freelancers, Robert, Steven and Wanda, are harder still to characterise as they have to pick and mix so to speak, in the job market. These differences should not be over-exaggerated as all their roles cluster around EFL education and individual socio-cultural contexts supply an immediate amount of variation in the sample which is at least as significant. However, professionalism will take on different nuances according to how "teacher" is (self-)defined.

3.6 Data collection

Table 5 shows the chronology of the data collection.

Table 5: Time line of data collection

Pilot study	July 2015
Interviews	September – December 2015
Transcription	September 2015 – January 2016
Participants' checking and agreement of transcripts	October 2015 – March 2016
Initial coding (grounded)	January 2016 – April 2016
Revision of coding (grounded)	August 2016 – October 2016
Intra-rater analysis	December 2016
Final coding (semi-grounded)	February – March 2017

A pilot study was carried out with three (anonymised) teachers from an independent language school in the UK: Ian (65 years old from the UK), Sophie (34, France) and Tamara (26, Russia). The purpose was to trial the interview questions, practise interview technique and gauge the time scale involved in transcription. No enquiries were made into the teachers' backgrounds beforehand but it transpired during the interviews none were members of IATEFL or another TA. This presented the biggest problem to interviewing non-members: they did not know what a TA was and hence found it difficult to discuss. Before each interview, the teacher was given a brief information sheet describing the project but this did not help much in this regard. Indeed, Sophie's answer to my question, "Have you ever been a member of a teaching association?" was as follows:

"Define teaching association actually. That was my question for you. What do you mean by that?" (As a formatting note, all block quotations in inverted commas are from study participants, to distinguish them from the literature quoted.) My off-the-cuff explanation did not seem to give full clarity as Sophie went on to talk about her favourite resource website in terms of a TA. Ian and Tamara had actually heard of IATEFL but were vague as to its purpose. The implication for the data collection proper was that in advance

of the interview non-members had to be given a straightforward definition of a TA with examples of their activity (Appendix A).

In terms of technique, the interviews with Ian and Tamara did not yield sufficient data probably because the style was too direct. The opening with Ian demonstrates (interviewer's questions in italics, as throughout):

"*What do you do?*"

"I'm a teacher of English specialising in exam preparation work, EAP, that sort of thing."

"*Have you ever been a member of a teaching association?*"

"No."

More time needed to be spent at the beginning getting the participant to talk about themselves and relax into the interview, what Gillham (2007, p. 31) calls the "entry phase". Also, a more conversational style was conducive to eliciting information as this won trust while preserving the distinction between interviewer and interviewee that maintains impartiality (Seidman, 2013, p. 97). Follow-up questions, "probes" in Gillham's terminology (2007, pp. 32-33), outside the interview schedule were essential to maximise information flow and personalise answers. For example, Tamara revealed she had taught English in China and responded well when asked to relate her work in the UK to that of her previous job.

For the full study, the interviews were held between September and December 2015 with the data audio recorded and stored on a separate device. The interviews lasted an average of 25 minutes while transcription took an average of 2 hours per interview. The far-flung sample made Skype the only option. Face-to-face interviews would be ideal, for example paralinguistic features can enhance the data, creating what Berg & Lune (2014) call the "three-dimensionality" (p. 342) of the text, and Skype introduces technical complications: an interview with Adriana in Romania was cut off 11 times due to the poor Internet connection; Orpita was next to a busy road in Dhaka so the sound quality was poor; Akiko in Japan spoke at such a low volume that it hardly came out on the recorder; several interviews had to be rearranged because of breakdowns in technology.

Interviews were transcribed manually using the Word processing tool. An orthographic transcription was used with conventional punctuation supplied to make the dialogue read naturally but language mistakes were not corrected. The transcripts were sent to participants to check and approve. There were no refusals but most participants edited the scripts, typically to iron out the infelicities of oral communication, for example deleting hesitations and repetitions, or to remove references they thought sensitive. This cleaning up process did make some scripts read a little artificially. There are significant differences between speaking

and writing, especially dysfluency (cf. Carter & McCarthy, 1995), so representing the former as the latter is damaging to the scripts' authenticity. None of the content altered seemed to be particularly revealing but as Murakami (2013, p. 9) makes clear in the much more traumatic context of interviewing victims of the Tokyo underground gas attack, respecting participants' wishes is a basic ethical requirement. The audio recordings were deleted once transcripts were approved in order to maintain confidentiality.

3.7 Data analysis

The interview data were interpreted through content analysis (CA), the identification, labelling and quantification of themes within the data. CA was chosen as, although independent of any epistemological position (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78), it allows the rich data supplied by the interviews to be interpreted through the context that is the case study. The understanding is that individuals' statements reflect a vision of reality which is determined both by their own personal views and experience and by larger forces, the nature of the EFL industry, which condition their thought processes and choices, whether acknowledged or not. CA supplies a set of themes to explore the discourse of the relationship between TAs and professionalism as seen through the prism of individuals' socially-constructed interpretation of their circumstances.

Approaches to categorisation fall between two poles. Categories are either based on pre-existing codes linked to established theory or they are derived afresh out of the data, i.e., grounded. CA can embrace either or both positions (Berg & Lune, 2014, p. 340) but the framework-first approach is often associated with positivist approaches where categories are understood to observe accepted truths (Mayring, 2000) and the objective is to measure instances of token behaviour that conform to the model. To illustrate, language parsers work from syntactical codes formulated on a specific grammatical theory (cf. Aarts, 2007). A strictly grounded approach in contrast makes no assumptions and coding is built up out of the data in what Calfee and Chambliss (2010) stress as a speculative process.

The dearth of literature on TAs, discussed in the previous chapter, determined that the initial approach was grounded as there was no theory-driven approach to apply. The closest parallel is that in Motteram (2016), critiqued in **2.6.2.1**, but the point was made there that the coding was only partially recorded, leaving it unsuitable as a framework. The first grounded set of coding followed the six-step approach of Braum & Clarke (2006). After each individual interview was transcribed, impressionistic notes were made on the content. When the interviews were complete, this process was repeated on the transcripts as a whole with the difference that there was a focus on continuity of ideas across the dataset. For example, comments

relating to "networking" were noticed as pervasive. Next, formal codes were identified and the interview data were matched to these categories. The NVIVO software programme was used to analyse the data as it is more efficient than manually handling a large data set. Codes were then collated into overarching themes with direct application to the emerging research questions. For example, "networking" was related to a theme "community". This became an iterative process of reconceptualising and redefining the coding system as a position on the data took shape.

NVIVO of course is only a tool, the task of coding remained one of judgement. Johnston (1997, p. 691) dismisses CA as "mechanical [and] quasi-quantitative". He is right that numerising results often gives the illusion of scientific rigour. He is wrong that CA is mechanical: considerable decision-making needs to be made during the catergorisation, A basic decision was what constitutes valid data to be categorised. Partcipants made explicit references to the content of the codes, perhaps even using the name of the code, in which case categorisation was usually straightforward. However, they also referred indirectly or obliquely to the code and in this case the meaning had to be interpreted as relevant or not. Gillham (2007, p. 144) terms this "high and low inference" reading of the data, i.e., latent as opposed to surface meaning. A high inference reading is acceptable within an epistemology which takes the researcher as an interpreter, not arbitrator, of reality. Taking account of latent meaning also recognises the human factor in the research process; that what people say does not always reflect their real thoughts or behaviour. The CA applied here did use inference supported by the linguistic context as the language choices made are an expression of attitude and identity (Paltridge, 2012, Chapter 2, passim.).

During the transcription and coding, the literature research continued, feedback was received from supervisors and the research questions were modified to take this into account. The constructs were also changed until identity, CPD and CoP were established. As a result, coding could no longer be called purely deductive as there was a theoretical position, but no pre-set codes, informing the reading of the data. The result was that a second round of coding was semi-grounded with themes related to the conceptual framework. What finally emerged were four themes: Identity, CPD, Conferences and CoP. Their relationship to the research questions and conceptual framework is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Research questions, themes and conceptual framework

Research question	Themes	Conceptual framework
1. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?	Identity	Identity How EFL teachers perceive of themselves as practitioners.
2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?	CPD Conferences	CPD The process of acquiring, reflecting on, renewing and furthering professional skills and experience which will result in enhanced performance. Face-to-face and online events which offer opportunities for CPD and function as CoP.
3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?	CoP Conferences	CoP Interest groups which interact and share in order to increase expertise and awareness.
4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?	Identity CPD CoP Conferences	Identity CPD CoP

The map of themes and (sub)categories, Figure 2, was drawn up and a full description of each theme, the categories which fed into them and their contribution to the research questions was produced, Table 7.

Figure 2: Map of themes, categories and sub-categories
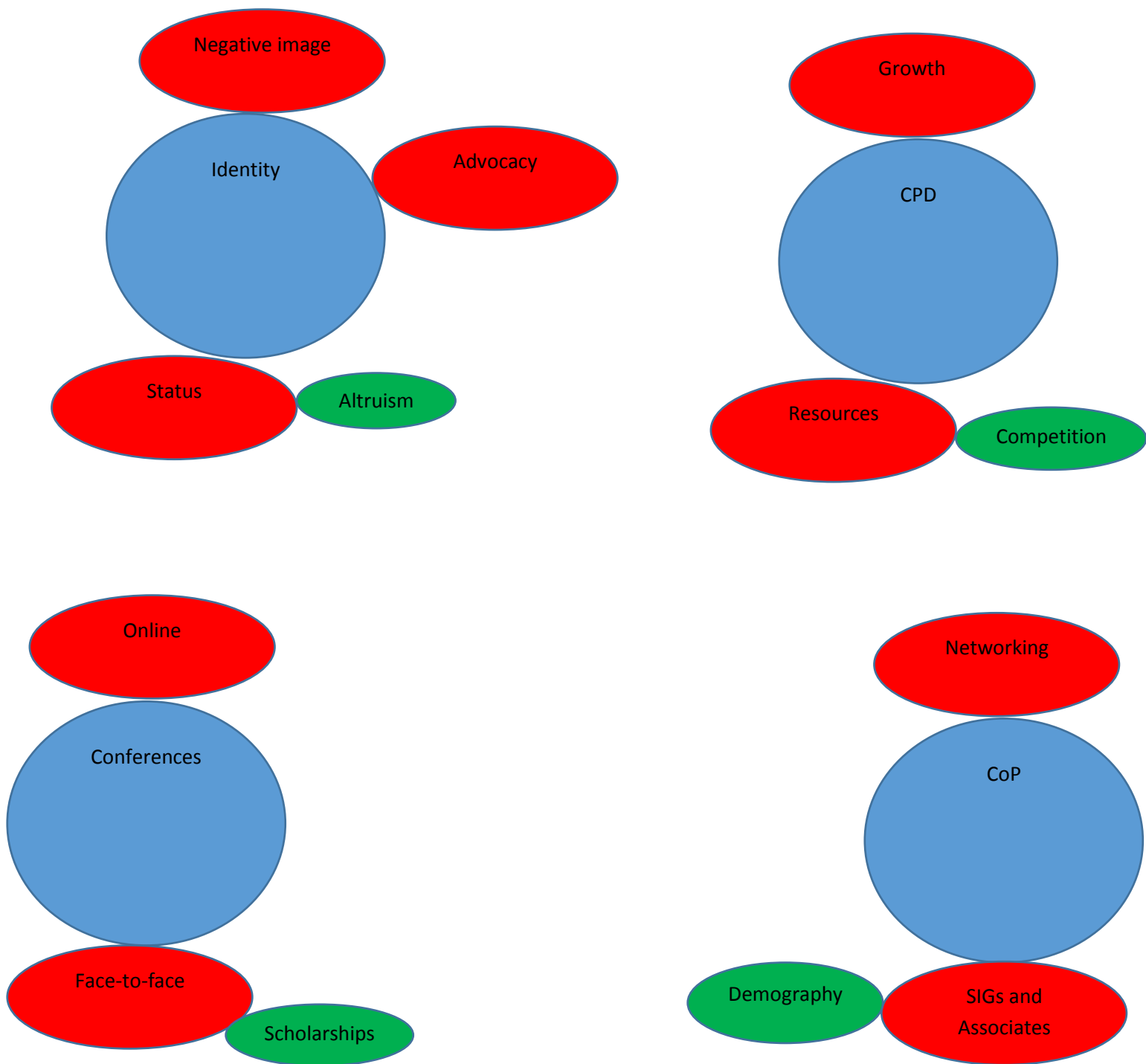
Identity represents the perception that a TA creates a professional identity. There are four categories: one affirmative, Status, one negative, Negative image, and one of disputed polarity, Advocacy. Status, consciousness that one's work and role is appreciated and has meaning, has a sub-category, altruism, pro-bono activity that is in line with personal convictions. Negative image is ignorance of the existence or goals of TAs or rejection of TAs because they are redundant to personal interests or their activity is seen as ineffective. Advocacy is agitation for policies aimed at protecting or enhancing a sense of identity.

The CPD theme is the perception that TAs are of value in CPD. It incorporates three categories: Growth and Resources. Growth is the TA-mediated acquisition of a knowledge and skills set. Resources represents access through TAs to tools to facilitate development. This contains a sub-category, Competition, as some resources are available to all teachers regardless of their membership of a TA.

The Conferences theme is the perception that conferences offer CPD opportunities and function as CoP. The two categories, Face-to-face and Online represent the medium by which teachers experience conferences. A sub-category is Scholarships as this financial aid facilitates participation in face-to-face conferences.

CoP as a theme signifies the perception that TAs constitute CoP. There are two categories: Networking and SIGs & Associates. Networking refers to how TAs bring teachers together and allow them to liaise and cooperate. SIGs & Associates is specific to IATEFL as a TA, issues relevant to sub-groups of IATEFL based on common interest or geographical region. A sub-category of SIGs & Associates is Demography, the spread of membership by geographical region and personal characteristics such as age and gender.

Table 7 illustrates how the themes relate to the research questions and conceptual framework and gives examples of each (sub-)category.

Table 7: Delineation of themes, categories and sub-categories

Theme	Theme description and relevance to research questions (RQ) and conceptual framework	(*Sub-*) Category	(*Sub-*)Category description and relevance to theme	Example (participant)
Identity	The perception and experience that TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers (RQ1). Identity	Status	Consciousness that one's work and role is appreciated and has meaning.	"Some people join because they want to be part of a professional association and they can put it on their CV." (Gerald)
		Altruism	*Pro-bono activity as a marker of a personal conviction.*	"I was looking for a role in a charity." (Sylvia)
		Negative image	Ignorance of TAs or rejection because they are redundant to personal interests or their activity is seen as ineffective.	"Many people think that just because they've been to Disney World they can teach English, you know." (Gabriela)
		Advocacy	Agitation for policies aimed at protecting or enhancing a sense of identity.	"I was involved, I was able to vote on a few things, that was mostly related to contract negotiations between the [name of organisation] as related to pay increases." (Robert)
CPD	The perception and experience that the CPD provided by TAs contributes to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism (RQ2). CPD	Growth	An augmented knowledge base and skills set.	"Because I teach business English, one of the things I've gotten is learning management skills which I can then relate on a very high level to my learners." (Clare)
		Resources	Tools, e.g., literature and technologies, to make development possible.	"I was thinking about joining just to have access to the young learner journal really." (Olivia)
		Competition	*Access to the kind of benefits TAs provide without the need to become a member.*	"[W]e had professional development, we had an extensive library, we had a lot of teachers to talk to and we attended workshops and seminars so we had probably all the things a teaching association offered as a school." (Steven)

Theme	Theme description and relevance to research questions (RQ) and conceptual framework	(Sub-) Category	(Sub-)Category description and relevance to theme	Example (participant)
Conferences	The perception and experience that conferences offer CPD opportunities (RQ2) and function as CoP (RQ3). CPD CoP	Face-to-face	Events where participants can meet in person. Face-to-face events are the core conference type.	"Some people join, you know, because they simply want to attend the conference and be part of that." (Gerald)
		Scholarships	*Financial assistance to attend events. Scholarships allow members otherwise without the means to access conferences.*	"You see IATEFL does kind of advertise a lot of scholarships and we've had one or two of our members who have actually won these awards so that's very important." (Orpita)
		Online	Virtual events which replicate the conference experience through technology for a wider audience than would be possible face-to-face.	"So, webinars and web conferences are nice because I can attend them even if I am not in the same country." (Ragna)
CoP	The perception that TAs function as CoP (RQ3). CoP	Networking	By design or casually, TAs can bring people together to liaise and cooperate.	"I needed more contact you know. I needed more contact with people outside, and especially professionals who were interested in some of the things I was." (Sara)
		SIGs and Associates	SIGs and Associates are formalised communities; the former based on common expertise, the latter on location.	"There are also of course you know the benefits of being part of a special interest group." (Ragna)
		Demography	The spread of membership by geographical region and personal characteristics such as age and gender.	"And I think that's really exciting actually, that IATEFL has such a reach across borders and countries." (Rachel)

Figure 2 and Table 7 represent end products of the coding but there were changes to the schema throughout. The first stage of coding was grounded and had no reference to the final conceptual framework. There emerged two themes, "Impact" and "Non-impact", attempting to capture comments that viewed TAs as having a high and low/zero impact respectively on professionalism. However, this binary division was difficult to maintain as some data could belong to both themes and it was falsely polarising the study. A second stage of reanalysis began with reducing the number of categories and sub-categories to embrace only the significant demarcations in the data. Thus, some categories were combined, for example, "Charity" and "Volunteerism" were subsumed under "Altruism", and some categories deleted and the data redistributed, for example most comments in the "Teacher motivation" sub-category were moved to an existing category "Status".

The second stage was informed by intra-rater analysis as a reliability check on the coding exercise. I recoded a sample of the interview data according to my initial framework of five themes, thirteen categories and four sub-categories. This sample consisted of unmarked copies of eight of the seventeen interviews, the eight most heavily coded. Inter-rater analysis, i.e., comparison with a peer, would probably have made this step more robust, as would combining both intra-rata and inter-rater reliability as in Kayapinar's (2014) evaluation of written test scores, but that was outside the resources of the project.

No formal statistical analysis of the intra-rater analysis was undertaken but comparison showed general consistency across the five themes. The one area of concern was the categories "Lack of Awareness" and "Irrelevance" which appeared hard to distinguish: several comments from one category were recoded to the other. It was decided then to merge the categories into "Negative image". This adjustment made, analysis of different classifications revealed minor differences that fell into two categories. The first, simple wrong or missing coding in either this or the original classification, which was immediately evident on examining the difference in coding. The second was occasions when a higher degree of interpretation needed to be applied because the interview comment was obscure, for example, when it was not clear whether a participant was referring to face-to-face or online conferences, which represent different categories. Accepting the fusion of the "Lack of Awareness" and "Irrelevance" categories, the overall picture was that the classification was reliable across the same coder.

The final stage of coding was semi-grounded and came as a result of a reassessment and restructuring of the Literature Review. Reading, supplementing and reevaluating the literature is a

continuous process during a research project (Aveyard, 2014, p. 80). The themes now reflected the three core constructs feeding into professionalism: Identity, CPD and CoP. Conferences remained a separate theme due to the volume of data. This reconceptualisation of professionalism had a significant impact on direction of the study, the research questions were changed, but the changes in terms of coding were relatively minor, only the redistribution of data, for example, Advocacy as a sub-category being subsumed under Identity. The intra-rater analysis was therefore not repeated. This final stage resulted in four themes, nine categories and four sub-categories (Figure 2).

3.8 Quality criteria

Reliability is critical in quantitative research and underpins any pretensions to validity. In qualitative research within a socially-constructed paradigm, true objectivity on the part of the researcher is not possible and, arguably, reliability is not even relevant. It may not even be desirable to eliminate the background and personality of the researcher from the research process as it is our preconceptions and experiences, personal and professional, which give us the ability to interpret data. Any human researcher brings baggage into a study so risk can at best be mitigated. It cannot and should not be eradicated unless the epistemological foundation of the study is completely altered.

Nevertheless, steps were taken to make the method rigorous. One purpose of the pilot study was to develop an interviewing technique which was neutral. Following Gillham (2007, p. 11), I embraced the concept of "distance", i.e., empathy but not involvement with the issues discussed. This meant a non-evaluative stance where I was careful not to react to observations made or supply my own commentary. It took some self-discipline not to fall into conversation mode but still maintain rapport with the participant. The experience of the pilot taught me to send the interview questions in advance to the participants and this prepared for them for questions which they might consider more difficult. At the end of each interview, I also reiterated the participant's right to amend or reject the full transcript. Also, transcriptions were done immediately after the interview while the conversation was fresh in my head.

Most important was to adapt to the style of the participant as this made the interview flow better, the content more reliable and the participants feel less exposed. Some participants could speak at length with very little prompting and it was just a case of listening and putting them back on track, i.e., relevant to my research questions, when necessary. Others needed to be led through the interview with questions repeated and paraphrased. The interview schedule had to be used flexibly as some questions proved redundant, they had already been covered, and others clearly not

relevant and likely to confuse. Controlling the rhythm of the interview, including reframing questions and formulating them more simply with non-native speakers, was crucial to maximising the quality of the sample in a non-threatening environment. Eight of the participants were non-native speakers and although as English teachers their English was of C1/C2 level, I was conscious that the speed and fluency of connected speech can be a problem even for very advanced learners (Cauldwell, 2018), so I tried to control my speech rhythms so as to make myself maximally intelligible.

Still, interviews have their limitations. What people say is not always what they think and what you understand is not always what they mean: Gillham (2007, p. 6) points out that both the interviewee and the interviewer are "constructing" their own reality, and these two versions of events may be quite separate. The veracity of the data is a reliability issue which increases in line with the stakes: forensic cases are all about distinguishing fact from fiction (cf. Shuy, 2014, p. 2, on the weight given to police interviews during murder cases). For the interviewer, the departure from a truer picture is not always obvious. On a deeper level, even if individuals could be trusted to react completely transparently, their interpretation of a situation is nuanced. In line with the ontological position, no one has a monopoly on the truth because it is multi-faceted. Nothing can be read at face value because it is only one version of an organic reality which exists beyond the individual's specific take on circumstances. Increasing the sample does not eliminate this epistemological consideration. Practical steps adopted here to mitigate this risk were first to ask interviewees to read and sign an information sheet (Appendix A) outlining their contribution to the project and second to have participants read and approve the transcripts.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Interviewing puts the researcher into a position of power. Most obviously, the convention of this speech act is that the interviewer asks all the questions and the interviewee answers them. It is not easy to say "no" to a question (it only happened twice in the 17 interviews, both instances with the same participant), especially when you are personally familiar with the researcher. There is a reliability issue as participants may dissemble in order to present themselves in the best light, this seemed a particular risk with IATEFL officers, and an ethical dilemma as individuals may feel compromised.

An additional factor was my personal status. As discussed in **1.4**, although not employed by IATEFL, I am a member and a volunteer on a committee. In this way my involvement risked the perils of insider research, in particular balancing the role of objective researcher with interested party, as

described in Floyd & Arthur (2012). More specifically, I have preconceptions about IATEFL based on my own experience and expectations of the TA. There was the danger of transmitting this background knowledge onto the participants and either directing the interview towards certain ends or interpreting the data as convenient with my own stance. To counter this, it was necessary during the interview, as advised by Opdenakker (2006), to show greater awareness; specifically, not to impose my own views and values on the participants, for example by adding an evaluative commentary to their replies or signaling a level of approbation with certain responses.

A further consideration is the use of the data. The case study method necessitates great familiarity with the case. The advantage of this is that variables in the context can be understood better. An uncomfortable accompaniment is that the degree of researcher involvement gives insights and perspectives which may not be intended for dissemination (Seidman, 2013). Conceivably, the project may expose information which could be compromising for certain individuals in IATEFL, especially the officers. As formal measures, ethical clearance (Appendix B) was obtained and the aims of the project were made transparent to participants, including the intended use of the data, in an information sheet (Appendix A), which they signed. Anonymity was observed throughout and the executive functions of the officers were not disclosed.

3.10 Summary

The epistemological position adopted by this study is that knowledge is socially-constructed and the researcher is in the position of interpreter of a reality which is dynamic and ultimately subjective. As the research questions centre on perceptions of professionalism, the approach was qualitative and the objective was to engage participants in articulating their attitudes, beliefs and experiences. Within this qualitative framework the methodology was that of a case study and the mono-method face-to-face interviews. The case study, exploratory in nature, is justified because interpretivism is enhanced if background factors to the data can be described in sufficient detail to inform subsequent analysis.

IATEFL was an obvious candidate as a case because of its size and standing. The procedure involved interviewing 17 participants, selected by convenience sampling, divided between three key stakeholders: IATEFL members, officers and, an innovative feature of the study, non-members. A pilot study informed the interviewing technique. The data were analysed through semi-grounded CA. The process of arriving at the final map of four themes, Identity, CPD, Conferences and CoP,

containing nine categories was described. Finally, ethical issues relating to the interviewing method, my role as researcher and use of the data, were countered.

The following two chapters present the results of the data analysis together with a discussion of their significance. Chapter 4 deals with sub-research question 1 and Chapter 5 with sub-research questions 2, 3 & 4. The contribution of each pertinent theme follows each research question, illustrated by representative quotations from the interviews. The discussion of the findings has an internal dimension, finding patterns and discrepancies within the data set, and an external dimension, referring back to work in the Literature Review.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion I

4.1 Introduction

In order to address the main research question – What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers? – there were four sub-research questions:

1. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?

2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

As outlined in Chapter 3, responses to each research question were analysed according to the four themes of CPD, Identity, Conferences and CoP where relevant. To make the argument more coherent and the presentation more manageable, first, results and discussion are combined and, second, the reporting is distributed over two chapters. This chapter deals with sub-research question 1 while Chapter 5 addresses sub-research questions 2, 3 and 4.

As detailed in **3.7**, the themes emerged from grounded CA following the six-step approach of Braum & Clarke (2006). As there are three distinct groups of participants, IATEFL officers, members and non-members, data from each group are presented in turn, beginning with IATEFL officers as representing an official vision of the TA. The reporting of the results comprises four elements: (1) reporting the general patterns in the data and how they relate to the research questions by participant group and theme(s); (2) reporting any intra-group differences, for example within members, teachers in higher education vs. teachers in other contexts; (3) selecting quotations to illustrate points (1) and (2); (4) summary of the results by participant group, highlighting inter-group differences where extant, for example members vs. non-members, and discussion of the issues raised with reference to the work discussed in the Literature Review. Note that participants' words are quoted verbatim in speech marks with language errors left in situ.

4.2 Sub-research question 1: what are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?

Professional identity was defined in **2.2** as how teachers would describe themselves as practitioners, which "derives from their self-perception, their self-image, and their self-efficacy in relation to their work and career." (Floyd & Morrison, 2014, p. 45). The relevance of identity to professionalism is that how teachers regard themselves, their work and their own contribution thereto is central to perceptions of themselves as practitioners and EFL as a field. Identity is a complex construct with many interpretations but the affinity-identity of Gee (2000) has been adopted in this study because it rejects the notion of a single static identity in favour of a process account where identity formation is context-bound, interaction-based and dynamic. The theme identified as relevant to this research question is Identity.

4.2.1 Identity

A key theme which emerged from the data was Identity: the perception that a TA creates a professional identity. There are four categories: one affirmative, Status, one negative, Negative image, and one of disputed polarity, Advocacy. Status, consciousness that one's work and role is appreciated and has meaning, encapsulates the "sense of purpose and status" which is central to Evans' definition of professionalism (2008, p. 29) and echoed in the literature (e.g., McGunnigle, O'Connor, Waggoner, Treasure, Cranley & Davie, 2005). Status has a sub-category, Altruism, pro-bono activity that is in line with personal convictions. The relevance of Altruism is that, as discussed in **2.5.1**, it confirms the role of personal values in identity formation (cf. Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Negative image is ignorance of the existence or goals of TAs or rejection of TAs because they are redundant to personal interests or their activity is seen as ineffective. Clearly, TAs can only impact professional identity if they are recognised and appreciated. Advocacy is agitation for policies aimed at protecting or enhancing a sense of identity. Discussion of advocacy in **2.6.2.1** (e.g., Murray, 1992) showed that advocacy could be relevant to affinity-identity if it countered industry forces seeking to impinge on personal values and beliefs, but that advocacy is rarely taken up by TAs (Goodwyn, 2012; Paran, 2016).

4.2.1.1 IATEFL officers: Identity

This section presents references to the Identity theme amongst IATEFL officers. To provide a general picture before detailed illustrations, officers' responses showed internal consistency in their assessment of the link between TAs and identity. Status and Altruism were identified as having a positive impact on EFL teachers' perceptions of professional identity in line with Bowman (2013). They all testified that status is enhanced by membership of a TA and three out of the four

acknowledged that altruism is perceived as self-affirming. On the other hand, it was conceded that Negative image is a barrier to identity formation with comments from three out of the four officers. Advocacy was rejected as relevant to identity formation with three officers seeing advocacy, at least as understood in the political sense of protecting teachers' rights and values, as outside the remit of the TA and generally undesirable.

4.2.1.1.i IATEFL officers: status

Gerald, university lecturer, made a general point about the connection between identity and membership of a TA based on his survey of members (reported in Motteram, 2016 – see **2.6.2.1**):

> "I looked at professionalism and identity and there was a fair amount of evidence to
> suggest that that's what people wanted, you know."

By "people" Gerald is referring of course to existing IATEFL members, his study did not survey non-members, so his remarks cannot necessarily be seen as extending across the entire population of teachers. The hedging in his comment, "fair" and "suggest", indicate caution in this regard.

Within the same category, Clare, freelance EFL teacher, offered a more concrete example of how membership creates positive perceptions. She remarked that, in addition to personal gratification, membership could lead to external recognition and reward:

> "I certainly have it [a reference to IATEFL membership] on my Linkedin page, it's
> always been on my resume. Whether someone looking for a job, whether that's going
> to affect being hired, it may depend on the country. Austria for example is big on titles
> so saying, 'Yes, I belong to a professional organisation' could make the difference. I don't
> know, I've never hired people for jobs but it could be that somebody who is looking at two
> CVs that are very similar, says 'Okay, I'll take the one who is a member of a professional
> organisation'. It shows a certain amount of seriousness, it shows a certain amount of
> investing in continuing education, I would say, to someone who may not know other things
> that you're doing, if that makes sense."

Clare spoke with pride of her own membership although she seemed more hopeful than certain that this intangible counts in the job market. Still, she pointed out that membership is a visible indicator of professionalism, a point echoed by Sylvia:

> "I think it shows a commitment to the profession if nothing else."

Given that membership of TAs is voluntary, the very fact of joining may create kudos.

4.2.1.1.ii IATEFL officers: altruism

Three of the four officers mentioned altruism as a perceived motivation for membership. The relevance of altruism to the research question for the IATEFL Officers is that pro-bono activity was seen as empowering and fulfilling, supplying a sense of purpose in one's work. Thus, Gerard referred again to his membership survey:

> "We also wanted to see how far as a benefit you felt you belonged to a community that fulfilled its charitable objective as well, which is why we've increased that kind of activity, so people were quite positive about that."

In relating her personal circumstances, Sylvia generalised this to an "ethos" of a volunteer spirit:

> "[T]hat was the only thing that attracted me to it because I'd done my degree in social policy and administration and wanted to work for a charity and had been working for a charity before that. And it does, it's about the ethos of it all as well, isn't it?"

Her tag question, "isn't it?", indicated optimism that members also want to identify with IATEFL's charitable principles. Clare certainly did:

> "For many of us it's the feeling of giving something back that is what, the reason many of us become volunteers."

IATEFL as a registered charity offers an environment where members can contribute, for example by joining a SIG committee. Clare implied that altruism, acknowledged as a motivation in Elsheikh (2016), is something attractive to members because it reciprocates – "giving something back" – benefits they have gained in the course of their work.

4.2.1.1.iii IATEFL officers: negative image

However, two officers acknowledged that awareness of even the existence of IATEFL is very low, which would mean that the TA is not in a position to affect the identity of a swathe of teachers:

> "But no one knows IATEFL, they don't know it at all." (Sylvia)

> "[Name of organisation] does work closely with IATEFL and sponsors lots of amazing, wonderful things for us but I don't think at the time any of the teachers necessarily knew about IATEFL, unfortunately." (Rachel)

Rachel's comment suggested that there might be a disconnect between management, who do know about IATEFL, and rank-and-file teachers, who do not. She also acknowledged that membership may be seen as a non-contributory factor to identity as she tried to look at falling membership of IATEFL from her own perspective:

> "I don't personally belong to any associations. I belong to a flower-arrangers' group but I don't necessarily go out of my way to talk to people about flower-arranging. I suppose it comes down to whether it's something which interests you outside of your

professional life and if you want to talk about it with your friends who are nothing to

do with EFL."

Rachel was emphasising with teachers who find TAs irrelevant to self-perception: they do not see the need to join TAs even if they know about them. This accords with Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, & Cunningham (2010) in that teachers show little regard for TAs. In addition, the analogy between EFL teachers and flower-arrangers is hardly flattering for the former in terms of their perceived status.

As concerns lack of awareness of IATEFL, there is an inter-group difference. Both Rachel and Sylvia quoted above work at IATEFL Head Office. The two officers who are not IATEFL employees did not allude to low awareness or impact, but on the other hand, nor did they confute this.

Sylvia and Gerald both compared IATEFL unfavourably with established professions in admitting that it cannot impact perceptions of EFL as a field:

"[W]e will never be in a position where you have to join IATEFL if you are a TEFL

teacher, you know like with other professions you have to belong to the organisation."

(Sylvia)

"[If] we became, for example, a UK-based organisation and we were a validating body for

teacher development, so in order to become an EFL teacher in the UK, you had to join

IATEFL, like you have to do if you want to be a surveyor or something like that, so you would

be the chartered institute of EFL, for example, then it might, might be more professional. So,

for example, like with doctors or whatever, you have to go through certain processes, you

have to take certain exams, you have to be recognised so that you can be a fellow of

whatever. That's not the way it is and that's one of the complexities." (Gerald)

Similarly, Thomson (2004) complained of the failure of TESL Canada to act as an accreditation body. The goal of IATEFL is to be international and all-inclusive in scope. It is a club anybody from anywhere can join, even regardless of whether they are a teacher. New members find this surprising as Sylvia noted:

"We often get letters from people overseas who don't quite understand about us, who

write these sort of letters asking, you know, 'Do I meet the requirements, I've done

this and this and this, please accept these', you know."

There are no requirements for membership, which distinguishes IATEFL markedly from the other professional associations Gerald describes, and even some TAs in general education, for example, Shieh (2012). It also cements the claim in Farmer (2006) that EFL is professionally inferior. There are

typically several difficult hurdles to joining professional associations in other countries and the result is that membership is prized. What does it say about the professionalism of EFL if membership of the largest TA is a formality? Gerald recognises that an alternative reality of a TA with exclusive membership elevating the professionalism of the field is not pragmatic: "[t]hat's not the way it is".

4.2.1.1.iv IATEFL officers: advocacy

Three out of the four officers rejected the TA taking a stance on issues related to protecting teachers' sense of identity. For example, Clare did not believe that advocacy would raise employment standards in EFL and thus enhance teachers' status:

> "What we cannot do is go to a country and say, 'You can only hire people with this qualification or that qualification'. We are not allowed at all in any way to interfere with laws in other countries. So, that is something. We cannot say, 'Everyone teaching must have a CELTA', for example, because that's not the only certificate out there. And that is not, I don't see that as IATEFL's role at all. I don't see that as kind of the watch dog of all the countries and it's very difficult to say, 'You can only take these teachers or those teachers'."

Officers did not think advocacy is appropriate, they did not think it would work in IATEFL's context. The certification of EFL teachers is a weak area (Thornbury, 2001) because there are no universally accepted standards for entering the job market and even a qualification with common currency such as the CELTA Clare cites is no more than a four-week training course. Clare rejected engagement with this issue. She projected advocacy as meddling, "interfer[ing] with laws". This goes against claims that advocacy has a positive impact on identity, for example, Murray (1992) and Thompson, Lyons & Timmons (2015).

Sylvia claimed that the reluctance to advocate comes from a lack of consensus on the issues involved:

> "Yeah, I think we've asked the members, haven't we, about [advocacy] and I think the decision is still out isn't it, that, you know, it's very difficult to have those statements. Some people are more political than others anyway and would want us to stand up and be counted. I think the problem is, from my point of view, we find in Head Office that, you know, we say that we think this but who actually does think this, is it one trustee, is it, you know, the majority of the trustees, is it the Head Office, you know, it's usually just one person who thinks that, isn't it, and this is the problem with these advocacy things and we have to stand up and say that we agree as well."

As discussed in **2.6.2.1**, advocacy is relevant to identity because teachers' values and beliefs can be easily compromised by a business model of education, as presaged in Damon, Colby, Bronk & Ehrlich (2005) and Goepel (2012). However, the issues and politics of involvement seemed too complicated for the officers to contemplate.

Advocacy was not altogether absent. There was a less controversial level of advocacy in terms of promoting educational initiatives, the rub off for teachers being that a perception of innovation in the field boosts their sense of individual identity. Gerald spoke of this with some pride in a comment which overlaps with the Conferences theme:

> "[IATEFL has] done some quite innovative things, over the time. So, you know, I've certainly been involved in quite a lot of innovation, you know the fact that we have an online conference now, and it was one of the very early ones in the world, which is the result of the work which the LT [Learning Technologies] SIG did. I could argue quite strongly that we engineered that and it made a massive difference to the way that people see things like online conferences. So, yes, I think we have impact. We did the first video link lecture at Brighton with [name of individual], years ago. At that time, other organisations weren't making those kinds of differences. So, you know, I think in those ways we have had an influence. As an organisation, you could say we've shaped the way that modern conferences are perceived."

It is difficult to evaluate the strong claims Gerald made – was the IATEFL online conference one of the first in the world and has it been so influential? – but the point he made was that IATEFL is in a position to impact perceptions of EFL as a field and thus raise the status of practitioners. This enthusiasm for curriculum-based advocacy, shared by Barfield (2016), contrasts with IATEFL's aversion to political advocacy but the latter is more representative of the data collected.

4.2.1.2 IATEFL members: Identity

The relationship between IATEFL members and the Identity theme is the focus of this section. Generally, the members saw challenges to the notion of TAs fostering perceptions of teachers' identity. While five of the six members affirmed that TAs can boost status, including one comment relating altruism to identity, collectively, members were conscious of the limitations TAs have concerning identity formation. Thus, all the members made comments falling under the category of Negative image, mainly echoing the officers' concern that too few teachers are aware of IATEFL and the scope of its activities, with two adding that identity should be treated as independent of membership. Four of the members alluded to industry conditions creating an image of EFL teachers

which is hostile to perceptions of identity. Only one member referred to advocacy as instrumental in identity formation and this was framed as the curriculum-based advocacy described by the officer Gerald. Unlike the officers, there was no outright rejection of political advocacy by the other members. The topic was simply not raised as relevant to identity.

4.2.1.2.i IATEFL members: status

As five of the six members paid tribute to status as a consideration in membership and hence identity formation, it is not possible to draw an intra-group distinction but two comments by Sara, a teacher at a community school, and Ragna, a university lecturer, perhaps show different contexts for how status is perceived. Sara is a member by choice rather than through the external stimulus of her employers:

> "At my particular workplace, it's, they're not that interested in what I do. So I was necessarily in my local CANTASOL as we're called. Canterbury Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, and our national one is called [unintelligible]. That's a little bit an imitation of the American association TESOL which I had also had intermittently contact with over the years. But I have been especially charmed if I can say that professionally by particular aspects of IATEFL that appeal you know to values I hold I guess."

Sara seemed isolated in her job and needed membership to confirm her sense that her work was going in a direction appropriate to her "values", which, as explained below, include altruism. This could not be done in the unsupportive atmosphere where she worked. "[C]harmed" is an interesting word choice, as Sara admitted by immediately qualifying it, suggesting that there is a rather personal connection between her and IATEFL, one which may appeal to "values" beyond the technical. This may tie in to the literature on professionalism which appeals to a values system that recognises expertise as including the personal, and non-definable, for example compassion and self-expression (Blair, 2014; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Youngson, 2011).

Unlike Sara, Ragna was in a position where her status at work depended on demonstrating her professionalism. Ragna saw membership as pivotal in creating perceptions of a professional identity:

> "[S]o going to conferences or being affiliated with a professional you know an institution like IATEFL is very important. It weighs very heavily, I mean we can get promotions and things like that if we have been active in professional development, it's very important."

Her comments suggested, in line with Motteram (2016), that the very fact of being "affiliated", almost regardless of what you do as a member, indicates professionalism to the wider community. As Ragna works in a university, this community would include instructors from different disciplines and outside the EFL sphere. Akiko and Orpita also work in higher education, where EFL is not the

main focus, so presumably they also face the complication of working with colleagues not from an EFL background who are perhaps less sympathetic to the peculiarities of the field and harder to convince in terms of their status. However, Akiko and Orpita did not refer to this dimension of identity formation.

4.2.1.2.ii IATEFL members: altruism

Only Sara referred to altruism, in terms of the volunteer spirit and desire to impact the field, a philosophy she wanted to invest in as part of her identity formation:

> "I don't know what level of volunteerism there is amongst [IATEFL] but what I find is you know everybody who seems to be involved in IATEFL really is interested in languages and students. It's, they're not there for a political reason and they're not there for, you know I just like the kind of sober earnest if you like. Yeah, I just thought the whole ethos of IATEFL. And I guess that's kind of probably the same for associations in New Zealand. You know the people who go and belong are the people who are interested, trying to improve the field or do something for their students or whatever."

The vagueness of Sara's language – she constantly hedged her remarks, for example, "I guess . . . whatever" – suggests that the altruism factor in identity formation is difficult to articulate. As found in Akkerman & Meijer (2011) and Yazan & Peercy (2016), personal values tend to resist easy expression, one reason why they have been marginalised in the discourse on professionalism.

4.2.1.2.iii IATEFL members: negative image

As with the officers, the chief concern was that teachers simply do not know about IATEFL:

> "Not many [know about IATEFL], some of those who are in graduate school, they know something." (Akiko)
> "Before I had no idea, I had no idea of IATEFL before." (Mei)
> "They do know about BELTA I think and everyone seems to know a lot about BELTA but IATEFL, no." (Orpita)

The members considered themselves as exceptions in that they are aware of IATEFL. The influence of IATEFL on perceptions of identity remains weak if members represent a minority.

Furthermore, two members would disagree that membership per se is instrumental in perceptions of identity:

> "Just being a member is not enough I think. Being professional, I think it means knowledgeable and also experienced in the field. So to share your information, share

your ideas it's very professional, in IATEFL, but you have to be more than just a member."

(Akiko)

"So respect is not something you demand from people, you earn from people, right?

So in this sense I think if you respect what you do, if you see the teaching career with

respect, people will start seeing it in the same way." (Gabriela)

Akiko saw IATEFL as a vehicle for professionalism rather than an end. Gabriela did not even mention IATEFL in this regard. She conceived of professional identity as dependent on practice and how this is perceived by others, which completely corresponds to Evans' (2008) and Sachs' (2016) depiction of professionalism as arising through enactment rather than entitlement.

Four members pointed out the size of the challenge if IATEFL is to influence identity formation. As noted in Johnston (1997) and Rimmer (2011), a sizeable proportion of EFL teachers may lack motivation and pedagogical competence. Such teachers would certainly not be interested in membership and they are immune to the activity of IATEFL. Gabriela speaks from her experience of teacher recruitment:

"I think it's about teaching in general but when it comes to teaching English many

people think that just because they've been to Disney World they can teach English,

you know. So, yeah, it's true. Unfortunately, it's true. Unfortunately, sometimes we

receive CVs and people come to us just because. This week we had a selection process and

one of the, the applicants had 'well I was travelling in Europe and now I want to make some

more money to go back there and travel more' and then he applied for a teaching position

so that that's the way some people perceive the teaching career."

As Thornbury (2015) points out, there are two general competencies required to teach English: knowledge of the language and expertise in teaching. Gabriela's point was that people only possessing language proficiency feel qualified to teach, presumably on the notion that pedagogy is something that can be learned on the job, and their long-term motivation is low. Against this backdrop, IATEFL has very limited sway: it certainly is in no position to bar such teachers, as Gerald earlier admitted, confirming Thomson (2004) that TAs cannot act as gatekeepers.

Ragna also served as corroboration of industry conditions thwarting the potential impact of TAs on identity. When asked about the professionalism of EFL in her country, Ragna sought comparisons and found EFL teachers wanting when measured against established professions or even other teachers (Shieh, 2012):

"Well, it depends compared to what? Compared to teachers of subjects or compared

to people who work in banks? I mean in our university for example, it's an academic institution so of course everyone is teaching. I'd say teaching English is not as important as say teaching a course. Being a professor in a subject is more highly valued than being an English teacher within my context. But I think in schools and in private you know places where that offer courses, perhaps that's, that's not the case."

Ragna's last point, that EFL may be more valued in non-tertiary contexts, was not borne out by the data or by the literature.

4.2.1.2.iv IATEFL members: advocacy

Only Orpita referenced advocacy, in describing a local initiative in Bangladesh:

"We have a strong advocacy programme . . . the first advocacy was about communicative language teaching. In Bangladesh CLT [communicative language teaching] still not very well understood and the teachers and the ministries and normally the bureaucrats are very much against it. The literature people are very much against it too. So we have a big kind of advocacy there where we're trying to kind of make people understand how communicative language teaching is not a method but it's a set of principles or assumptions under which you adapt or adopt whatever method is appropriate for your own setting."

This activity seems to have had real impact on perceptions of identity as it involved changes to beliefs which were entrenched; similar to the historical advocacy movement recorded in Howatt & Smith (2014). However, Orpita's was a lone voice in a specific context and no member mentioned advocacy on a global level led by IATEFL.

4.2.1.3 IATEFL non-members: Identity

To provide an overview of the position of non-members as regards the Identity theme, predictably, this data set provided the severest obstacle to establishing a link between TAs and identity formation. Three teachers conceded that there are circumstances when membership may give status but this begrudging endorsement was outweighed by contributions in the Negative image category. Their own lack of familiarity with TAs exemplified the fears of officers and members that IATEFL is obscure. Furthermore, they did not see any practical advantages of membership, and rejected non-tangible benefits such as status. They also regarded the work of TAs as misdirected and in any case portrayed industry conditions as antagonistic to the formation of a professional identity. Altruism was not evidenced as a sub-category. If advocacy were an antidote to a hostile marketplace, this finds little support in the data with only two teachers, both freelance, commenting in this category, and their views being in conflict.

4.2.1.3.i IATEFL non-members: status

Even these positive comments were qualified:

> "When I joined [a local TA] I was at the beginning of my teaching career and people
> seemed to think it was a good idea. So I don't know, it was, I suppose, a status thing.
> Like you know you're a member of an association kind of makes you sound, sound
> serious or whatever." (Adriana)

Her use of the past tense showed that she has moved on from such considerations and her identity is secure without involvement in a TA, which is in tune with the findings of Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, & Cunningham (2010).

4.2.1.3.ii IATEFL non-members: negative image

The six non-members work in three broad categories, freelance, higher education and teacher-training, but lack of awareness of IATEFL was across the board. Natasha, a university lecturer, admitted that she knows very little about TAs and seemed unconvinced of their value. When asked what she knew about TAs, her vague reply was:

> "Well, just a bit. As I've told you, I've seen some conferences, maybe streamings. I've seen
> some maybe some calls for papers, I can't recall it, advertising. I read something about it. I
> heard something about from my teachers but I just didn't research it that well I think to get
> a better view."

Further comments revealed that Natasha has other priorities at work, pedagogical, for example demanding classes, and practical, the ubiquitous low remuneration, that did not seem to be able to be addressed through joining a TA. Natasha later on said perceptions of her identity come from her position as a lecturer in a prestigious university; an assertion of the institutional-identity of Gee (2000) and organisational-identity of Edmond & Hayler (2013).

Olivia, teacher and teacher-trainer, considered those teachers who do recognise IATEFL to be part of an elite:

> "I think some of the Czech teachers wouldn't and some would [know about IATEFL] . . . I did
> some training a few weeks ago with [name of publisher] and we were travelling around the
> Czech Republic, and these teachers were the kind of teachers who would turn up voluntarily
> to a [name of publisher] session, they would probably know about IATEFL. But just the
> teachers out there generally in the state school system, I don't know. I don't know, I think
> they just tend to stick to their own school and sometimes just a chapter ahead in their
> coursebook and just doing the best they can. I really don't know the answer, I would have to

ask them myself. I'm trying to rack my brains and I can't think of any situation when a

teacher has even brought up IATEFL."

Invoked is an image of teachers too blinkered by their own circumstances to be receptive to TAs

even should they be informed of them, akin to the description in Goodwyn (2012). Her reference to

coursebooks was telling as a frequent theme in the EFL literature (e.g., Tomlinson & Masuhara,

2013) is the habitual use of the ubiquitous textbook as a debilitating factor in teaching and learning.

Olivia was not critical of such teachers, after all they are "doing the best they can". Their limited

aspirations probably did not stem from laziness (a common attribute designated to teachers, e.g.,

Charlton, 2014) or incompetence but rather from what Olivia called the "system", i.e., a field which

is hostile to identity formation (Damon, Colby, Bronk & Ehrlich, 2005).

Wanda, a freelance teacher, illustrates the rejection of TAs as vehicles to enhanced perceptions of

identity. Picking up on the point made by Akiko previously, Wanda was similarly wary of an appeal to

automatic professionalism through TAs:

> "It sounds like some kind of sport brand saying 'Respect me'. No, you gain your respect by
>
> being professional, yes. And that means as professionals, us behaving and acting in that
>
> way."

Wanda's scornful simile with sports brands dismissed the promotion of IATEFL through the

commercial and manipulative machinery associated with the advertising industry. Brands work

through universal recognition and customers purchase a branded product to buy into a

manufactured set of values, for example success and well-being in the case of sport. Wanda

conceived of identity as self-formed and self-maintained, with perceptions of identity based on what

you do and not what you belong to; a stance which is in sync with Evans' (2008) and Sachs' (2016)

depiction of professionalism as practice-centred.

Olivia was similarly cynical of IATEFL being used as an identity marker and doubted that it carried

much weight amongst non-members:

> "Another guy I work with at my work, I'm pretty sure he just joined so he could tell
>
> everybody he was a member of IATEFL to sound more important in the staffroom.
>
> That sounds really awful, doesn't it? . . . But I think [he] somehow thinks it gives him
>
> extra status but the other teachers just kind of think, 'Yeah, so what?' They're not
>
> really particularly impressed by it."

Membership was actually detrimental to perceptions of this individual's identity as he certainly lost

credibility in Olivia's eyes. She characterised him as buying, literally, title to professionalism without

developing a professional identity. His colleagues' projected response of "Yeah, so what?" is damning for the case, for example, Motteram (2016) and Paran (2016), that membership brings any change in perceptions of identity.

Other non-members were less vitriolic but still disengaged from TAs because they cannot see their connection to identity. Steven, a freelance teacher about to exit EFL, voiced the virtually unanimous view that TAs, while very well-meaning, were just not relevant to their particular circumstances:

> "I do think that for all teachers there should be an opportunity for professional development so again if teachers work for an institution, for a school like [name of organisation], or any other big companies where they have teacher training within the school, they may not need it. But obviously for other teachers, teaching associations probably do a good, a good job, they provide a good service. I don't know. Personally, I've never really felt the need to join them."

Those "other teachers" who do feel TAs impact their identity are not to be found in this sample of non-members. Non-members acknowledged the existence of TAs but did not connect them to their professional identity

The tone of Robert, also freelance, was similar – TAs came a long way down his list of priorities:

> "But my participation in [the TA] has kind of dropped off. I still read the newsletter every now and then but I didn't go to the conference this last October mostly because I'd just got the news that all of my ESL classes had been cancelled and so I had bigger things on my plate you know like finding a job."

Being in a TA had not brought Robert job security, one of the biggest issues in EFL (Waldron, 2016; Wright, 2016), so he could hardly be blamed for not reveling in any sense of renewed status and purpose.

Indeed, Adriana exemplified the view that non-members are not impressed by perceptions of identity that feed off what amounts to self-congratulation. Adriana had been a member of two TAs, IATEFL and the local RATE, but she had left both because they were poor value, literally, for her personally:

> "Well, basically I think you get, depending on what you do, you get, you can get very little for what you pay for, to be honest. I mean with RATE, being a member doesn't really give you anything. It doesn't give you discounts for conferences or anything. You just pay for the membership and then that's it."

Adriana was only interested in concrete benefits, such as discounts on events and resources, so an intangible such as status, even if this were to be a real by-product of membership, did not seem to be of interest. Non-members were highly dubious of perceptions of professionalism linked to personal status and sense of purpose because they saw these as unreal. They would prefer something more substantial and are conscious of the value for money (Nobre, 2011).

Robert's comment encapsulated the notion that while TAs such as IATEFL could impact identity, they have limited ambitions:

> "I think [TAs] could and I think to do that they need to get their story straight and really focus on, you know, what, have some kind of mission statement besides just putting on a show and helping people feel good about themselves. Okay. I don't want to go too far down that train of thought."

His insinuation was that TAs bring self-gratification for individuals but lack a global approach to issues in the field, which echoes the frustration of Alatis (2005) and Tonningsen (2002). Actually, IATEFL does have a mission statement (http://www.iatefl.org/about-iatefl/governance-and-policy-documents) but there is a difference between a formal document and actual behaviour.

Gaia, a university lecturer, also believed that TAs were not contributing to perceptions of identity. For her, this was because TAs are too orthodox in the beliefs about language teaching and learning which they are prepared to support and disseminate. She described a case where this leads to an identity being assigned to a teacher which is actually offensive:

> "I mean there are taboo words in English language teaching. You know somebody told me once that she'd been accused of being a fascist because she'd mentioned memory in the context of learning languages and that was actually in the context of talking about motivation helping memory. So, you know, these, probably these kinds of things above all, above all have prevented me from getting back in touch with associations."

Gaia's specific views on the prescriptivism of TAs seem controversial – the IATEFL annual conference has included many sessions incorporating the role of memory (e.g., De Chazal, 2017) – but she personally was under the impression that TAs fail to reflect current thinking in EFL and so cannot build a set of values and beliefs integral to identity.

The comments under Negative image also referred to adverse industry conditions neutralising the efforts of IATEFL to impact the identity of individual teachers. Steven complained that the workforce lacks commitment:

> "I think in EFL sometimes you have people who don't necessarily want to be teachers. Whereas, where I work, all the therapists obviously want to be therapists so they take everything more seriously for them . . . It's definitely, I think it's taken a lot more seriously. A teacher doesn't necessarily worry if a student after three months still can't use the present perfect whereas if a therapist don't achieve the goals for the month then they need to find something, they work, they prepare something different."

Steven was comparing EFL, which he is leaving after stints working abroad and in the UK, with speech therapy and finds no equivalence in the level of professionalism. It can be inferred that a body of EFL teachers would be unreceptive to the work of IATEFL because, unlike speech therapists, they do not see EFL as a career and are not interested in their identity within EFL, a concern voiced by Johnston (1997) and Thornbury (2001).

TAs also face the practical problem that their activity is often not supported by the work culture of EFL. Wanda was disappointed by the relatively low attendance at a developmental event and explained this in terms of the unfavourable environment:

> "The thing is everyone is so involved in trying to get more hours or make ends meet that sometimes some things fall through the cracks . . . One of the things is that very few schools, if any, will pay for either membership or registration or if you pay for either of those, they would pay you for the time to do the professional development, yes. So many, many times people say, 'OK, it's a Saturday that is away from my family and I do this or, I mean. I just enjoy my family.' Yes, so that's one of the very big things."

When teachers are harried by their unstable schedules, identity formation is impeded by economic survival. The "some things fall through the cracks" metaphor put very aptly the juggling act that teachers face in balancing priorities during the constant battle for stable work. In addition, financial support from their workplaces is not there. As all three teachers working in Anglophone countries commented, the majority of teachers are obliged to take several jobs, so schools legally have fewer responsibilities towards part-time employees, which is why they employ them in this capacity, and certainly do not feel any obligation towards their development; a state of affairs which corroborates White (2014). TAs have chosen to eschew advocacy (Goodwyn, 2012) so as long as these industry conditions continue, teachers will withdraw from development and negative public perceptions, unfairly, will redound on the identity of teachers.

This is not just an issue in Anglophone countries, as Wright (2016) points out. As another indicator of attitudes within EFL which would resist the overtures of TAs, Natasha deplored the shape of EFL in her country, Russia:

> "Well, I mean that some governmental policy should be involved here. The attitude of the government should be changed. The salary should get higher and then it will probably be more interesting for young people because it's hard to start a life when you know that you won't get more than say 40000 [roubles] [approximately 500 pounds] a month. So probably this is a bit discouraging for the young generation and when the young generation doesn't come into the profession, it degrades."

Natasha meant that there are larger issues, namely poor industry conditions, which IATEFL cannot penetrate. Factors such as low pay damage perceptions of identity (Kolesnikov, Shipilov & Khvesiuk, 2013) but IATEFL was not put into the frame as an agency which could reinforce a more positive image.

Olivia also mentioned money and the fact that the lack of influence IATEFL has on raising salaries or providing other practical benefits made teachers cynical that membership has any link with their professional identity:

> "[I]f teachers were told that you'd be on a higher pay scale if you were a member of IATEFL and then IATEFL said to be a member you need to do this, this, this or something, then maybe. But right now, I mean my teachers have no desire to join IATEFL because they can't see how it would benefit them. And if they asked me, 'How would it benefit me to join?', I would say 'I don't know'."

Olivia was speaking for herself, someone who was a member of IATEFL but left the TA, and other teachers, her colleagues, who she feels are outside of the reach of IATEFL. Like Clandfield (2004), Olivia felt that financial incentives bolster identity, but added that teachers cannot look to TAs for support here. In corroboration of Adriana and Robert's points above, teachers are not interested in a nebulous version of identity which gives them mothing beyond a warm glow. The conditional sentence which presents the hypothetical dialogue between Olivia and a teacher highlights that a situation where a teacher would even ask about IATEFL is unrealistic: teachers do not enquire about IATEFL because they are beyond its pale.

In addition, two non-members expressed misgivings of the content provided by TAs, indicating that it would fall outside the beliefs and values that inform their identity:

> "Well, I think these conferences and these associations can tend to, I don't how to say, to
> follow the orthodoxy in sort of language teaching theory and the orthodoxy is not
> necessarily scientific at all, okay. So I'd like to see, I'd like to see more scientific foundations
> for their work. I mean language teaching is a field which is rife with pseudo-science, okay."
> (Gaia)

It is difficult to determine whether Gaia's criticisms lay with EFL as a field or with TAs as conduits for what is contemporary thinking in EFL. TAs can only reflect the field and it seems unfair to expect them to take a completely different position if there is no precedent for this. A problem with Gaia's lack of confidence in the academic rigour of EFL is that Gaia seemed to have a narrow identification of research with positivism, "scientific foundations", whereas this epistemological position is hard to maintain in many aspects of education, especially those areas investigating human experience rather than linguistics (cf. the phenomenological approach in Young and Messum, 2011). Possibly Gaia was expecting too much from TAs but her frustration with their perceived limited vision was real and she saw an ideological clash with the identity she had constructed for herself.

4.2.1.3.iii IATEFL non-members: advocacy

Only two non-members commented on advocacy. They are both originally from the US where advocacy has more of a tradition in TAs (Whitney, 2010) but they held diametrically opposed opinions.

Robert was receptive to advocacy and gave a personal example from his involvement in a local TA:
> "I was involved, I was able to vote on a few things, that was mostly related to contract
> negotiations between the [name of organisation] as related to pay increases and by
> way of more concrete things I voted on, the university was able to award a certain
> amount of money to the salaries of the teachers and the vote was to decide on how
> that should be distributed, whether or not it should be applied equally to all teachers'
> pay checks."

Robert, in line with Thompson, Lyons & Timmons (2015), believed this advocacy led to change which improved perceptions of identity of teachers by making them feel more secure and valued.

However, Wanda associated advocacy with unionisation (cf. Popiel, 2013), which she was vehemently opposed to:
> "I don't want to see [IATEFL] as a trade union because, as I told you before, I am a

researcher, I am a writer, and with all due respect to bus drivers, I work and I function at a

different level. So if it were some kind of trade union with the whole internal politics,

internal and external politics of all that, maybe not."

There was some snobbishness in Wanda's elevation of herself over bus drivers (unlike EFL teachers,

they at least require a licence) but her comment tapped into a fear that advocacy degenerates into

militarism, which might detract from the identity of teachers.

4.3 Summary of sub-research question 1: what are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?

The data show a sliding scale from the three stakeholder groups in terms of a commitment to the

notion that professional identity is connected to membership of a TA. This is most marked in the

Status category with officers convinced that membership provides perceptions of self-worth and

purpose, members supportive of this with the reservation that identity has to be formed and

demonstrated independently, but non-members extremely cynical of any relationship between

membership and identity. Officers and members clearly saw identity as important to teachers, just

as Crandall & Christison (2016) identified, and TAs as instrumental in forming an identity, the

premise behind Motteram's survey of members (2016), but non-members felt that the nature of EFL

as an industry, the instability and poor working conditions, evidenced by Waldron (2016) and Wright

(2016), impinged on their identity and precluded TAs as a meaningful recourse.

The literature (e.g., Popiel, 2013; Thompson, Lyons & Timmons, 2015) pointed to advocacy as a

measure for countering these corrosive effects of industry conditions on professional identity.

However, the data from this study support the views of Goodwyn (2012) and Larson (2014) that

teachers are not perceived to be particularly receptive to advocacy. The officers saw advocacy as

futile; members did not acknowledge it; two non-members did refer to advocacy but their views

conflicted. Advocacy was not admitted into the process of identity formation. Goodwyn (ibid.) may

well be right that this is because teachers are conditioned by their circumstances to have low

expectations but the fact remains that advocacy was just not perceived as relevant to identity.

The construct of identity is based on the affinity-identity of Gee (2000), a representation of identity

as a set of distinctive social practices generated through relationship building. Gee (ibid.) posted

three alternative conceptualisations of identity: nature-identity (the attributes we are born with),

institutional-identity (an official position sanctioned by society), discourse-identity (how we are

perceived though our interactions with people). None of these were evidenced strongly in the data.

There was only one fleeting reference to nature-identity. Although the sample included eight NNSTs, no one mentioned TAs as influential in protecting the identity of NNSTs. This is a departure from the literature as prejudice against NNSTs and the erosion of their identity is the most well-developed strand in the literature on identity, for example, Medgyes (2017). Institutional-identity and discourse-identity are weak because EFL was projected as a lower-ranking form of teaching, even at university level, with concomitant reductions in status and benefits. TAs do not impact institutional-identity or discourse-identity in part because, a fact which enjoyed inter-group agreement, too few teachers are aware of IATEFL and can thus use the TA as a conduit towards identity formation. This accords with the literature, for example Blair (2014), who finds teachers first oblivious to TAs and second genuinely puzzled by the notion that TAs could be relevant to them.

As for affinity-identity, the perceptions and experiences of the participants seemed too diverse to coalesce into any meaningful sense of a shared identity. To some degree this may be attributable to the fact that EFL is very broad in scope and the participants who are teachers work in very different environments. It is counter-intuitive that someone teaching full-time at a university overseas (e.g., Natasha) would relate their beliefs and practices to a freelance teacher (e.g., Robert) in an Anglophone country. TAs may see themselves as a mechanism for connecting such people and thus creating affinity-identity but the data do not support this as happening across the board. Nor does the data suggest another apparent supplier of affinity-identity, for example, the ubiquitous criterion-referenced performance standards endemic in general education (cf. Connell, 2009), often emanating from a neo-manageralist agenda (Gewirtz & Ball, 2000). Such standards have had far less impact on EFL in terms of identity formation, despite the existence of established frameworks specific to EFL (e.g., Rossner, 2008), simply because such standards lack any regulatory force and hence direction for individual teachers.

To conclude, identity, or the lack of it, was perceived as important but it was constructed variously according to individual circumstances, as proposed by Akkerman & Meijer (2011). TAs could play a role in self-perceptions of identity but they have too little recognition and sway to create the sense of commonality of belief and practice that characterises affinity-identity. Thus, the contribution of TAs to perceptions of professional identity can best be described as marginal.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion II

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 addressed the first of the three sub-research questions so this chapter deals with sub-research questions 2, 3 and 4.

2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

5.2 Sub-research question 2: what are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

CPD is relevant to professionalism because the theoretical framework is practice-oriented, consistent with Evans' (2008) definition of professionalism, and demands a knowledge and skills base sufficient to meet learners' needs. As the complexity of teaching and learning contexts increase, competencies need to be expanded and updated on a regular basis (Bubb & Earley, 2007). CPD differs from the Identity theme in that the latter is concerned with self-definition while the former targets self-realisation (Richards, 2010) and is ultimately based on improving pedagogy (Stoll, Harris & Handscomb, 2012). CPD and identity are connected as facets of professionalism because involvement in CPD can cement identity just as identity can foment CPD. However, CPD is perceived much more as an activity with demonstrable outcomes.

5.2.1 CPD and Conferences

CPD and Conferences were important themes in the data and both are relevant to sub-research question 2. CPD is the perception that TAs are of value in CPD, and Conferences is the perception that face-to-face and online events offer CPD opportunities. Conferences would seem a sub-theme of CPD but the number of references is so large that it is a theme in its own right. Both themes are addressed together as regards sub-research question 2.

Development incorporates two categories: Growth and Resources. Growth is the TA-mediated acquisition of a knowledge and skills set. Resources represents access through TAs to tools to

facilitate development. This contains a sub-category, Competition, as some resources are available to all teachers regardless of their membership of a TA.

5.2.1.1 IATEFL officers: CPD and Conferences

This section presents how the CPD and Conferences themes emerged in the data from the IATEFL officers. Generally, there was strong conviction among the officers that IATEFL has a significant impact on CPD through a range of developmental opportunities, chief among them conferences.

5.2.1.1.i IATEFL officers: growth

It was claimed that the very act of participation in a TA can be developmental (cf. Hall & Paran, 2016, passim). Clare believed, and Marks (2014) made a similar point, that her role within the TA had given her a skills set which it would have been difficult to acquire just through pedagogic training:

> "Because I teach business English, one of the things I've gotten is learning management skills which I can then relate on a very high level to my learners to say, 'Yes, I just ran a meeting, I just had this situation with a difficult team member, I just did, I just put an agenda together, just looked at the minutes'. So that has been fascinating for me and they come back saying, 'This is great. We have lots of English teachers. We don't have English teachers who run meetings' and that kind of thing."

Clare experienced extra credibility as a business English teacher by having these skills to relate to. The feedback from her students is represented as evidence that this is a real development although their dismissive remark "We have lots of English teachers" suggests a lack of confidence in the knowledge base of EFL teachers. Still, Clare felt she had gained an extra edge and a higher perceived professionalism.

Sylvia added:

> "[I]f we are offering continual development as well as the networking, I think that's the way forward."

Sylvia's use of the progressive aspect, "are offering" rather than *offer*, perhaps highlights that development should be a continuous and evolving process. Sylvia believed that members perceive development as a key benefit because it demonstrates their professionalism, a direction she wanted IATEFL to encourage.

As an example of the impact of IATEFL on perceptions of CPD across the field, Clare cited local initiatives IATEFL is involved in:

> "I would like to see the projects continue with this idea of the awards and giving
> teachers in local contexts the chance for teacher development and training."

These "local contexts" are typically under-resourced by the official educational providers (cf. Kuchah, 2016, for the situation in Cameroon) and IATEFL is portrayed by Clare as stepping in to support teachers who otherwise would have little opportunity to develop.

Rachel commented that IATEFL is underplaying its impact on the field:

> "I don't know that IATEFL is necessarily selling its workshops and conferences as
> opportunities for continuing professional development. Sometimes it feels that it
> might be being sold just as a conference and I think it's so much more than a conference."

Reminiscent of Farmer's (2006) depiction of EFL, Rachel resorted to the language of commerce, "selling. . . sold", to show that CPD is part of the membership deal. IATEFL is providing services which are of real career value in multiple contexts but Rachel worried that they are underestimated. Such is the emphasis on the annual event that Rachel was right to point out that the organisation is "much more than a conference". A conference is a once-a-year phenomenon but CPD has a lasting impact, and not just on individuals but on the field as it demonstrates allegiance to a values system (Borg, 2015).

5.2.1.1.ii IATEFL officers: resources and competition

Nevertheless, the officers accepted that there is significant competition for the benefits it offers, which diminishes pretensions to impact the field. For example, IATEFL is not the only show in town, so to speak, when it comes to TAs, as Gerald noted:

> "There's too much competition out there. I mean even in my local region, there are
> several local organisations that I could join that probably are arguably more relevant,
> or maybe not relevant to me, but to teachers in this local region than would be IATEFL, so
> why would I join IATEFL?"

EFL as a field has both a local and an international perspective. Gerald was concerned that IATEFL may not appeal to localised concerns, perhaps because of what Robinson (2014) deemed the centralisation of CPD.

Also, publications provided by IATEFL are becoming less relevant in the professionalism of the field because alternatives are readily available, often at no cost. Gerald claimed to have evidence for this based on his survey of IATEFL members (Motteram, 2016):

> "I mean, very few people mentioned publications. In fact, even our own publications, if you
> look at the last membership survey, very few people saw that as being very high on their
> priority list."

Sylvia recognised this in her admission that "[W]e need to be a bit more inventive in our
publications."

Comments by Clare indicated the officers' ambivalent stance on the CPD offered by the resources
the TA makes available. First, she ran off a list of print and online resources, suggesting that
members have plentiful options, but then acknowledged that this is not a unique benefit and hence
access may not alter perceptions of professionalism:

> "Part of it is that there is more and more online that you can access for free, not just
> through IATEFL but through other organisations including publishers or the British
> Council. So, people may not see the reason for actually being a member."

Clare's ambivalence was mirrored by Gerald:

> "Of course, some people join, although I'm sure that's increasingly less true, for the
> reduced cost of publications for example. . . That's something that is not so much of an
> attraction anymore because there is so much stuff available electronically."

IATEFL officers estimated their CPD opportunities highly but were aware that their resources are
becoming less relevant to teachers and hence less of a factor in influencing perceptions of
professionalism.

5.2.1.1.iii IATEFL officers: face-to-face conferences and scholarships

IATEFL officers were fully committed to the idea that conferences, especially face-to-face, and
particularly the main annual conference, are perceived as enhancing the professionalism of EFL
teachers. Conferences were represented as offering an intensive environment for CPD. Indeed,
Harmer (2007) saw conferences as the main role of TAs. As well as offering development,
conferences also serve other functions linked to perceptions of professionalism. They provide a
space for teachers to share experiences, reaffirming their sense of status and purpose through
empathy and participation with colleagues.

Clare exemplified several aspects of the theme in her enthusiasm for the IATEFL annual conference:

> "I think it's the place where people do come together, it is the place to find resources . . .

It's a place to talk to people, it's a place to find out is there something I can get involved in or project, some kind of book project or another kind of project like a conference. I think it's the place to make connections."

For Clare, the conference offers ready practical advantages such as access to resources but it also acts as an information exchange, a longer-term step in her career development. As examples, Clare gave materials writing and participation in other conferences. It is striking that a conference is a "project" too for Clare, something which extends beyond its start and finish dates and involves an investment of skills and energy. Conferences are not occasions for passive attendance but opportunities for professional renewal. This excerpt covered both face-to-face and online conferences but the mantric repetition of "it's a/the place" shows that her allegiance lies with the physical environment.

Such is the significance of conferences that Sylvia saw them as the main focus of IATEFL:

"But I think I've almost sort of concluded now more and more recently because what you get from membership you can get for nothing elsewhere, we do need to rely on our events, our, even the online events and things like that to connect to people."

TAs face considerable competition in the area of resource provision so conferences can be perceived by members as more unique benefits, hence their prominence in two guides to TAs (Falcao & Szesztay, 2006; Gomez, 2011). Sylvia's "even" hints that online events have been seen as inferior to face-to-face.

Clare testified to the significance of traditional face-to-face events:

"As much as we use online. I still feel that face-to-face is important and I mean it's not just us. I've had dinner with friends who were scientists and they were talking about the conferences they go to. It's not just ELT. So, conferences are still a major part of any kind of professional development."

Interesting was her parallel to scientific conferences. Scientists, unlike teachers, seldom need to defend their status so Clare is arguing that the conference is a universal in professionalism, "[i]t's not just ELT". Crucial for perceptions of professionalism is the sense that EFL is comparable to established professions, such as accountancy (Picard, 2016).

A point made in support of face-to-face events was the availability of scholarships:

"In the last two or three years we've had over a thousand applications for scholarships for the conference so, yeah, I think it's definitely something that's wanted." (Rachel)

The popularity of scholarships shows that teachers, not just IATEFL members for anyone can apply, relish the opportunity to attend conferences and make the most of this development opportunity. Scholarships also show an attempt by IATEFL to be as inclusive as possible, allowing teachers in straitened circumstances to attend, which also reflects well on the professionalism of the field by showing that participation in CPD is encouraged.

It's not just about the annual conference, as Sylvia exemplified:

> "[T]here's obviously our events, maybe having more events all round the world because maybe people try not to travel as much, you know, environmentally and all that. I think that should be the way forward."

Multiple events in multiple locations is said to increase the impact of IATEFL on professionalism because more teachers could be involved.

5.2.1.1.iv IATEFL officers: online conferences

Clare illustrated officers' awareness of online events as of increasing relevance:

> "And we also have a live stream [of the annual conference], through the generosity of the British Council, which reaches about 60,000 people around the world."

EFL is a truly global phenomenon and 60,000 teachers represent but a fraction of the workforce (Greenall, 2014) yet online events allow for more penetration of the field than face-to-face formats.

5.2.1.2 IATEFL members: CPD and Conferences

To turn to the CPD and Conferences themes as realised in comments from IATEFL members, this group agreed with the officers that TAs do influence perceptions of the professionalism of EFL teachers through the developmental opportunities they provide. The Growth category was well attested as teachers perceive their pedagogic knowledge expanding under the tutelage of the TA. There was a positive reception of the resources provided by TAs and a link was made to their CPD potential, despite the opening up of (free) alternatives to materials and training through the Internet and local initiatives.

5.2.1.2.i IATEFL members: growth

Gabriela's comment was representative of this category:

> "So I've been learning new procedures, new ways of carrying training sessions for example or training courses . . . [s]o I think this sharing knowledge has contributed a lot to my development."

Gabriela saw herself as both a recipient and distributor of knowledge through the TA. In the rest of the interview she intimated several times that she had achieved her own high career goals because

of what she had gained from the TA. Her elaboration of concrete skills is convincing to the argument (Richards, 2010; Stoll, Harris & Handscomb, 2012) that CPD has practical outcomes.

This set of quotes testifies that IATEFL is widening the scope of development and taking teachers away from a dangerous parochialism:

> "It's still more popular with the grammar-translation than communicative [methodology]. It's a kind of combination. But you've got more new ones, like CLIL [content language integrated learning] or some new approaches, new ways to learn. But still it takes time to learn those. I think it's a very good thing. We have our own ways too but we respect other ways too." (Akiko)
>
> "I think in terms of learning about different contexts, teaching contexts, about teacher-training contexts, which is the area I've been involved with more. And being able to learn how things happen in different institutions and all over the globe." (Gabriela)
>
> "We usually use terms like student-centred, project-based, task-based, we use these words but I think you know it can have a very limited meaning until you see what other people are actually doing then you fully understand." (Ragna)

CPD is often associated with changes in methodology (Howatt & Smith, 2014) but Akiko's comment in particular showed that it can happen at a more profound level. Akiko went on to contrast the Japanese system, where the teacher is expert and leaners receptacles of their knowledge, with a western model she had been exposed to, partly through IATEFL, that of a more equal and collaborative relationship between teachers and students. This obviously goes beyond incorporating new technologies or teaching techniques, innovation which commentators like Ur (2013a) are sceptical of. The work of IATEFL was said to create a new paradigm which is changing attitudes and perceptions in the field.

5.2.1.2.ii IATEFL members: resources and competition

Sara offered an example of the continuing role of resources in CPD:

> "You know, IATEFL offers great stuff now like the Voices magazine, so most places get all those magazines, that's quite traditional, we always get those magazines. But that whole new active dimension of being online and tweeting and all of the webinars and stuff like that, it seems to me that it's grown in IATEFL and you know I could probably do that myself actually, you know. It's all around us and I'm sure there will be teachers who pick it up."

Sara believed that the competition faced by IATEFL in terms of resources is being fended off by a growing digital presence and that this has wider reach to members. That technology has increased accessibility to CPD is acknowledged in the literature, for example, Wilden (2017).

5.2.1.2.iii IATEFL members: face-to-face and online conferences

The members also considered events, face-to-face and to a lesser extent online, as being extremely significant in CPD, confirming the findings of Borg (2015) and Raza (2010). Again, the IATEFL annual conference was singled out as of special benefit with all the participants having attended at least one.

Mei, an EAL teacher at a UK secondary school, was in no doubt of the annual conference's effect on her CPD:

> "Actually, I for the first year proposed you know a talk which was accepted so I went to IATEFL before I moved to the UK for the conference. I went there in 2008 for the first time and I remember I spend almost all the time going to lectures and you know it's like an explosion."

The conference was also Mei's first experience of the UK so the cultural immersion was as striking as the academic content. She was not just a delegate but a speaker so CPD was happening at two levels, that of creating an output which would impact others, and that of translating the input into her emerging professionalism. Indeed, several members mentioned the combination of presenting and attending as being of great CPD value.

If anything, the conference is too successful, overshadowing the TA's other benefits. Ragna only belongs to IATEFL because of the conference:

> "I don't get enough benefit out of anything else that the organisation offers . . . But at the moment for me it's mainly the conference with a couple of things here and there which I might attend but it's mainly the conference really."

It is noteworthy that during her interview, Regna often used IATEFL to mean the conference. For example, when asked how she thought IATEFL would change in the future, her instinctive answer referred to online broadcasts of the sessions. Bereft of the conference, IATEFL could struggle to convince Ragna that it could promote her professionalism and she might follow the same route as Adriana and Olivia, who left IATEFL because they could no longer attend the event.

Gabriela illustrated the belief that conferences are a core function of IATEFL (cf. Harmer, 2007) and that they disseminate professionalism:

> "I think the conference is a great opportunity for you to liaise with peers from all over the globe, to learn about the different teaching contexts which we mentioned so I think it is a very good opportunity for you to learn more about the profession."

The conference creates perceptions of coherence amongst "different teaching contexts".

Sara supported Gabriela in this and added that face-to-face events play more of a role in professionalism:

> "[A] body of enthusiastic, interested people are surely going to disseminate what they've achieved and what they're thinking and what they're interested in, you know and what they love doing or don't love doing, you know, all of those things. I'm sure that the profession and I think it would be a huge, and I guess and hope it doesn't happen, I think it would be a huge mistake to think that the whole organisation could be shifted online."

Members wanted to retain face-to-face events. They do not see online as a replacement but as an alternative, a way of widening the impact on the field.

The other way of making the conference experience more accessible is to organise regional events. Orpita provided an example:

> "I think [IATEFL] is having a general influence, slow, but we can see. For one thing, let me tell you, conferencing was not something that was common in the academic field in Bangladesh. It was very professional, you know, once in a while a huge conference. But we started it off and now we see that almost every university has a conference every year and it's like English language teaching, teachers and a lot of young teachers are coming forward, doing presentations. I think that's one influence we've had."

Orpita identified the earlier conference culture as "professional" but not widespread, a situation she believes her TA, an affiliate of IATEFL, has changed for the good of the industry in EFL.

The general feeling though was that international events have more impact, as exemplified by Ragna:

> "I mean Cairo has its own [conference], we have local universities which have their own symposiums and conferences. They're much smaller and they tend to be sort of more focused on issues which relate to their context but I think an international conference you learn a lot more . . . I think it's very important to be exposed, to have exposure to other cultures. I found all of this very eye-opening. I think before I started going to these

international conferences and attending conferences abroad, I saw things in a certain way

and then like my view completely changed when I started seeing what other people were

doing like it's very important to have this exposure."

Ragna felt that richer CPD opportunities are created due to global exposure and so international events are worth the extra cost and effort to attend.

Finally, Mei pointed out the downside to these arguments, that IATEFL events are not supported or even known enough to maximise their impact on the field:

"IATEFL do have scholarships and whatever. But they've never been well you know

promoted within China so, for example [name] has run this scholarship for Chinese

teachers only for at least three years . . . I wouldn't say this money was spent in the way

they should have but IATEFL has done nothing about promotion."

IATEFL would seem to have too low a profile in China and it is missing an opportunity to promote professionalism in the largest country in the world. Nonetheless, the general finding amongst members was that conferences have special significance for CPD. Richards (2010) and Thornbury (2006) downplayed external stimuli to CPD like conferences, preferring internal mechanisms like reflection (Farrell & Baecher, 2017), but their views are not supported by this data set.

5.2.1.3 IATEFL non-members: CPD and Conferences

To preview this section, non-members also acknowledged TAs as a source of CPD and most appreciated CPD which has practical outcomes, as recommended in Stoll, Harris & Handscomb (2012). Hence, the category Growth was largely articulated through methodology and training rather than learning theory. Resources, print and online, were cited as a positive factor in perceptions of professionalism because they can also impact CPD. However, as with Officers and members, there is the reality that the Internet is making access to resources a level playing field and to some extent making this less of a member benefit.

5.2.1.3.i IATEFL non-members: growth

Natasha articulated the connection between CPD and professionalism:

"Well, [TAs could] probably help me to develop professionally first of all by . . . [m]aybe

learning something new about how you can teach or where you can teach at, something like

this I guess."

Her vagueness, "Well, probably . . . [m]aybe . . . something like this I guess", was because she has actually not sampled any of these development opportunities herself. Still, the availability of CPD was attractive to her as she connected it to improving her practice. Elsewhere, she showed a desire

for learning practical activities she can use in the classroom, feeling quite confident on theoretical principles.

Wanda offered further corroboration:

> "[IATEFL] does provide a lot of teaching and methodology support and professional support."

Although Wanda is not a member she had taken part in IATEFL events – they are not exclusive to members – so she was in a position to evaluate their usefulness and her judgement seemed positive. The factors that discouraged Wanda from joining IATEFL are not down to disappointment in the quality of support or any doubt that CPD is beneficial: a statement that can apply across the sample of non-members.

Without disagreeing with other non-members, Adriana made the point that some teachers may perceive TAs as a CPD tool more than others:

> "[F]or young teachers who are not very well paid and at the beginning of their career and they don't know a lot about the teaching profession, I think they would benefit from you know being part of a local association and being, you know. That would be if that particular association does all sorts of events which would interest them."

Adriana herself is a very experienced teacher, a teacher-trainer in fact, so she implied here and throughout that she can source her own CPD. This contrasts with Gabriela, member, quoted earlier who is also a teacher-trainer but still felt her professionalism is enhanced through the CPD provided by TAs. Nevertheless, Adriana did not deny the role that TAs may play for other teachers. Another issue raised was the financial aspect: TAs are a relatively inexpensive means of CPD compared to commercial courses. Robinson (2014) made the point of limited resources being available for CPD, and in EFL many teachers are self-funding (Nobre, 2011), so their economy may make TAs attractive.

The non-members obviously view CPD as well intentioned and they can see it having an influence in some circumstances, as Adriana said:

> "I think for young teachers, particularly for teachers working in state schools who don't have a lot of support and perhaps don't have access to a lot of expensive training. I think being a member of an association of this sort can actually you know trigger potentially beneficial associations as in you meet people, you talk about things, you find out about maybe free events or free training courses or this sort of thing."

5.2.1.3.ii IATEFL non-members: resources and competition

Adriana went on to point out, contradicting member Sara, that technology is superseding IATEFL:

> "As I said, I think there should be a lot done over the Internet. I think you know in
> fact the Internet makes the distinction between local and international a bit you know
> redundant. I mean because you can access things. As a teacher in Romania not being
> part of any association, as I said you can access resources".

Gaia and Oliva also offered examples of competition:

> "No, I actually don't [think teachers need TAs] because they get a lot of information
> on such things from their local teaching authorities because there's a lot of teacher-
> training that goes on and it's very specifically for this context." (Gaia)

> "The Czech teachers seem very impressed by the British Council or Cambridge University
> Press. If they see a school has, runs the Cambridge exams, they think that must mean
> something, it's almost like the Czech teachers feel like Cambridge University Press is some
> kind of teaching association, well not Cambridge University Press, Cambridge exams,
> Cambridge examinations, or both, anything with the word Cambridge." (Olivia)

These comments suggest that teachers do not need to join IATEFL to access CPD as it is not the unique provider.

However, Robert believed that the CPD activity of TAs has higher academic credentials than many sources and that this leads to professionalism of the field:

> "Their scholarly newsletters and journals, for academics here are always publishing
> the cutting-edge content that people are working on and they were heavily drawn
> from for my Masters programme for example."

From his US perspective, he referred to the TESOL TA, which has a strong publishing record. "[S]cholarly" may be the key criterion, for work which is empirically-based would probably have more credibility in establishing the professionalism of the field. As the reference to his Masters course shows, Robert has an academic background himself and this inclination may not be to all teachers' taste; some would prefer developmental activity with a pronounced practical element. In any case, membership of large TAs includes a very experienced and informed membership. The dissemination of this knowledge base should have some weight on the field beyond that of student researchers such as Robert.

Olivia also appreciated the TA's resources:

> "I was thinking about joining just to have access to the young learner journal really."

Olivia is unique in the sample for citing a resource as her main motivation for membership. She valued this journal in particular because she specialises in teaching children and can use this resource to gain new knowledge. However, the general message from the non-members is that TAs face severe competition in the area of resources and they would struggle to sell themselves as vehicles of CPD on this factor alone.

5.2.1.3.iii IATEFL non-members: face-to-face conferences

Non-members regarded conferences as a very visible sign of how TAs are linked to CPD, confirming Harmer (2007). Face-to-face conferences were portrayed as having an impact on CPD and there is a cascade effect as teachers come back from events and report their experiences. There is also some prestige for both speakers and delegates in attending conferences. Only one of them had attended the IATEFL main conference but they had all had experience of similar events and could speak from a position of knowledge. On the other hand, non-members did not refer to online events at all.

Robert referred to a student conference he attended as an MA student:

"One of the nicest things that they provided for me was I went to a conference. It was about an hour drive south of Seattle during the second year of my MA and as part of my membership, they also had a little like grants and scholarships available for people to apply for to basically get the cost of admission to conferences waived and that was really helpful for me, for me to take time off from my studies. To make that drive and also pay the full conference fee, I didn't feel like I could financially swing that. But my membership opened up opportunities for me to apply and like I said get that covered by the organisation, which then let me go to the conference, listen to great talks, get access to resources, so that was super helpful, that's like a more concrete example of how that benefitted me."

The conference was the highlight of Robert's membership although he made it clear that as a student he could not have attended without financial support. Cost remains an issue even for members in employment (Nobre, 2011). Aside from the input provided by talks and resources, Robert valued the conference as a change in direction, "take time off my studies". This is hardly down time – the popular conception of a conference as a paid holiday has no support in the data – because Robert was a keen and active participant in the event.

Adriana contrasted her own resource-rich position with less fortunate teachers and saw conferences as going some way to creating a parity within CPD:

"We tend to see things in a different way, we have had access to training they, they

can't afford maybe so for them this sort of you know meeting other people, working
in schools just like them. It's a good opportunity to exchange ideas and yeah."

Natasha would be an example of one of the teachers Adriana referred to as benefitting most from conferences and this was confirmed:

"[I]t's always inspiring at such conferences because you can see what other people do
and see some new perspectives." (Natasha)

The effect goes beyond individual teachers and individual events, as Steven pointed out:

"I guess in a way they do [have an impact on CPD] for example if I think about [name of
organisation], when we had people who had attended conferences, they came back and
they presented what they'd seen etc. Then it obviously had, it was obviously good for
professional development because we learned a lot."

A tradition of teachers attending and then sharing would give more credence to the professionalism of EFL.

5.2.2 Summary of sub-research question 2: what are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

As reported in the discussion of Crandall & Christison (2016), CPD is a source of much interest in terms of its importance, accessibility and affordability (Robinson, 2014). All three stakeholders were in agreement that TAs have the potential to play a role in CPD and via this can be perceived to promote the professionalism of EFL teachers. CPD was mainly conceived as methodology support and practical training which could increase teachers' knowledge base and lead to better practice. These findings are in line first with Lamb (2012), the most acknowledged work on TAs, that CPD, however multifarious, is the main function of a TA, and second with Stoll, Harris & Handscomb (2012) that CPD must have practical goals, i.e., the improvement of pedagogy.

Resources were still regarded as a tool in CPD but the wide availability of materials and training tools via the Internet acts as competition to TAs in this regard. On the other hand, conferences were described by IATEFL officers and members as offering significant CPD opportunities. Non-members concurred with this. This perceived importance of conferences to CPD supports Raza (2010), Puchta (2012) and Borg (2015). CPD within the context of an event is enhanced by the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers and compare approaches and contexts. All three groups credited face-to-face events but only officers and members referenced online events, mainly regarding them

as viable but inferior alternatives to face-to-face, so it would seem that face-to-face events are perceived to have the most impact on CPD.

In terms of what CPD actually entails, Crandall & Christison (2016) give three dimensions of CPD: teacher cognition, i.e., teachers' beliefs and values; reflection, how teachers process the feedback they get from their teaching experiences into meaningful outcomes; and teacher research. The data here seem to relate to cognition and reflection because CPD is envisaged as changing mind sets and developing a clearer rationale for pedagogy. None of the participants referred to teacher research as a facet of TAs, this despite teacher research being much vaunted in the literature, for example action-research (Edge, 2001; Talandis & Stout, 2015). Teacher research may be a valid component of CPD but these results suggest that teachers, perhaps sharing Ur's (2013b) cynicism, do not associate research with TAs or indeed professionalism.

5.3 Sub-research question 3: to what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

Based on Wenger (1998), CoP were operationalised in **2.2** as interest groups which interact and share in order to increase expertise and awareness. CoP are relevant to professionalism because they bridge identity and CPD by providing a means for them to be realised. The professionalism of the individual is enhanced by collaboration with others.

5.3.1 CoP and Conferences

CoP was the fourth theme to emerge from the data and signifies the perception that TAs create CoP. There are two categories: Networking and SIGs & Associates. Networking refers to how TAs bring teachers together and create a sense of shared purpose. SIGs & Associates is specific to IATEFL as a TA, issues relevant to sub-groups of IATEFL based on common interest or geographical region. A sub-category of SIGs & Associates is Demography, the spread of membership by geographical region and personal characteristics such as age and gender. The Conferences theme is also acknowledged as events were perceived to create a connection that is physical in the case of face-to-face events, people sharing the same space, and based on shared beliefs and values.

5.3.1.1 IATEFL officers: CoP and Conferences

To summarise this section, IATEFL officers concurred with Motteram (2016) that a TA provides a strong sense of community which is perceived by members as a facet of professionalism. It was posited that through the categories of Networking and SIGs & Associates, members have

opportunities to interact and exchange information and beliefs about their work, which impacts both identity and CPD.

5.3.1.1.i IATEFL officers: networking

Gerald paid tribute to the value of networking:

> "IATEFL offers lots of possibilities and for a lot of people, in particular people who work abroad, who want to maintain links back to the UK. There are still a considerable number of members who are ex-patriates, so for them it offers that kind of, that linkage back to a UK organisation. So, although we're seen as an international organisation, for some people it's their link back to the UK." (Gerald)

The argument runs that many EFL teachers are itinerant (cf. Johnston, 1999) and seek an anchor point through a TA. IATEFL offers a common reference point for such teachers and hence creates coherence in the field.

Rachel saw Networking as the main advantage of membership, confirming Aubrey & Coombe (2010) and Puchta (2012). She sees this benefit becoming more universal and powerful as new media for communication appear:

> "Networking, also as IATEFL increases its global reach via online options so webinars, the online conference, Facebook, Twitter. I think that's connecting people in a way that it wasn't possible to do certainly when I started seven and a half years ago, those options were not available and if they were, they weren't having quite the same reach as they currently do."

5.3.1.1.ii IATEFL officers: face-to-face and online conferences

The officers mentioned face-to-face conferences more often within this theme, probably because they are higher profile, but they did envisage online events as having a high take-up value by teachers because they are seen to impact professionalism:

> "There's a feeling of community that comes from the people who log in through the chat box and we did look for a real variety of topics, so something for everyone."

Clare voiced the common view amongst the officers that online events are more accessible and democratic, also providing the "something for everyone" which satisfies varying CPD demands. Shin (2016) also acknowledged the role of technology in creating CoP.

Sylvia, however, was less enthused with technology:

> "From my point of view, I think it must be the networking and the family sort of feeling, the fact that you know you can do this through social media, all the new things that are

happening. But you know when you go to conference and everyone gives you a hug, 'I

haven't seen you for years, that's our only contact with you'. I think that's the part most

people really like."

Sylvia believed that face-to-face contact is the most potent realisation of CoP. Comparison of a TA

with a family suggests an intimacy between members that fosters a belief that their values are

shared. Networking creates a bond between members which gratifies them.

5.3.1.1.iii IATEFL officers: SIGs & Associates

SIGs & Associates were identified with CoP:

"[SIGs] cover such a wide range of special interests . . . it gives you a chance to

communicate with like-minded people in your specific field. If you're the only person at an

institution teaching a particular subject or reading about it or simply interested in it, being in

a SIG gives you a whole new community that you can belong to. So, I think the SIGs are a

major part of what IATEFL has to offer." (Clare)

The range of SIGs is presented as so comprehensive as to appeal to teachers of any persuasion. The

implication was that SIGs and Associates constitute CoP and that this is a breeding ground for

professionalism because it makes teachers more competent.

In the SIGs & Associates category, Clare mentioned an initiative which benefits less privileged

regions:

"IATEFL projects, which was started by I believe [name of individual] and [name of

individual] is something, is a programme that allows local teacher training for particular

associations. So these are teaching associations which normally could not afford to have a

trainer come in and do a teacher training in their country."

IATEFL is portrayed as a mechanism for promoting CoP in areas without the resources for teachers to

work unassisted. The training comes from IATEFL drawing on its international outlook and

experience but it is localised to match conditions on the ground in a similar way to the CoP described

in Naidu, Neeraja, Ramani, Shivakumar, & Viswanatha (1992).

5.3.1.1.iv IATEFL officers: demography

Rachel saw the diversity of membership as a sign of reach, and hence the impact of professionalism

on the whole field:

"I know that we have members in Japan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka. I think we've got

members in a lot of different places. I don't know that we've got any members in Greenland or the Antarctic obviously but we have got a lot of members dotted all around the world and they're on islands, they're on vast continents, they're in cities, in villages, in the countryside, they're all over the world. And I think that's really exciting actually, that IATEFL has such a reach across borders and countries."

It is claimed that variegation spawns a CoP which potentially has a huge database of knowledge and beliefs that can feed into the professionalism of the field. It should be said that the examples of CoP in the literature tend to be small, closed groups, for example, Grossman & Wineburg (2000) and Nishino (2012), rather than vast inter-continental conglomerations.

5.3.1.2 IATEFL members: CoP and Conferences

By way of overview, IATEFL members confirmed Herrero (2016) that TAs as CoP increase perceptions of professionalism amongst teachers. This is principally realised through networking as liaison with peers augments professional identity and brings CPD opportunities. Conferences function as vehicles for CoP as they bring teachers together. SIGs and Associates involve teachers in a range of contexts and encourage advances in specific areas of expertise.

5.3.1.2.i IATEFL members: networking

Two examples suffice to illustrate this category:

"For me it's for the networking, socialise with academic people. It's very useful for me." (Akiko)

"I think that being able to liaise with people like we're doing now, to work with, to meet the big names of English language teaching and also in the pronunciation, the pronunciation course I teach, the teachers have started new projects because of the people I've met at IATEFL." (Gabriela)

Akiko's juxtaposition of "socialise" and "academic" suggested that networking bridges the personal and professional. The merging of these two qualities in the debate over professionalism has been much discussed (e.g., Canrinus, 2011; Floyd & Morrison, 2014). As for Gabriela, she was proud that through her contacts she has been able to pass on knowledge and skills to a future generation of teachers.

As Orpita revealed, there are different levels of networking, starting with that at local levels:

"We can say very strongly that BELTA has started this because it's very important that people get together and listen to each other and talk about things, rather than just let things happen. If you're not happy, you just kind of whine away but don't do anything."

Orpita claimed that the TA BELTA has started a trend of positive collaboration. The image of individual teachers complaining but doing nothing to seek redress will be familiar to anyone who has spent time in a staffroom (cf. Clandfield, 2004). The industry conditions which teachers experience (Wright, 2016) make EFL a soft target for criticism and the atmosphere can turn poisonous if there is no channel to vent frustrations. In many ways, teachers are to blame for their predicament. Their passivity, the tendency "to just let things happen" as Orpita sagely observes, allows them to be exploited. The CoP built by TAs may be a valuable outlet in light of the general rejection of advocacy (Paran, 2016).

5.3.1.2.ii IATEFL members: face-to-face conferences

Regarding the impact of events, Sara discussed less tangible factors in the conference experience:

> "But my colleagues per se are interested, I'm sure they're interested, in their job but they're not interested in the focus I have so I can't talk to them, I can't bounce ideas off them, you know. My head of department is very encouraging, he doesn't work in our department but he's seen my students at work. So I don't mean that I'm completely isolated or something but if I want people to talk to me and listen, I have a great response from other teachers at conferences . . . When I go to a conference and I can meet people who are interested, that's great."

What came out of the interview with Sara was a sense of isolation. Although very experienced, she sought reassurance that her values and beliefs were shared and feared that, based in New Zealand, the geographical distance had created a professional gap. One wonders if her rejection of her colleagues' support was well motivated: their lack of interest in her positions on teaching/learning, if true, does not preclude a dialogue. The IATEFL conference at the other side of the world was an important point of contact. Sara needed the prism of other practitioners to set and observe her own professionalism. She was not alone amongst the participants in seeing the formal aspects of a conference, the sessions and scheduled networking events, as almost secondary to collusion with others.

5.3.1.2.iii IATEFL members: SIGs & Associates

Concerning SIGs, Akiko suggested how SIGs could evolve to further knowledge in the field:

> "A topic could be like CLIL, content integrated learning. Some specific topic. Some people have special interests in something, like my current interest is critical thinking. Maybe some of the members, maybe not a lot of them, but some members have ideas."

Akiko is a university teacher and quite research-focused so she saw SIGs as an avenue to explore pedagogy and contribute to the field of EFL. Actually, her orientation towards the academic is more in line with the CoP described in the literature (e.g., Grossman & Wineburg, 2000; Fernandes & Vieira, 2014).

As for Associates, Orpita stated the purpose of her association in Bangladesh:

> "Our objective is of course getting English language teachers on to a platform, giving
> them a voice and some sort of empowerment and development of teachers."

Orpita saw teachers in her region as disenfranchised from professionalism because of a lack of resources and opportunities (cf. Kucha, 2016). CoP for Orpita are one way of negating some of the factors infringing on professionalism.

Akiko did express one reservation of Associates: they may have a limited outlook:

> "JALT [Japan Association for Language Teachers] is about teaching of English
> intended for teachers of English from elementary to university so anyone can join. It's
> really focused on teaching in Japan to Japanese students. So it has its advantages and
> its disadvantages."

The advantage of associates is that their agenda is relevant because context-sensitive. The disadvantage is that a local focus may be too blinkered. Akiko had earlier expressed her personal openness to new approaches from the West. These methodologies may not be any superior to those practised in Japan, the novel often appears attractive just because of its exoticness, but awareness of alternatives allows existing options to be reevaluated. Japanese teachers talking to other Japanese teachers about Japanese students may not generate a new discourse. On the other hand, associates can have a broader appeal, for example they can bring in outside experts for conferences and publications, etc. It depends very much on the construct of CoP the TA wants to achieve.

5.3.1.3 IATEFL non-members: CoP and Conferences

The relationship between non-members and the CoP and Conference themes follows. Non-members recognised the value of networking to professionalism on two levels. First, it relieves teachers who are isolated; second, it expands their knowledge and skills base. Both prevent professional stagnation. They also referred to conferences as opportunities to network. SIGs and Associates did not feature in the data, apart from one fleeting reference, probably because non-members are unaware of them.

5.3.1.3.i IATEFL non-members: networking

An explicit goal of IATEFL is to build a sense of community, articulated in the organizational strapline, "[*l*]*inking*, developing and supporting English Language Teaching professionals worldwide" [emphasis added]. This was attractive, as Motteram (2016) claims, even to non-members like Wanda:

> "I mean, it makes you be part of a group and a body, yes. It gathers and sort of represents people with the same interests and the same approach to life, well, no, not the same approach to life, but sort of identifies a group."

Wanda fell short of grouping individuals with "the same approach to life", perhaps in recognition that the common interests are workplace oriented. If TAs were to function as CoP, this would allow best practice to be shared and bolster impressions of professionalism.

For example, Natasha made the point that different subjects loosely clustering under English teaching could find a common ground through TAs:

> "I think that university education and university teachers can share a lot with school teaching and generally it's difficult when we speak about English language teaching, it's very difficult to stay in just one sphere, I mean just university teaching because I well often have to teach school children as well so it's very closely connected for me."

If teachers from different but related subject areas could build a CoP, as in the multi-disciplinary CoP described in Fernandes & Vieira (2014), this would make a fragmented field more cohesive and lead to better practice in the component parts.

Olivia illustrated networking as an antidote to isolation through an acquaintance's experience:

> "The guy that was on my MA course, my opinion was, I think the reason he joined was that he was teaching in Taiwan and he felt kind of on the outskirts of the TEFL industry. He wasn't really in touch with anyone teaching in other countries and other contexts and he was working for I think a primary school and he felt like joining IATEFL was a way of getting in touch with the rest of the world."

Olivia's explanation was coloured by the fact that this is her interpretation rather than the teacher's own admission. She never named the "guy" and the degree of hedging, "my opinion . . . I think . . . kind of", suggests that this is through a lack of familiarity rather than wish to preserve his anonymity. Possibly he gained more of a sense of community through the TA than he did through his MA course with Olivia. The phrase "on the outskirts" suggests a remoteness which is beyond the geographical. Isolation from those who can impart and imbibe values weakens perceptions of professionalism.

Gaia expanded on this:

> "[A]nd probably also to overcome a slight sense of loneliness . . . [F]or example a teacher I spoke to recently said that she found it really frustrating because she couldn't even memorise their names and she was really annoyed because in the past she used to be able to and now she has two hundred children that she sees every week and therefore it's impossible . . . I mean this person obviously does it because she wants to sort of overcome her loneliness, as a teacher, you know."

It seems ironic that someone dealing with hundreds of children on a weekly basis could be said to experience loneliness. What Gaia called loneliness is obviously not physical separation; if anything she is overwhelmed by the company around her. The frustration of dealing with a deteriorating educational process – the result of the acceleration of work to incorporate ever higher student numbers in education (cf. Damon, Colby, Bronk & Ehrlich, 2005) – has created a disconnect between her beliefs and reality. The sense of CoP engendered by a TA offers reassurance.

5.3.1.3.ii IATEFL non-members: conferences

Wanda showed how conferences are prime networking opportunities:

> "You need to share ideas, to get something from other people and sometimes when you just go to a conference, maybe you skip the talks and get to hang out with other people, even talk and realise, 'Oh my god, this person has fantastic ideas and I never thought about this.' And it's not sort of networking to get another job, it's real professional connection."

There is a distinction made here between the pragmatic networking done to enhance one's employment prospects and the networking done for growth. Wanda saw the latter as relevant to professionalism.

5.3.1.3.iii IATEFL non-members: SIGs and Associates

Only one non-member, Wanda again, referenced the category SIGs & Associates and their brief comment is no more than an aside:

> "There were special interest groups and so on and so forth."

Her "so on and so forth" did not attach much merit to SIG membership.

5.3.2 Summary of sub-research question 3: to what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

Connection with other practitioners, particularly face-to-face interaction, was seen by all three groups of participants as creating perceptions of professionalism. All cited networking as an

instrument to confirm the existing beliefs and values and bring in new elements. Aside from its role in the acquisition of academic lore, on a more personal level, networking also bonds teachers, makes them more confident in their professionalism and alleviates a sense of isolation. Aubrey & Coombe (2010), Lamb (2012) and Motteram (2016) all highlighted networking as a core function and benefit of TAs. While IATEFL officers and members enthused over the potential of SIGs & Associates to influence perceptions of professionalism for teachers in specific fields and regions, the non-members had nothing to say on this, probably because they are just unaware of what SIGs & Associates are and how they operate.

However, the question remains whether TAs can be considered legitimate CoP, as posited by Motteram (2016) and Herrero (2016). It is telling that none of the participants referred to IATEFL as a community of practice. Wenger (1998) stipulated three elements distinguishing CoP from mere groupings: joint enterprise, members understanding the nature of their work and their contribution; mutual engagement, maintaining relationships of trust; shared repertoire, a common discourse as well as a bank of tools and techniques which members can draw upon in practice. Wenger has also been explicit (Farnsworth, Kleanthous & Wenger-Trayner, 2016) that not all groups qualify as CoP.

The forces at play in IATEFL, mainly networking, while laudable seem too vague to satisfy Wenger's criteria, and so IATEFL cannot be deemed a community of practice. Joint enterprise is problematic because the teachers work in such diverse conditions with such diverse aims; mutual engagement is hardly a factor because the relationships enjoyed are largely casual without any fixed commitment; shared repertoire is partially satisfied by the dissemination of methodology but there is no evidence at all for a shared discourse, a finding which complements the rejection of discourse affinity in **4.3**. By extension, TAs seem collections of individuals with shared and shifting interests rather than fully-fledged CoP. This does not negate their value to the individual or industry but it does advise caution when using the term CoP in the context of an EFL TA.

5.4 Sub-research question 4: to what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

It is clear from the data from the three groups of stakeholders that there is a degree of overlap between the three constructs. This is particularly evidenced by the conferences theme as events are prime CPD opportunities (CPD), create networking opportunities (CoP) and lead to enhanced self-perception (identity). It may be because conferences embrace all three aspects of the model of

professionalism that they are given such emphasis in both the literature (e.g., Borg, 2015) and the results. Data from the officers and the members can be seen to present an idealised conceptualisation of professionalism which has all three constructs in operation and contributing to professionalism. To their understanding, identity comes in part from the sense of knowledge and worth gained by participation in CPD and CoP; CPD is informed by teachers' personal values and beliefs, i.e., identity, and may be aimed at and carried out in CoP.

However, consideration of the responses of non-members makes it clear that the impact of each construct to professionalism is not equal. As discussed in relation to sub-research question 2, the unqualified references by all stakeholders to the value of CPD indicate this to be the key factor in perceptions of professionalism, and almost the raison d'être of TAs. Identity is recognised as a force in professionalism but there is considerable doubt, particularly amongst non-members, as to if and how professional identity could be obtainable through membership of a TA. Above all, identity is complex to articulate and relate to compared to CPD, which can be measured through concrete steps such as attending events and gaining qualifications. As for CoP, it was argued in **5.3.2** that the sense of community engendered by a TA does not constitute CoP proper and this remains a nebulous notion. Thus, in terms of perceptions of professionalism generally and professionalism through a TA, although the three constructs feeding into professionalism are inter-dependent, it is CPD which is seen to play the dominant role.

5.5 Summary and main research question: what are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers?

Relating the four sub-research questions to the main research question serves as a summary to both results chapters. The strongest and most consistent finding comes from sub-research question 2, that stakeholders experience and perceive TAs primarily as a vehicle for CPD. Even non-members see the role and value of TAs within CPD. Furthermore, TAs appear to have an important function in the industry as CPD opportunities are limited and not always accessible. Within this CPD provision, conferences are particularly valued. However, TAs may be over-reliant on conferences as a means of CPD delivery as those teachers who cannot attend conferences may see the other benefits of TA membership as secondary and consequently not join or remain in the TA. A much more divisive issue is that of professional identity, sub-research question 1. While identity is seen as important, the perceived contribution of TAs to identity depends very much on which side of the fence teachers are: members register an impact while non-members deny it. Furthermore, even those who make a

connection between TAs and professionalism, the officers and members, cannot articulate identity in terms of either the nature-identity, institutional-identity or discourse-identity of Gee (2000). At best, the relationship between identity and TAs can be seen as aspirational. Teachers have but a nebulous sense of professional identity (Johnston, 1997) and TAs fail to make the link between their activity and identity. As regards sub-research question 3, being a member of a TA does supply a sense of community, important to professionalism given the isolation many teachers experience, but TAs fail formal criteria to qualify as CoP. Sub-research question 4 acts as a conclusion: of the three elements contributing to the conceptual framework of professionalism in **2.2**, identity, CPD and CoP, CPD is perceived and experienced the strongest and is the most visible to the stakeholders in the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This final chapter begins by summarising the study. It then highlights the original contribution to the field made. Next is discussion of the implications and recommendations of the research findings. This is followed by reflection on how the findings have changed my thinking and influenced my practice.

6.1 Summary of study

This thesis has investigated the relationship between TAs and professionalism in EFL. The motivation for the project was that there is a lack of empirical research into TAs in EFL and the assumed link between TAs and professionalism has not been established. Within a relativist paradigm, professionalism was operationalised via three constructs: identity, continuing professional development (CPD) and communities of practice (CoP). The definition of a TA was supplied by Lamb (2012).

The over-arching research question was:

What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers?

There were four sub-research questions:

1. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?

2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?

3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

The literature review examined identity, CPD and CoP in general teaching (non-EFL) and EFL in isolation and in relation to TAs. This found the most relevant construct of identity to be the affinity-identity of Gee (2000), as it acknowledges the fluid and multiple nature of identities as they are negotiated through interaction and cumulative learning experiences. The model of CPD adopted was that of Bubb & Earley (2007) as this reflects the diversity of CPD provision and maintains that the goal of CPD is improved pedagogy. The CoP construct (Wenger, 1998) was adopted because of its value in bridging identity and CPD. In general, it was found that commentators on EFL have struggled

to conceptualise and operationalise professionalism, using the term loosely, while TAs have received minimal attention from scholars.

Within a social-constructionist framework, the approach was qualitative and the objective was to engage participants in articulating their attitudes, beliefs and experiences. The methodology was that of an exploratory case study of IATEFL as the largest UK-based TA. The mono-method was face-to-face interviews. 17 participants, selected by convenience sampling, were divided between three sets of stakeholders: IATEFL officers, members and, an innovative feature of the study, non-members of IATEFL. The data were analysed through semi-grounded Content Analysis and found four themes: Identity, CPD, Conferences and CoP.

The results of the four sub-research questions are summarised below.

1. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the way TAs contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers?
While professional identity is important to IATEFL officers, members and non-members, only officers and members believed that identity is connected to membership of a TA. Officers and members did see membership as status-enhancing but non-members viewed TAs as too peripheral to EFL as an, often hostile, industry and to their own circumstances to have any sway. Even officers and members conceded that there is too little awareness of TAs for them to have an impact on the field of EFL. Furthermore, the participants' projection of identity was rather nebulous. It cannot be claimed that the data support the affinity-identity of Gee (2000) because the perceptions and experiences of the participants seem too diverse to coalesce into any meaningful sense of a shared identity. While identity, or the lack of it, is valued, it would seem wholly dependent on individual beliefs and circumstances; a complex mix which does not exclude TAs but limits their contribution. Thus, bearing in mind that the vast majority of EFL teachers do not belong to an international TA, the impact of TAs on perceptions of professional identity can best be described as marginal.

2. What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the CPD provided by TAs and its contribution to EFL teachers' sense of professionalism?
All stakeholders concurred that TAs have the potential to play a role in CPD and via this can be perceived to promote the professionalism of EFL teachers. CPD was mainly conceived as methodology support and practical training which will increase teachers' knowledge base and lead to better practice. Conferences, face-to-face events in particular, were experienced as the prime

CPD opportunity offered by TAs, to the extent that IATEFL is almost identified with its annual conference.

3. To what extent are TAs perceived by stakeholders to function as Communities of Practice for EFL teachers?

While all participants agreed that TAs facilitate networking, TAs cannot be considered legitimate CoP according to Wenger's (1998) criteria of joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire. The motives and goals of members are too heterogeneous. TAs seem collections of individuals with shared and shifting interests rather than fully-fledged CoP.

4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive professional identity, CPD and Communities of Practice to impact on one another in the professionalism of EFL teachers?

There is a degree of convergence and inter-dependence amongst the three constructs. However, their individual impact on professionalism is unequal, with CPD playing the main role as the most well-articulated and universally accepted of the constructs.

In answer to the over-arching research question, What are stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the ways in which TAs contribute to the professionalism of EFL teachers? , the strongest and most consistent finding is that stakeholders see TAs primarily as a vehicle for CPD. Identity is a much more complex phenomenon and at best the relationship between identity and TAs can be seen as aspirational. Finally, while TAs do supply a sense of community, they fail formal criteria to qualify as CoP.

6.2 Contribution to field

This is not the first study of TAs within EFL but two features mark it out as significant to future work and as having a degree of originality. The first is the methodology and the second is the conceptualisation of professionalism.

6.2.1 Methodology

Previous studies of TAs have all had two traits not followed here. First, they have adopted questionnaires as methods. For example, the most recent survey of IATEFL (Belak, 2018) is an online questionnaire essentially repeating Puchta's earlier version (2012). Lamb (2012) did include group interviews in addition to surveys but no information is given to how these were actually engineered and how personalised the experience was for individual participants. Second, empirical studies have exclusively surveyed TA members, as is the case with Belak (ibid.), Puchta (ibid.) and Motteram

(2016). This study has used interviews in preference to surveys because it captures a fuller and richer data set. It has also targeted non-members as this reflects the reality of the EFL world where the vast majority of teachers are not members of an international TA such as IATEFL.

Interviewing allowed participants to be probed after a particularly interesting comment. To show the contrast with surveys, Belak (2018, p. 23) expresses frustration at not being able to engage in a dialogue with the anonymous author of the following response to an open question:

> My guess is that when IATEFL committee members see my responses, if they do at all, they will dismiss them as the ramblings of someone who bears a grudge, is too negative, doesn't understand the realities of running such an organisation or similar.

This hostility is very much at odds with the overwhelming positive comments by respondents, 75% saying they were "very happy" (p. 22) with member benefits, but the methodology allows no mechanism to find a motivation for the writer's dissatisfaction.

The following sequence from the conversation with Adriana shows the comparative flexibility of interviewing:

> *"You said right at the beginning that when you joined the Romanian association, that made you feel more professional, would you say that's true of teachers generally?"*
> "I think it depends. I think there is a certain sort of prestige. We are social animals where we like to be part of a group so I would say for some people, yes, why not. I mean I guess it depends of what your context is, yeah. Personally, now I don't know, I don't think I would feel the same sort of 'Oh my god, I'm part of an association of professionals'. I mean but I think I've become a bit more cynical in the meantime."
> *"Cynical of what?"*
> "Of how the TEFL world works really."

The opening of the interview question "*You said right at the beginning*" allows the conversation to be brought back on track to professionalism and the focus is turned from personal experience to considerations of other practitioners. Adriana does contemplate the question from the angle of other teachers but then turns to self-analysis. After the dramatic interjection of direct speech to show her contempt for a depiction of TAs as identity markers, "cynical" is very apt and another unscripted interview question picks up on this word in order to explore the theme of Identity. Surveys can contain open questions but, as illustrated, they cannot compare with interviewing in the depth of interaction between researcher and participant. Because professionalism deals with perceptions, it is crucial that the method allows participants to express their beliefs and values fully.

Although interviews can never achieve the sample size of surveys, the quality of the data is much higher.

Turning to the second facet of the methodology, the incorporation of non-members into the sample, approaches which only target members are immediately skewed in favour of a positive interpretation of the relationship between TAs and professionalism. Members by definition must be convinced of the value of membership, otherwise they would not continue their involvement in the TA. Admittedly, their motivation to be members may not be connected to perceptions of professionalism, or they may be self-deluded, but in any case members are simply not representative of the EFL workforce as a whole. There are many reasons why teachers do not join TAs. The simplest explanation, and possibly most convenient for TAs, is that teachers are simply unaware of TAs, and this is articulated frequently in the data. However, a darker version of the truth is that teachers are informed but nevertheless reject TAs as relevant to professionalism: data from renunciates Adriana and Olivia bear testimony to this. Interpretations are multiple but sampling needs to include non-members to have validity.

6.2.2 Conceptualisation of professionalism

Professionalism has been discussed widely in connection with a range of professions including mainstream teaching. As Smith & Sky (2015) admit, there has been nothing like the same kind of rumination on the nature and implications of professionalism in the EFL literature. Often, professionalism is undefined as if the term has an accepted currency. For example, the most quoted and extensive study on TAs, Lamb (2012) does engage with the literature on professionalism but it never actually shows how professionalism is operationalised for the purposes of research. Despite this, Lamb arrives at a definition of TAs as "networks of *professionals*, run by and for *professionals* (p. 295) [emphasis added]". An argument that TAs disseminate professionalism because they are made up of professionals is circular if professionalism is not adequately conceptualised.

This study has conceptualised professionalism through three interlocking strands identified as integral in the literature on general and EFL teaching: identity, CPD and CoP. Identity is the most challenging construct as it merges personal and vocational values but we can only understand professionalism by understanding who teachers are and what they aspire to. However, the problem found in this study and the literature, for example, Blair (2014), is that teachers struggle to articulate their identity so there is a large degree of interpretation involved on the researcher's side. CPD is the most patent aspect of professionalism although how it is enacted remains controversial (cf. Robinson, 2014). CoP have rarely been applied to an EFL context following Wenger's (1998) criteria

(Herrero, 2016, is one relevant study) and the data here reject IATEFL as a community of practice. What this study has attempted is to relate identity, CPD and CoP to perceptions of professionalism in an empirical study. While it does not untangle the Gordian knot of what professionalism means for each individual teacher, it does provide a more robust and comprehensive framework than is found in most studies.

6.3 Implications and recommendations

The first section deals with what the results suggest for perceptions of professionalism in EFL. Professionalism, of course, is demonstrable without membership of a TA so there is a section commenting on the connection between TAs and professionalism. There is then reflection on IATEFL as an organisation before notes on future research in this area.

6.3.1 Perceptions of professionalism in EFL

Those involved in EFL lack a vision of professionalism which they can translate into their practice. They tend to interpret professionalism from their individual perspective with their beliefs and values tempered by the context they work in. Instructors are fully aware that EFL lacks solid credentials to professionalism and that its integrity needs to be defended in a way that with established professions, such as law and accountancy, it does not. This exchange with Gerald illustrates:

> *"I'm asking this question to different countries, but in your country, the UK, is EFL regarded as a profession?"*
>
> "Is EFL regarded as a profession? I'd probably, it depends on what you mean. It's part of the teaching profession and teaching is seen as a profession. I don't think it's very well recognised as a profession. You might consider someone who is an EAL [English as an Additional Language] teacher to be more recognised but it's not very high status, despite the fact that it brings billions of pounds into, into the UK coffers, so, no, it isn't highly regarded.

The "depends on what you mean" shows that there is no consensus on what professionalism stands for. What it means for the interviewer is likely to differ for what it means for the interviewee, an observation which can be extrapolated across the whole data set. Gerald credits there being a teaching profession but regards EFL as a less prestigious sub-stratum. Within EFL, there is likely to be a pecking-order in terms of perceptions of professionalism, with those working in higher education, like Gerald, at the top, those working in state schools, like Mei, in the middle, and those working in private language schools or freelance, like Robert, at the bottom.

The area which has perhaps been addressed the least satisfactorily, due to its complexity, is sub-research question 4; the extent to which identity, CPD and CoP interact to create perceptions of professionalism. It can be inferred that identity, CPD and CoP is not a triumvirate and they play different roles with different levels of contribution. It is posited in this project that CPD plays the major role but this is only in the context of this case study. Studies in different directions may emphasise identity, CPD and CoP differently. For example, CoP may not even be a construct if the focus is on individual teachers studied in isolation.

In terms of the impact of perceptions of professionalism on the field, the low status accorded to EFL is creating genuine suffering in terms of poor working conditions and economic exploitation. Because of the way EFL is seen, teachers like Wanda are poorly-paid and have chronic employment instability:

> "Right now, I am, as I said, right now I am utterly broke so that's the thing. If it's a matter of choosing breakfast or IATEFL, I'm very sorry."

Typically, the only people willing to tolerate such conditions are the under-qualified and low-skilled, teaching in exchange for the opportunity to travel. Their lack of professionalism further stigmatises the field so that a vicious circle in enacted as quality teachers are frustrated and leave EFL, creating a labour demand which can only be met by accepting untrained teachers. EFL as a business model is highly successful, as Gerald above alluded to, but because of a lack of quality control and regulation it offers a very poor setting for professionalism.

6.3.2 The connection between TAs and professionalism

The most glaring point to be made here is a negative one: there is too little awareness of TAs amongst EFL teachers and too few teachers are members of TAs for TAs to be in a position to influence professionalism on any kind of global scale. TAs can mean much to individual members but the vast majority of teachers are not members of TAs and have no interest in joining them. Everything claimed about TAs needs to be read in this context.

This situation is only likely to change if TAs have some regulatory force, ideally if they determine entry to EFL. Unfortunately, as Sylvia pointed out, even international TAs lack any real clout:

> "[W]e will never be in a position where you have to join IATEFL if you are a TEFL teacher, you know like with other professions you have to belong to the organisation."

When membership is purely voluntary and benefits are intangible, TAs will never appeal to more than a minority. Nor does there seem to be any appetite for advocacy. The concept that TAs could protect teachers and shield them from hostile industry conditions has not been embraced. Being

cynical, what has transpired is a situation where TAs are an optional luxury for those teachers fortunate enough to have the time and financial resources to utilise their services.

On a more positive note, the results indicate that main area where TAs can impact perceptions of professionalism is through CPD. Traditional face-to-face events have been far from superseded by the burgeoning digital provision and conferences remain an important member benefit. The point was made that the CPD offered by TAs is actually very accessible and affordable compared to commercial courses. TAs could make this more explicit in their promotional literature. They could also brand forms of their CPD so that it carries accreditation, which would definitely be attractive to some teachers.

The participants, other than discussing their experiences of conferences, did not expand much on the CPD activity offered but there is scope for TAs widening and diversifying CPD. The most relevant to this study is for TAs to encourage reflection on professionalism itself and how to translate this into practice. The educational literature does not give much attention to how professionalism can be taught but one technique common in medicine is critical incident analysis whereby practitioners reflect on good and bad practice and create action points for their own or their institution's behaviour. Rademacher, Simpson & MarcDante (2010) describe several case studies of critical incident analysis and report high satisfaction rates: in one application 97% of the 186 students found this approach useful in operationalising professionalism, i.e., moving from theoretical representations to changes in their procedures. As consistent with the definition of professionalism adopted in this study, Evans (2008, p. 29), professionalism must be visible so EFL could usefully adopt such training models. Given the sensitivity of discussing critical incidents with colleagues, TAs as relatively neutral ground may provide a more suitable context.

In addition, TAs could encourage teacher research as a valid form of CPD. None of the participants in this study mentioned research as a TA activity but, as demonstrated with a local TA (Kuchah, 2016), research can benefit members on two levels, theory and practice, as they gain a fuller understanding of the issues involved and arrive at practical remedies. International TAs would presumably have more resources and be able to tackle more ambitious and global research projects.

This example touches upon the issue of the respective value of local compared to international TAs. This was a case study of IATEFL but several of the participants referenced local TAs, for example the Romanian Association of Teachers of English (Adriana). International TAs probably carry more

prestige and offer more extended networking opportunities. On the other hand, local TAs can make CPD more accessible, particularly conferences, and they can address issues specific to that country or region. There is space for both local and international TAs and ideally they would collaborate, for example local TAs offering scholarships to events held by organisations like IATEFL.

6.3.3 IATEFL as an organisation

Many of the points made in the previous section apply to IATEFL specifically. The most pertinent of these is lack of awareness of what IATEFL is and what they can offer. Gerald doubted the effectiveness of a massive marketing effort but it is difficult to see how IATEFL will grow without it:

> "[I]n order to [increase membership], you would have to spend a lot of money on marketing, you would have to have somebody within, at the moment we don't have anybody within the Head Office structure, who actually focuses on marketing of membership. So, you would need a separate person, whose job it was solely to do that. You might need more than one person. You'd have to go out, they'd have to go out, go round schools, around the world. Imagine the budget that that would require to do that. So, it would be, it might be worthwhile in the end but when you look at the fact that at the moment you have that constraint that you can't really increase membership fees to cover costs, would it really be worth it at the end of the day?"

The answer to Gerald's question depends on the goals on IATEFL. Is it content to service a relatively small number of teachers and balance the books or does it want to have a wider impact on EFL and a larger number of individual teachers? One would advise caution on observing the status quo. Lamb (2012) makes the point that falling membership is the biggest issue threatening TAs. EFL is not shrinking as an industry but the supply of members to TAs is and IATEFL should have a strategy in place to deal with that.

The achievements of IATEFL in creating perceptions of professionalism should also be acknowledged. Their jewel in the crown is the annual conference, which is enthusiastically received by all those who can participate and impacts both identity and CPD. So associated with IATEFL is the annual conference that several times in the interviews participants responded to a question about IATEFL as if the conference were being referred to. There is a risk that the conference is overshadowing other benefits of membership and becoming the sole focus, as illustrated below in the exchange with Ragna:

> "*Do you feel more of a professional by being a member of IATEFL?*"

> "I'm not sure it's being a member but going to the conference, certainly. I mean when I'm
>
> there and when I've come back from the conference, yes, I think I do feel more professional,
>
> yes."

Ragna separately comments that she wouldn't be a member without the conference. Few teachers, and not all IATEFL members, can go to an overseas event so IATEFL should not define itself by the conference. Unfortunately, because of the financial precariousness inherent in EFL teaching, conferences are only accessible by an elite. Other benefits are needed to reach out to grassroots teachers.

The overriding feeling is that IATEFL has unrealised potential to impact the professionalism of individual teachers and EFL as a field. The absence of regulatory bodies in EFL was represented as a barrier to professionalism in **1.2.2** but actually this has created a void which IATEFL as one of the longest-established TAs could fill. For example, were IATEFL to develop a pathway towards professional accreditation, one free of the political interests of national educational systems and the commercial concerns of international testing systems, it would face little competition and the final product would have currency. There are CPD opportunities aplenty in IATEFL but no coherent plan for how members can progress through them or recognition of members' achievement in exploiting CPD and bettering their practice. A clear CPD direction from a body as respected and neutral as IATEFL could help develop the notion of EFL as a real career.

IATEFL could also rise to the challenge of operationalising CoP in an EFL environment. As discussed in **2.4.3**, CoP are important to professionalism because as vehicles for identity formation and CPD they can be customised to specific teaching and learning contexts. The data has established that IATEFL as a body does not meet the criteria for CoP but it already contains the infra-structure for instigating CoP: the SIGs and Associates. SIGs represent members bound by professional interests, for example technology, while Associates represent members from one location. Both bodies are thus in a position to channel their efforts into a direction which is specific to members' interests and more attractive for them to invest in. It is perhaps erroneous to assume that impact must be top-down, for example advocacy statements agreed by trustees, as CoP would represent a very strong grassroots achievement, the influence of which was bound to permeate upwards.

These are challenging propositions but I would suggest that IATEFL needs to be bolder if it is to remain relevant to current members and attract new ones.

6.3.4 Further research

This study indicates that professionalism as a concept is highly variable and context-dependent. Individuals do not have a benchmark understanding of professionalism to inform their behaviour and allow them to self-reflect. Professionalism needs to be separately operationalised according to the purpose of the research and plucking one model from the literature is unlikely to be successful. The methodology needs a thorough awareness of the participants and the circumstances in which they work. As such, further research should adopt a social-constructionist approach and use methods, like interviews, which can record the richness of human experience.

Interviews seem an ideal tool but considerable skill is needed in conducting them so as to maximise the quality of the sample. Interview technique is one area where this study could clearly be improved if there were to be a replica project. To exemplify, a degree of cultural awareness is needed when conversing with different nationalities. With Akiko, from Japan, the interview was rather staccato as several times she made long pauses, which I interpreted as the end of a turn, whereas in fact she hadn't completed her thoughts. This disconcerted and puzzled me until I consulted the literature and found that the Japanese often use long pauses, as long as four seconds according to Nakane (2006), as a politeness rather than terminal strategy. A prior understanding of such subtleties would put interviewees more at ease and elicit more data.

This study is original in including non-members of TAs. It is strongly recommended that further research into this area also contains non-members in the sample. The sample size could be increased to test the emerging theories and with more data, analysis could be fine-tuned so that other factors such as length of teaching experience and gender could be investigated as possible variables.

6.4 Personal reflections

CA entails multiple re-readings of the data and a high degree of familiarity with the interview transcripts. What this process has impressed on me is the varied and disparate nature of the field which I have referred to throughout as EFL. The 17 participants all occupied quite different socio-cultural spaces. For example, Gerald is established as a tenured university lecturer in the UK and probably does not need membership of a TA to build a professional identity. Wanda on the other hand, freelance and in a vulnerable position, rejects TAs not because professional identity is not valued but because she thinks what TAs offer is irrelevant in this regard. EFL is not monolithic and encompasses a wide range of individuals in individual circumstances.

This study has made me more aware that local circumstances vary tremendously and there is vacillation across a teacher's working life: Wanda makes reference to a previous more privileged existence. I have felt a tendency to judge some of the participants for not doing more to assert their professionalism, for example by engaging in advocacy, but this criticism needs to be tempered by the fact that I am not fully cognisant of the complications and realities of their personal and working lives. In particular, referring back to **1.4**, as a NST I occupy a privileged position compared to the NNST majority and cannot fully comprehend their professional plight. The reality is that NSTs are much less under scrutiny than NNSTs as the latter still have to defend their legitimacy. NST commentators such as myself should recognise such tensions before formulating theories which claim to be applicable to teachers as an anomalous mass.

In connection with this, as the project developed I have realised that the issues involved are more than academic for they make a real difference to individuals' lives. As a "good" researcher one trains oneself to listen impassively and be impartial but some of the information shared, for example the economic hardships of EFL teachers, makes for painful reading when the consequences on the interviewees as people, not just research participants, are considered. A researcher is an observer of reality, and in social-constructionism that reality is changeable and multi-faceted, but to some extent I felt a degree of voyeurism in exposure to people's inner struggles.

Finally, as this is an EdD rather than PhD, I would like to record the impact on my own practice as an EFL teacher. First, I am committed to the idea that engaging in research is a form of CPD as this process of extended reflection has allowed me to question and refine my own teaching. Second, I have learned the most important message about professionalism: ultimately professionalism results in better student learning. I do not believe that membership of a TA necessarily has the same result but that does not make my own membership of IATEFL redundant. I want to become a better teacher and neither that nor professionalism is dependent on membership of a TA.

6.5 Final remarks

EFL as an industry is not showing signs of decline. Although numbers of EFL learners in the UK are lower due to financial and perhaps security issues, EFL is in massive global demand with students learning in situ. Despite the inroads made by technology, learning activity on this scale would not happen without teachers. The contexts of learning vary tremendously globally but it can be generalised that effective instruction is key to allowing learners to realise their personal goals. As operationalised in this study, the ultimate aim of professionalism is improved practice so teachers

who do want to make a difference need to aspire towards professionalism. By doing so they help themselves function in the classroom, they make themselves more employable, they improve the stature of their institution and the field, and, most importantly, they facilitate learning. There is not one version of professionalism, one road towards it or indeed a terminal point – teachers must keep adapting and learning to meet fresh circumstances and goals. Professionalism is thus both a complex and complicated phenomenon; complex in that it involves both personal and work-based values; complicated in that the beliefs and competencies are numerous and overlapping. If TAs are one resource a teacher can use on their journey towards professionalism, their existence is well justified.

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Appendix A: Information Sheet

Researcher: Supervisors:

Wayne Rimmer   Professor Andrew Goodwyn, Dr Louise Courtney

0161 973 4192   Phone: 0118 378 2602

wrimmer@hotmail.com   Email: a.c.goodwyn@reading.ac.uk,

                                              l.m.courtney@reading.ac.uk

INFORMATION SHEET

You have been asked to participate in a research study and selected to be a possible participant because it is believed your views and experience will inform the project. A total of approximately 15 people have been asked to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of teaching associations on professionalism. A teaching association is understood as an organisation, local, national or international, which provides services to members – largely teachers, who join on a voluntary basis - such as conferences, publications and networking opportunities. The results of this study will be used for research purposes, within my dissertation and as part of external research publications in the future.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher, lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission. The transcription will be shown to you in order for you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. The information gathered will be used by the student researcher for data analysis.

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. You will be assigned an identification number (ID) only to distinguish your responses from those of other participants. This ID is in no way associated with your name. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the student researcher, Wayne Rimmer, and the researcher's supervisors, Professor Andrew Goodwyn and Dr Louise Courtney, will have access to the records. The student researcher can also send the results of this research to you electronically if you wish to have them. We do not anticipate that participation in the project will involve you in any expense.

Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. Also, you are free to withdrawal your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting the student researcher, Wayne Rimmer, contact details above, if you wish to withdraw from the study.

This application has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor, details above.

Signed: (Researcher)

Date:

Consent Form

Project title: Exploring the contribution of teaching associations to the professionalism of teachers of English as a foreign language: a UK case study

I have read and had explained to me by Wayne Rimmer the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to being interviewed and recorded: _____ _____

yes   no

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix B: Ethical Approval Form

Tick one: Staff project: ___   EdD X

Name of applicant (s): Wayne Rimmer

Title of project: Exploring the contribution of teaching associations to the professionalism of

teachers of English as a foreign language: a UK case study

Name of supervisors (for student projects): Professor Andrew Goodwyn and Dr Louise Courtney

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

PLEASE COMPLETE EITHER SECTION A OR B AND PROVIDE THE DETAILS REQUIRED IN

SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION, THEN SIGN THE FORM (SECTION C)

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has no significant ethical implications.	X
Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words. Attach any consent form, information sheet and research instruments to be used in the project (e.g., tests, questionnaires, interview schedules). Please state how many participants will be involved in the project: *This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.*	
The purpose of this project is to investigate the impact of teaching associations (TAs) within the field of English as a foreign language (EFL), using the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) as a case study and interviewing stakeholders in order to determine their perceptions of the value of the organisation and its role in creating a sense of professionalism for the industry and individual members. The participants are members of the IATEFL organisation: 3 trustees, 3 members of IATEFL Head Office, 3 SIG Coordinators and 6 general members. The instrument is a face-to-face interview which is recorded and transcribed. The interview schedule is attached with the information and consent form.	

B: I consider that this project may have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	

Please provide all the further information listed below in a separate attachment.

title of project

purpose of project and its academic rationale

brief description of methods and measurements

participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria

consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)

a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.

estimated start date and duration of project

This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:		
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	X	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	X	
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	X	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	X	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	X	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	X	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	X	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	X	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	X	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	X	
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows:	X	

'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.		
k) includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	X	
Please answer the following questions		
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	X	
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	X	
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		X
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	X	
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	X	
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	X	

	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?			X
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?			X
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			X
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video	X		

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[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?			
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			X
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?	X		
12b) If the answer to question 11a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?	X		
13a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		X	
13b. If the answer to question 12a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			X
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: ………………………… Print Name………………………. Date………….

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: ………………………… Print Name………………………. Date…….

    (IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

For IATEFL officers:

Question	Rationale
1. How long have you been involved with IATEFL? 2. Why did you take up this post? 3. What background do you have in education?	To introduce the interview gently. To understand factors in the speaker's background that might influence their attitude and perceptions.
4. What do you think are the main benefits of membership of IATEFL? 5. What have you personally got from IATEFL? 6. Do you think IATEFL should introduce any other benefits for members? 7. Do you think members feel more professional by being part of IATEFL? 8. Do you think IATEFL has an impact on EFL as a profession?	Directly related to the research questions.
9. Is there anything else you would like to add about IATEFL or your role?	To wind up the interview and provide space for unsolicited information.

For IATEFL members:

Question	Rationale
1. What do you do? 2. When did you join IATEFL?	To introduce the interview gently. To understand factors in the speaker's background that might influence their attitude perceptions.
3. Why did you join? 4. What are the benefits to you of being a member of IATEFL? 5. Is there anything else IATEFL could do for you? 6. Do you feel more of a professional by being a member of IATEFL? 7. Do you think IATEFL has an impact on EFL as a profession?	Directly related to the research questions.

Question	Rationale
8. Is there anything else you would like to add about IATEFL or your experience as a member?	To wind up the interview and provide space for unsolicited information.

For IATEFL non-members:

Question	Rationale
1. What do you do?	To introduce the interview gently.
2. Have you ever been a member of a TA?	To understand factors in the speaker's background that might influence their attitude perceptions.
3. What do you know about IATEFL or any other TA?	Directly related to the research questions.
4. Would you see any benefits in you joining a TA?	
5. Why do you think teachers do join TAs?	
6. Do you think TAs could have an impact on EFL as a profession?	
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?	To wind up the interview and provide space for unsolicited information.

Appendix D: Example Coded Interviews

Participant: Sylvia (officer)

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
What is your role in IATEFL?		
I'm the Executive Officer, so I'm the link between the trustees, the volunteers and the staff, the paid staff.		
How and why did you get involved with IATEFL?		
I was looking for a role in a charity. We were working abroad at the time and so I just looked online from my local newspaper back here in Kent and saw that vacancy and thought, 'Oh right, that'll probably do me for a little while.' And so I applied and obviously I was very pleased when I got the role.	Altruism	Identity
I mean, the charitable status of IATEFL, do you think that makes a difference to how the organisation works?		
Yeah, definitely, and as I say that was the only thing that attracted me to it because I'd done my degree in social policy and administration and wanted to work for a charity and had been working for a charity before that. And it does, it's about the ethos of it all as well, isn't it?	Altruism	Identity
So although we hope to get surpluses, and we have to get surpluses to keep our heads above water, I think it's because we actually do lots of charitable things like the scholarships	Scholarships	Conferences
and we set up the WMS [Wider Membership Scheme]	Demography	CoP
and things like that, that is the nice part about IATEFL.	Altruism	Identity
What do you think are the main benefits of membership of IATEFL?		
From my point of view, I think it must be the networking and the family sort of feeling, the fact that you know you can do this through social media, all the new things that are happening.	Networking	CoP

169

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
But you know when you go to conference and everyone gives you a hug, 'I haven't seen you for years, that's our only contact with you'. I think that's the part most people really like and if they compare it with TESOL, they say you don't get that family feeling at all.	Face-to-face	Conferences
How do you think IATEFL generates that family feeling?		
I think because our members join us because somebody has recommended it to them. You know it's word of mouth more than heavy marketing and yeah I think that's how.	Networking	CoP
You know they see someone speak at conference well	Face-to-face	Conferences
and you know they just all keep in touch, don't they.	Networking	CoP
I mean the membership of IATEFL is not growing so do you think heavy marketing might be an answer to that in the future?		
Well, this is something that comes up very often at board meetings, like we haven't got somebody responsible for marketing in-house and we haven't got a marketing committee, which we did have, for a very short time, but they didn't do any marketing, and I suppose if we had some expertise about marketing, we might know how to market ourselves and to be honest membership is falling at the moment, which is a bit of a shock. So we do need to do something. I don't know how we would market ourselves and who would be interested. We're always getting people saying 'Why do we have to pay the fifty-six pounds when you can get everything for free.'	Negative image	Identity
Our only unique selling point I think is the fact that you have to be a member to present at conference and people still really want to do that.	Face-to-face	Conferences
How important is the conference to IATEFL?		
I think it's very important because financially we couldn't survive	Face-to-face	Conferences

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
without it. The surplus from the conference each year supplements what we get from membership, which doesn't pay for itself. But it's also that once a year meeting up, isn't it, with people and makes us staff realise what we're doing and stuff like that. I think it's hundred percent important really. I think when I first joined, I saw the figures, you know, so I always wanted to be at the point where we could say we didn't need the conference, we made a surplus of our own sort of thing and I have been trying to do that down the line. But I think I've almost sort of concluded now more and more recently,		
because what you get from membership you can get for nothing elsewhere,	Negative image	Identity
we do need to rely on our events, our,	Face-to-face	Conferences
even the online events and things like that to connect to people.	Online	Conferences
What about members who can't get to the conference, do you think IATEFL still offers something to them?		
Yes, obviously we hope to get them on board with the online broadcasts from the British Council and we have planned this year to make sure that we actually advertise that	Online	Conferences
and encourage associates even more to share that with their members who won't be able to come over.	SIGs and Associates	CoP
I suppose we've been lucky on that. We've had a recent discussion with the British Council to make sure we promote it so that they talk about sixty to eighty thousand people joining us that way each year, that we actually increase on that this time.	Online	Conferences
What have you personally got from IATEFL?		

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
What have I personally got? I suppose I've developed quite a lot over the few years I've been here. I did have a management role before I came here but I haven't actually worked closely with trustees before so that's always been very interesting. Yeah, I've developed quite a lot since I've joined and my personal achievement I think was boosting up the funds so that we could purchase this property and in the very near future we'll be mortgage-free and then I think we're made financially so we don't have to worry so much about surpluses so much.		
Do you think IATEFL should introduce any other benefits for members?		
Yes, I think things that don't cost us money but are valued would be very good. This is like the webinars and things like that. At the moment, they're open to everybody but they're stored in the membership area after a certain time. Maybe we could run some members-only ones and just make them a bit more unique.	Resources	CPD
You mention that the membership of IATEFL is falling, why do you think that is?		
I don't know. It's a bit of a worry because we have been slowly increasing over the last few years, hovering around the four thousand odd, and then, you know, it drops off after the year because people have joined just to be a speaker and then November the next lot come in. This year that hasn't happened, although we've had as many or more speaker proposals than ever. So the last few months I think we've dropped about five hundred, which is very worrying. Sometimes that is relating to WMS so we have hundreds of WMS and they can come in in bulks of hundreds and so sometimes they wait for their conference or whatever. I don't think that is affecting it at the moment. WMS seems to be quite static at the moment. We've also had changes to staff here so I'm sort of making sure that we're not missing any tricks. I've been sending out emails to people that haven't renewed, saying 'Look,	Negative image	Identity

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
this is what you've missed over the last year' or whatever. So we're monitoring it. It's very difficult to know whether this is just a blip or whether this is the way things are going to be because of our online presence and free presence that we have. So if you think we only have say six hundred speakers, we might only be six hundred members, you know.		
Do you think members feel more professional by being part of IATEFL?		
Yeah, I think they do. I think, although we don't do a lot of CPD we do offer events and things. I think it shows a commitment to the profession if nothing else.	Growth	CPD
Is CPD something that you think IATEFL might want to provide in the future?		
Yeah, I think that's the way forward really	Growth	CPD
although we will never be in a position where you have to join IATEFL if you are a TEFL teacher, you know like with other professions you have to belong to the organisation.	Negative image	Identity
I think if we are offering continual development	Growth	CPD
as well as the networking,	Networking	CoP
I think that's the way forward.		
Do you think it might be necessary for people to join IATEFL in the future like in other professions?		
No. We have talked about this in the past, having some sort of accreditation or whatever and it is so difficult for us because half our members being overseas, checking on their credentials. You know, you hear about people inventing these qualifications themselves anyway. We just couldn't keep on top of it, I don't think.	Negative image	Identity
Do you think there should be some kind of entry criteria for IATEFL?		
Yeah, I don't think that would be such a bad thing really. We often get letters from people overseas who don't quite	Negative	Identity

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
understand about us, who write these sort of letters asking, you know,'Do I meet the requirements, I've done this and this and this, please accept these', you know. And in a way I think that would be quite, if there was some sort of screening but I suppose that would lead us to what do we do about institutional membership and stuff like that, and those are the ones that we like because they actually make us money.	image	
Has anyone actually been disqualified from IATEFL?		
Not to my knowledge, no.		
Do you think IATEFL has an impact on EFL as a profession?		
That's another difficult question, isn't it, because we are asked to have a position on, about different things, you know political, economic and things like that and we choose not to have a position because of our international status.	Advocacy	Identity
But I still think we have an impact but perhaps not as high an impact as some of our members would like us to have so saying that you have presented at IATEFL still holds quite a bit of weight.	Status	Identity
If you did have advocacy statements, do you think members would find that attractive?		
Yeah, I think we've asked the members, haven't we, about this and I think the decision is still out isn't it, that, you know, it's very difficult to have those statements. Some people are more political than others anyway and would want us to stand up and be counted. I think the problem is, from my point of view, we find in Head Office that, you know, we say that we think this but who actually does think this, is it one trustee, is it, you know, the majority of the trustees, is it the Head Office, you know, it's usually just one person who thinks that, isn't it, and this is the problem with these advocacy things and we have to stand up and say that we agree as well.	Advocacy	Identity
How do you think IATEFL will change in the future?		

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
I think it needs to become probably a free organisation, so membership is all electronic, it doesn't cost anything to join. Maybe because of that we will want to be more selective who joins and you know then there's obviously our events, maybe having more events all round the world because maybe people try not to travel as much, you know, environmentally and all that. I think that should be the way forward.	Face-to-face	Conferences
Do you think cost is an issue then?		
Yes, I think value for money is the issue. So, if you spend fifty-six pounds, you get six newsletters. Well, it actually costs us more than that to send them and have a member of staff doing it and all the rest of it. So is it value for money especially if you think the newsletter isn't very good value for money or whatever, whereas all electronic online things, they can be bigger, they can be more colourful, they can be interactive, you might attract more sponsors that way and stuff like that and teaching aids. I think we've missed a trick not doing any of those sort of things. Yeah, that's the way I can see it going forward. Maybe it would mean less staff because it would be less physical, we're used to doing everything electronically, pushing buttons and all that. Yeah, I think overheads would drop, posting costs are the highest thing about our publications, they cost more than the printing, you know.	Resources	CPD
Do you think members appreciate the publications?		
Yeah, I think to a certain extent. Having for example a couple of Voices in the staffroom is easier than you know forwarding it to twenty staff members by email and they don't bother to open it. You know that is the problem, isn't it? Who actually opens an electronic newsletter and who actually looks at one that's sitting around? I must say that *Conference Selections* [proceedings from the IATEFL annual conference], which we send to everyone at the moment, we have heard that people only open it to read their	Resources	CPD

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
particular article in it and if they haven't got an article in it, they don't open it at all. I don't know if that's true or not but maybe we need to go back to the days when we did a free publication, we printed a professional development one a couple of times, particularly a storytelling one, which the printers actually want to reprint because people like it and will pay money for it. So maybe we need to be a bit more inventive in our publications.		
How international is IATEFL?		
It depends what you're looking at really. If you're looking at membership, then we say that roughly about half of them live abroad, some of them are expats that have gone. But if you're looking at committees and trustees, we get less and less international, don't we? And a lot of that is to do with finances but also about skills really. We obviously want the right people in the right jobs if they're doing a lot of work for us as volunteers and especially as trustees, they've got to be responsible people. I think we're trying to address that all the time but yeah it is quite difficult to do, especially as we are based in the UK.	Demography	CoP
What kind of awareness do you think there is of IATEFL of typical you know teachers in state schools around the world?		
Very low, I would say. Even if you know out and about, you just say TEFL, people say 'Oh yes, I know TEFL'. But no one knows IATEFL, they don't know it at all. So, yeah, it would be quite nice with this marketing idea to get our name out there a bit more. How you do it, how you get their attention, you would imagine it might be through British Council, you know. They do have this spurt of trying to raise up awareness about us, they insisted that all their centres joined as members and they did like a free membership for British Council London people, all these centres and included *ELTJ* [English Language Teaching Journal] and a few SIGS and things like that. Even then some people didn't take it up, even though it was all	Negative image	Identity

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
free, not in their budget or anything like that. Yes, it's really difficult to persuade people to come on board and value what they're getting out of it.		
That relationship with the British Council, that particular initiative, did it end?		
It did end, yeah. They decided that they weren't going to pay for these memberships if they weren't valued, you know. People would you know register in a particular name because they get moved round quite a lot. The next person coming onboard wouldn't receive any of the emails and that, they would go to this chap who had moved on. They didn't bother to update things and so I think in the end you know budgets were being cut there as well, they decided it wasn't a good use of their money.	Negative image	Identity
Do you think there's any overlap between the work of IATEFL and other organisations such as the British Council?		
I suppose we think we sort of rub alongside each other sometimes with different things, maybe with the events and things like that and we do try to partner up, to use all their facilities and expertise and contacts. So, for example with WMS and WMIS, we have tried to tap into their knowledge, local knowledge. It's quite difficult actually because they're quite institutionalised, aren't they, themselves and they don't seem to look outside the boxes very much, I don't think. But yeah. I suppose in a way sometimes they feel they don't need us, they're doing what we do.	Competition	CPD
Is there anything else you would like to add about IATEFL or your role?		
No, I don't think so. Particularly, it's a good organisation to work for, it's quite hands-on, this role. Some management roles you don't have a lot of self-input, you know, you sort of. I do feel I can make decisions on my own, which is good. I think perhaps that's changing a bit, maybe that's getting less now. I think gone are the days when you had like one trustee doing most of the work and we		

Sylvia (officer)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
would work really closely together, making decisions together. Now other trustees are coming along and saying 'No, we all need to be included in these decisions' and so you know management and boards gets more and more difficult. So I would say from that point of view things are changing but yeah it's been, been a good experience.		

Participant: Gabriela (member)

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
What do you do?		
I'm an academic coordinator at [name of organisation] so basically I'm a teacher, a trainer and a course designer. I'm currently in charge of a number of training initiatives such as the pronunciation course for teachers, the ICELT, I don't know if you're familiar with the Cambridge ICELT course, and I run the teachers' colloquium, which is a yearly event we have at the beginning of every year and it's when we have our 600 teachers together to develop their knowledge about language and to broaden their teaching repertoire. I'm also in charge of the pre-service course so right now we have an on-going training course with around 30 teachers and in November we start a bigger one with around 80 teachers who are applying for a position at [name of organisation].		
Do you actually find much time for teaching yourself amidst all that?		
I do teach as well. I have, this semester I have a group of young learners but every semester I have a different level, a different age range and I teach in a different branch as well, every semester.		
When did you join IATEFL?		
I joined IATEFL back in 2012, my first IATEFL was in Glasgow. I actually won a scholarship from the British Council and together	Face-to-face Scholarships	Conferences Conferences

178

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / **Sub-category**	**Theme**
with the BrasTESOL I had to write a text, I had to answer a question, writing an essay saying why they should sponsor me to go to IATEFL and that's when I first joined the institution.		
So did you join to go to the conference, basically?		
Yes, at that time yes. That's why, how I first joined IATEFL. But IATEFL has brought so many benefits to my profession, to my career and I'm very happy to share these experience with the teachers I work with and to see many others showing those interests as well. Just this week one of the teachers who went with us to IATEFL in Manchester, she won the Learning Technologies SIG scholarship so I was very happy to see that.	Face-to-face Growth Scholarships	Conferences CPD Conferences
Do you think you would have gone to the conference in Glasgow if you hadn't got the funding?		
I don't think at the time I would be able to go, I wouldn't be able to at the time. And then the year after, I won the Trinity London scholarship and then the next year I sponsored myself to go there in Liverpool. So in Liverpool I paid to go and this year [name of school] paid for me to go there and next year I'm funding myself again to go to the conference.	Scholarships Face-to-face	Conferences Conferences
Where you actually work, do many teachers know about IATEFL?		
They are beginning to learn more because we've been telling them for a couple of years now, more consistently, more systematically about the benefits not only of IATEFL but of joining a teaching association to help support each other in the teaching profession. So here in Brazil we have the BrasTESOL, I think you know about it, and I'm very much involved with BrasTESOL here as well. So they're beginning to learn about IATEFL and they are showing more interest as well.	Networking SIGs and Associates	CoP CoP
What are the benefits to you of being a member of IATEFL?		
I think the knowledge that I have gained in these four or five years that I've been going to the conference as well as being able to	Face-to-face	Conferences

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
share my knowledge to present in a conference. So important, super, it's been tremendously amazing, fantastic and I've made many, many friends as well by going to the conference and finding people who share the same interests I do.		
You said knowledge, what kind of knowledge do you think you've got from IATEFL?		
I think in terms of learning about different contexts, teaching contexts, about teacher-training contexts, which is the area I've been involved with more. And being able to learn how things happen in different institutions and all over the globe. So I've been learning new procedures, new ways of carrying training sessions for example or training courses	Growth	CPD
and I've been able to share my experience as well both as a trainer and a course designer by presenting the conference.	Face-to-face	Conferences
So I think this sharing knowledge has contributed a lot to my development.	Growth	CPD
You've mentioned the annual conference a few times. Do you think that's something kind of quite special for IATEFL?		
What do you mean? I'm sorry.		
Is it a major part of IATEFL, the annual conference, do you think?		
I think so. Yeah, I think so. I think the conference is a great opportunity for you to liaise with peers from all over the globe, to learn about the different teaching contexts which we mentioned so I think it is a very good opportunity for you to learn more about the profession.	Face-to-face	Conferences
Obviously, it's a long way from Brazil and it's quite expensive getting there too. Is it worth the time and the cost would you say?		
I think some conferences have been more worth going to than others. So one of the IATEFL conferences I went to wasn't that worth going. I mean it is always worth going but at times it just	Face-to-face	Conferences

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
depends on the choices I make, you know what I mean, in terms of the sessions you attend. Sometimes it's just a matter of, of luck honestly sometimes. But I do think it's worth investing, especially for us then to be immersed in the British culture, to learn more about it and then be able to share it here with our learners and the teachers as well. So I do think it's worth investment. It's not easy, it's not very easy especially now with the crisis that we have here. It's becoming more and more difficult to go abroad and then teachers don't usually have the opportunity to go because of when the conference happens, they're just in the middle of the semester here, so it's not very, sometimes it's not possible simply for them to go there. We don't have, we may not have people to cover them in the lessons, it's an extra overload for their peers. But I do think it's worth investing our time and our money to go all the way to the UK to attend the conference.		
You mention like the British angle. I would have thought Brazil would have been more orientated towards the US and like the TESOL organisation?		
It depends a lot on the context. Like [name of organisation] you know we, it's part of our mission to make people more aware of the British culture, of course not only British culture but that's our main, well it's a mission actually. So we do want our teachers to learn more about the British culture but not only. We are very much aware of English as a Lingua Franca, of World Englishes. But I do believe that by going to the conference in the UK you have the chance to interact with people from all over the globe and then to learn more about the history of the language itself. So we think we value this tremendously.	Face-to-face	Conferences
Do you think most Brazilian teachers, and obviously Brazil's a massive country, do you think most Brazilian teachers at some point have that chance say to go to the UK and the conference?		
I don't think so. I think even from here there's not many teachers go to the conference. They need funding and not all schools are	Face-to-face	Conferences

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
willing to do so. When you go to IATEFL, it's usually people from the same schools who were there. So it's usually [name of organisation], and then you have [name of organisation] which is in Brazilia. We have one or two representatives from [name of organisation] and then maybe one or two from [name of organisation] but not from many teaching institutions, not that we know. Some freelance teachers go on their own, not many. Some freelance teachers go on their own. And then of course you meet our peers, our friends from publishers, but it's not something that many people are willing to invest in. You know some teachers think their schools should be responsible for funding this type of, of training if you will. So they wait for the school to offer them the opportunity, they don't go for it, unfortunately.		
Would you fund yourself in the future?		
What am I answering?		
Would you pay for yourself in the future to go?		
Yes, I will. Next year I will. The pound is incredibly expensive now, it's ridiculously expensive now for us. It's like one pound is six reals for us, more than six reals. So it's becoming more and more expensive to go but I do think it's worth investment.	Face-to-face	Conferences
Do you feel more of a professional by being a member of IATEFL?		
I do, I honestly do. I think that being able to liaise with people like we're doing now, to work with, to meet the big names of English language teaching and also in the pronunciation, the pronunciation course I teach the teachers have started new projects because of the people I've met at IATEFL. Just this semester I had [name of individual] from Argentina to record a video and send to my learners. In one of the lessons when I talk about world Englishes I have [name of individual] and [name of individual] talk to the teachers. So it's something that I'm only able to do because of the people I've met at the IATEFL conference.	Networking	CoP

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
So the networking thing is quite important do you think?		
It is and it adds great value to my teaching and to the development of the teachers I work with, absolutely.	Networking	CoP
Is there anything else IATEFL could do for you?		
I don't know. I've been able to contribute to the newsletter as well, I've had a couple of articles published. I don't know.	Resources	CPD
I think IATEFL has been giving me these opportunities to interact with people from, people who do the same thing I do all over the globe so I think it's been helping me this way. I don't know, I think what IATEFL can do for me, I'm not sure, I'm not sure but I can think about it and get back to you later if I remember anything.	Networking	CoP
Do you think IATEFL has an impact on EFL as a profession?		
Well, from my point of view it does. At least it's had in mine but I don't know. I think people perceive that, people who know and who go to the conference either on a regular basis or if it's their first time in the conference. They always perceive the gain they can have by attending a conference this big. I was just talking to one of my peers today who's going there next year and he's really excited. He just got his membership card and we were talking about it, how amazing it is to be in the conference. Just to be there is fantastic so I think it adds great value as I've said.	Face-to-face	Conferences
You mention perceptions. In your country, Brazil, how do people perceive EFL?		
Well, it's hard because many people see the teaching profession as just a job, unfortunately. Many people see it as just doing something in between careers	Negative image	Identity
but many people as well see it as a career and treat it with the respect it deserves. So at [name of school] we want our teachers to know, we want them to see that teaching is a career, it is not just a job.	Status	Identity

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
So it is important to meet people who do the same job you do in different cities, in different teaching contexts, in the state sector, in the private sector, in the language institute, in our state, in different states, in different countries. And we also believe in the power of sharing to provide learners with the best learning experience and to help them to communicate better in English.	Networking	CoP
This perception that it's just a job, is that about EFL or is that about teaching generally?		
I think it's about teaching in general but when it comes to teaching English many people think that just because they've been to Disney World they can teach English, you know. So, yeah, it's true. Unfortunately it's true. Unfortunately, sometimes we receive CVs and people come to us just because. This week we had a selection process and one of the, the applicants had 'well I was travelling in Europe and now I want to make some more money to go back there and travel more' and then he applied for a teaching position so that that's the way some people perceive the teaching career.	Negative image	Identity
I mean do you think IATEFL could do anything about that?		
I think by focusing on more professional development and the importance of teaching maybe as a way to see that	Growth	CPD
but unfortunately I think it depends very much on the person's culture, on the way teaching is seen in their countries. I met some teachers this morning. We had a meeting with the foreign teachers who work were us and they were just saying this. We have a teacher from Iran and she said teaching in her country is something people look up to and then when you come here, when you tell people you're a teacher, they also ask you if you also work or if you're only a teacher. So it's depressing at times, at times it's offensive. But when you say you work at [name of school] they	Negative image	Identity

Gabriela (member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
treat you differently, they see it's an institution that respects the teaching profession and then they should see it in a different way. But unfortunately when it comes to teachers' work in the public sector and the state schools, they, they really don't feel respected and many times because they don't respect their own profession, unfortunately.		
Why is that do you think?		
I don't know, honestly. I think it's because they, they I don't know. Maybe it's something has been happening for too long so they say why change it and then it's a vicious circle I'd say. Because if they see it, they think they cannot change it, they do nothing about it, of course it's not going to change but if you get up and stand up for your rights and you do things that will help people see how important it is, the importance you can have in people's lives, I think that's a way, that's a way for you to change your perception. I know I'm doing my job here in helping people treat the teaching career with more respect, with the respect it deserves and I hope many other teachers start doing the same, you know. That's my point of view I think. You should respect what you do. So respect is not something you demand from people, you earn from people, right? So in this sense I think if you respect what you do, if you see the teaching career with respect, people will start seeing it in the same way.	Negative image	Identity
You mentioned your foreign colleagues. Do you think they would know anything about IATEFL?		
Well, I know these ones do because we always tell them about it and one of the teachers who came here today is from Birmingham and he told me, 'Oh, next year it is in my city' so he knew about it	Face-to-Face	Conferences
but not many people do know. I was just thinking of different ways	Negative	Identity

Gabriela (member)		Coding	
		Category / Sub-category	Theme
IATEFL could be better known to people but I don't know. We have the Facebook page, we have newsletters, we have people who go to the conference and advertise it so I can't really think of other ways it can become more known.		image	
Is there anything else you would like to add about IATEFL or your experience as a member?			
I don't think so. I don't think now that I could. Maybe I'd like, as I told you before, I'd like to be better able to contribute somehow		Growth	CPD
and I think I've been able to contribute by writing to the newsletter.		Resources	CPD
Maybe one day if I could join one of the PCEs [Pre-annual Conference Events] I would be very happy to do so.		Face-to-face	Conferences
But I would really like to say that I'm available to help, to become more active if you like in IATEFL. I'd just like to congratulate everyone on the excellent job that you all do there to help us develop,		Growth	CPD
improve the teaching career, the teaching profession.		Status	Identity
Do you see IATEFL kind of changing in the future?			
In the future? Oh well, I think it has been changing when it makes it possible for people worldwide to follow the plenary sessions for example with the live streaming. Maybe more sessions could be broadcast because it is quite an investment to be made. Right, maybe making it more available, actually with online presentations, I don't know. I think this would be a way to help teachers from around the globe to take part in the conference. I think this is the way, maybe.		Online	Conferences

Participant: Steven (non-member)

Steven (non-member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
So you've been teaching over the summer?		
Yeah, not that many hours in July and August because I was mainly in the office but then September I taught the whole month.		
Generally, what's the teaching scene like there?		
You have a lot of students who are here on residential programmes for a couple of weeks, then you have students who sometimes spend six, seven months. It really depends what they come to the UK for. Some of them are preparing for IELTS and for going to university so they tend to stay a bit longer, especially I notice students from China and Turkey were here for a lot longer. Or you have people who just need English for work so they come to England for about two, three weeks, sometimes a month.		
Your position is interesting because you're actually moving away from teaching. Can you tell me about that?		
Yeah, because, well, I do like teaching but having moved back to the UK, not being a native speaker, I feel like it's more difficult to find a job like a permanent position and so that's why I thought even though I like teaching I also want to make sure that I can develop professionally and can have a permanent position at some point so that's why I decided to do something different.	Negative image	Identity
Have you ever been a member of a teaching association?		
No, never.		
What do you know about IATEFL or any other teaching association?		
I know that they are associations that organize conferences, meetings, think publish I guess studies and articles. But not, nothing more, I guess.	Negative image	Identity
Would you see any benefits in you joining a teaching association?		
I can't think of any at the moment, especially now that I'm not	Competition	CPD

Steven (non-member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
teaching but also my teaching experience has been mainly at [name of institution] where we had professional development, we had an extensive library, we had a lot of teachers to talk to and we attended workshops and seminars so we had probably all the things a teaching association offered as a school. So I never really looked into it, I never really had, felt the need to.	Negative image	Identity
If you continued teaching in London, would that be an attractive option?		
I guess it would depend on the school because if I taught say in a small school with very little optional opportunities for professional development, then I would probably look into it but at [name of institution], I probably wouldn't.	Growth Competition	CPD CPD
Why's that?		
Well, because I guess you can develop professionally without being part of an association or maybe I'm just, maybe I'm getting the whole concept of a teaching association wrong.	Negative image	Identity
Why do you think teachers do join teaching associations?		
Well, maybe if, as I say, if you work for a small school then you might want to develop and talk to different people and attend conferences and see what's going on. So that's a good opportunity, it's a kind of link to the world outside. I'm thinking of teachers, for example I have a friend who now works in a small town in Spain and I think there're are only ten, fifteen teachers where she works so she often travels and goes to different conferences. Yeah, maybe that's why.	Growth Networking Face-to-face	CPD CoP Conferences
Have you ever been to one of these conferences?		
No, the only conference I attended was the modern languages	Face-to-face	Conferences

Steven (non-member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
conference at [name of institution].		
Did you get any value from that?		
It was an interesting experience because it was my first conference. I, what I noticed was that a lot of the ideas discussed were ideas that you could find in books and there wasn't, wasn't a lot of new stuff in there. But definitely it's interesting to see how other teachers see their profession and what they do in the classroom and different techniques. But maybe, I don't know, maybe it's just not for me, I enjoyed it but I wouldn't say it was great.	Face-to-face	Conferences
Do you think teaching associations could have an impact on EFL as a profession?		
I guess in a way they do for example if I think about [name of institution], when we had people who had attended conferences, they came back and they presented what they'd seen etc. Then it obviously had, it was obviously good for professional development because we learned a lot so depending on the way they work and what their programme is, it might be useful. They could have goals for conferences	Face-to-face	Conferences
and for publications	Resources	CPD
and help people develop.	Growth	CPD
You've taught EFL in different countries now. Generally, what would you see as the status of EFL?		
Well, I find it really different, but here for example I find it really different from [name of institution] because if you work for a school like [name of institution] or abroad in general, you have students for nine months or sometimes for a year so you can try things out with the same students in the classroom and see what works, what doesn't work, what you can do to help students in the long term, whereas here you have students coming and going basically every week. So what you teach you can easily, I guess here you can easily teach CELTA [Certificate in English Language		

Steven (non-member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
Teaching to Adults] style for a year say and it's fine. Whereas if you have students for a long time , you need to change things a bit because then it might become a bit monotonous.		
When you say 'CELTA style', what do you mean there?		
The standard PPP [present-practise-produce], from the book you adapt and add a game perhaps at the end. Whereas, if you have the same students for a long time, I think you can, you can, yeah, experiment a bit more. And also you have a different pacing schedule so you can, if you have a lesson and you decide to do something that has got nothing to do with the syllabus because perhaps students need it, then you can.		
Your decision to move away from EFL, is that because of its kind of status in some way?		
Well, I don't know, for me I have to say that teaching, I guess for me it's always about the uncertainty, you know, the fact that it's difficult to find a permanent job where you can grow and say become ADOS [Assistant Director of Studies] or DOS [Director of Studies], teacher trainer. But it's also for my personal interests that I've decided to decide to move away from it. But, yes, there definitely is, I've heard it many times, this is not my point of view, but you can kind of hear it quite often you know when teachers say 'I've decided to do something else because I was looking for a real job'. But I guess it's, it might be, I think it depends on the contracts that you get. If you have a full-time contract, it is a real job, whereas if you only work five hours a week or six hours a week for a school and then you need to find another school then it doesn't really feel like you're working as much as you would.	Negative image	Identity
Has that been your experience in the UK, it's difficult to find full-time work?		
Yeah, yeah, definitely. It's alright in summer but not in winter. The only time I was offered a full-time contract was when I was about to move back abroad so I had to say no. It might also be because now DELTA (Diploma in English Language	Negative image	Identity

Steven (non-member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
Teaching to Adults] is a requirement in most schools, for full-time positions.		
How do your colleagues feel about that?		
Well, at [name of institution], most teachers had other jobs, for example some worked for theatres, some were actors, some were just there for the summer. So it was good for them because they had say lessons in the morning and then they could do other things in the afternoon. But, you know they were happy there because they knew it would fit their own timetable. And then some teachers were there obviously full time.	Negative image	Identity
Did you feel then a kind of sense of disappointment when you went back to the UK?		
No, no. I knew it would be difficult but then I figured out I wanted to do something else so okay, and I wanted to come back to the UK.		
These issues, do you think teaching associations could do anything about them?		
I don't know. No, I don't think so because I think it's in the way the business works. If you have a lot of students in summer and fewer students in winter then obviously you need more staff during the summer and you can always give people enough, you know the amount of teaching hours per year so. So I guess and that's why abroad you can, you can get more contracts and the situation is completely different.	Negative image	Identity
Would you regard EFL as a business then?		
Oh, yeah. I think all private schools are mainly a business, right? Students are paying customers, they're clients and you want to make sure they're happy.	Negative image	Identity
Do you see that as in any conflict with educational values?		
No, not necessarily, not necessarily. Obviously, it depends on how the school, I think it depends on how the school works but I mean even, even mainstream schools are businesses. I see it now because on Tuesday I work with another therapist in a school here		

191

Steven (non-member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
in London and we have, we have to see fifteen students every week and they can only pay for one day a week when they would actually need two days a week in fairness. But obviously we need to make sure that we provide a service we have to provide within the time limit that we have. So yeah that's, I think that's business as much as a private language school offering IELTS or other courses.		
In terms of professionalism, can you provide any comparisons or contrasts between therapy and EFL?		
In the way people work you mean? [yeah] I guess, I think in EFL sometimes you have people who don't necessarily want to be teachers. Whereas, where I work, all the therapists obviously want to be therapists so they take everything more seriously for them. They plan sessions regularly and I would say they need to make sure everything is planned properly for each patient. What else? There is a lot more paperwork and I think they tend to take it more seriously to compare with, I don't know filling in registers, and completing the notes for a session. It's definitely I think it's taken a lot more seriously. A teacher doesn't necessarily worry if a student after three months still can't use the present perfect whereas if a therapist don't achieve the goals for the month then they need to find something, they work, they prepare something different.	Negative image	Identity
Why is it taken more seriously do you think?		
I think it depends on, obviously I'm kind of generalising, now that you told me to compare, I can see the difference between therapists who obviously want to be therapists and some teachers who don't necessarily want to be teachers and they want to travel. I'm not saying that all the teachers are like that but, sorry what was the question again? Why is it taken more seriously? [*yes*] Well again if you want to travel and you're just working because you want to visit a country then it's not the main, you don't see it as the main aspect of your life, I guess. I think if I had to find a different	Negative image	Identity

Steven (non-member)	Coding	
	Category / Sub-category	Theme
job just to pay the rent. I'd probably, I would probably still be professional, it would depend on me, but I wouldn't be too worried if I couldn't do all the things that I had planned.		
Do you think these kind of attitudes teaching associations could do anything about?		
No, I know that there is definitely something because I know that my managers attend regular meetings and conferences.	Face-to-face	Conferences
When you were doing your initial training in EFL, were you made aware of teaching associations?		
We were given options for further professional development. I remember that they told us about DELTA and other courses that we could, we could do but I don't remember a session on teaching associations.	Negative image	Identity
Is there anything else you'd like to add on this topic?		
Not that I can think of. Well, I guess, I take it that this is about teaching associations and professional development? [*yes*]. So definitely, I do think that for all teachers there should be an opportunity for professional development so again if teachers work for an institution, for a school like [name of institution], or any other big companies where they have teacher training within the school, they may not need it.	Competition	CPD
But obviously for other teachers, teaching associations probably do a good, a good job, they provide a good service. I don't know.	Growth	CPD
Personally, I've never really felt the need to join them.	Negative image	Identity

Appendix E: Personal Response

What do you do?

I teach in a private language school.

When did you join IATEFL?

1994

Why did you join?

I read about it in a book *Teach English abroad* and I liked the idea of joining a wider community of teachers and getting more information about what I was doing. I was pretty isolated at that stage of my career, it was pre-Internet and the colleagues in the international school where I worked weren't very orientated towards TEFL. It was in 1995 that I went to my first annual conference and that was a revelation to me, the first time I really appreciated the size and scope of ELT.

What are the benefits to you of being a member of IATEFL?

That sense of community is still there as while I have a lot of colleagues who I can see face to face every day, ELT is a very transient profession, teachers coming and going, so IATEFL gives me a sense of continuity. It's actually been the one constant throughout my teaching career. I've met some amazing people through IATEFL. You do that in real life too of course but IATEFL has the advantage that you're disassociated from them in terms of work, you're not peers in the same workplace, so you are freer to communicate and express yourself. The most important influence on my professional and possibly personal life was an IATEFL contact, the late Michael Berman. Michael was actually tutor on my diploma course but we didn't have a personal relationship then and I was actually quite scared of him. I don't know how it happened but we started seeing each other regularly at the IATEFL conference, then writing to each other in between until we were firm friends right until his death. I'm very proud that one of the IATEFL scholarships is named after Michael so his legacy can live on. PronSIG has also been a great source of support and inspiration and I think it does a great job for rather a niche area. A lot of the time you wonder what it is all for but when you arrange an event and see everyone contributing and sharing, you realise what it is all for.

Is there anything else IATEFL could do for you?

IATEFL is very anxious to introduce more benefits, especially ones that are exclusive to IATEFL in some way. I'm not sure this is really possible in the online age when so much is widely accessible and, crucially, free. So, I'm not worried about expanding the range of benefits. I'd probably like to see IATEFL get more selective in terms of what it offers and who it offers it to. For the former, that would include vetting proposals for the annual conference so there is quality control, as TESOL does. For the latter, I think there should be some criteria for joining IATEFL so membership could be

aspirational. I've no idea how that would work, for example qualification-based or references, but it doesn't seem right that anyone can join who can pay the fee.

Do you feel more of a professional by being a member of IATEFL?

Not per se. I think you are professional by what you do. Just paying your subscription fee every year is no big deal (someone might even be doing this for you), especially given that membership is open to everybody and anybody. Also, realistically, the vast majority of teacher have never heard of IATEFL or only have the slightest notion of what it could mean – thin ground for establishing a base for professionalism. There are teachers who are consummate professionals who are not members of any teaching association and wouldn't see the point of joining one; conversely, there will be people in IATEFL who do not follow any professional code.

Do you think IATEFL has an impact on EFL as a profession?

Not really. First, EFL is just too big a beast in terms of where and how it operates. The factors involved are two various and too confusing to try and rationalise let alone control. Second, I don't think the key players in IATEFL have any ambition to make the organisation authoritative. The clearest example of this is the lack of advocacy. IATEFL is simply not interested in taking stances in the same way as say TESOL does with its policy statements. The arguments against advocacy are lame. People either misinterpret it as unionisation or say that there is no point in having policies that we can't possibly implement. Personally, I don't see any grounds for conflating advocacy with unionisation and I believe it is important to have positions on key issues so that there is a professional compass. Of course, it's more comfortable to avoid issues like advocacy and this is perhaps the biggest problem for IATEFL: aiming at self-protection rather than serving the true interests of members.

Is there anything else you would like to add about IATEFL or your experience as a member?

I often wonder what IATEFL will look like in say 25 years' time. I doubt a fee-paying membership is sustainable with all the competition from free resources. The IATEFL annual conference is the bedrock of the organisation, not just financially, and if that continues, and I see no sign of it becoming less popular, something will remain. Smaller teaching associations could go either way. Globalisation might make them unattractive; on the other hand, they might be seen as serving the needs of local teachers better. Demand for English language teaching is going to increase if anything so there will be a big market of teachers. Better training might make them more autonomous and less reliant on external support in the form of teaching associations. Ironically, the regularisation of the ELT industry and the increasing of standards might make teaching associations redundant. In the utopia of carefully selected English teachers in well-paid jobs getting all the training they needed, it's more difficult to see a role for teaching associations.