2015

# Preparing Elementary English Teachers: Innovations at Pre-service Level

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*Abstract: The teaching of English for Young Learners has become a global phenomenon, but many countries are facing dilemma in terms of teacher preparation (Nunan, 2003; Kaplan, Baldauf, & Kamwangamalu, 2011). Indonesia is of no exception. Its pre-service system has not been adequate to sufficiently prepare elementary English teachers with knowledge and skills pertaining to their occupational needs. Moreover, systematic ways to overhaul the pre-service system remain yet to be seen. This study investigated the perceptions of English teachers and language teacher educators on educational policy measures for the improvement of pre-service education to better prepare elementary English teachers. The findings of the study validate the need for redesigning pre-service education curricula as well as specific preparation for the elementary English teachers. The study also highlights the importance of a training scheme for teacher educators in teaching EYL. Although the implications of the study are derivational from Indonesian present context, they may also shed some light to the quandary currently faced by other countries facing a similar dilemma.*

**Key Words**: pre-service education, English teachers, English for Young Learners, language policy

## Introduction

The increasing interest in teaching English to Young Learners (EYL) is evident in the introduction of English into the elementary school curricula that takes place on a worldwide scale (Lee & Azman, 2004). Countries as diverse as Serbia (Filipovic, Vuco, & Djuric 2007), Ireland (Wallen & Kelly-Holmes, 2006), Vietnam (Hoa & Tuan, 2007), Taiwan (Wuchang-Chang, 2007), South Korea (Jung & Norton, 2002), China (Hu, 2005; Li, 2007), Indonesia (Chodidjah, 2008), Turkey (Kirkgoz, 2008), and Japan (Butler & Iino, 2005) teach English to students at elementary level.

In Indonesia, English was included in the elementary school timetable in 1993 based on the aspiration to strong foundation of English instruction in alignment with the demands of globalization. Proponents of early English instruction pointed out the failure of the teaching of English in secondary schools as the main reason for pushing early English instruction. It was expected that English instruction at elementary level would contribute to the advancement of students' overall language competence (Sadtono, 2007).

Approximately 47,577 teachers carry out English pedagogy at elementary level. No less than 41,304 of these teachers teach in the public primary schools, while 6,271 teach in the private ones. These teachers only teach English, as opposed to the 1,012,427 classroom teachers, the majority of which are assigned by their school principals to teach English in addition to compulsory subjects (e.g. Indonesian Language, Math, Science) (Kementrian, 2009).

## The Context

Elementary English teachers in Indonesia come from two pre-service streams: Primary School Teacher Education (PSTE) and English departments. A brief description of these two streams is presented below.

## Primary School Teacher Education (PSTE)

Many English teaching professionals at elementary level in Indonesia are graduates of PSTE, which is normally called PGSD (Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar). The course is offered in general education teaching colleges as a four-year undergraduate degree that aims to produce qualified and competitive elementary classroom teachers; to conduct research that involves lecturers, students, and elementary teachers; and to conduct community service. Upon completion of their studies, the graduates are conferred with a Bachelor degree in Primary Education, which is the minimum qualification required to teach in primary schools. The graduates of PSTE will have acquired knowledge and skills related to teaching young learners, approaches and methods of teaching, educational philosophies, teaching practicum, testing and assessment, but their exposure to English is limited. This is due to the fact that they only learn a unit called *English for University Students*, which is taught for two to four credit points (100-200 minutes/week) and is expected to provide them with basic English proficiency (Suyanto, 2010).

The appointment of PSTE graduates is prominent in many areas throughout the country such as Bandung, DKI Jakarta, Medan, Malang, Sidoarjo, and Blitar (Ernidawati, 2002; Damayanti, Muslim, & Nurlaelawati, 2008; Lestari, 2003; Nizar, 2004; Suyanto & Chodidjah, 2002). Their main task is to teach general subjects as classroom teachers, but they are also assigned to teach English because of the absence of qualified English teachers (Suyanto & Chodidjah, 2002).

## English departments

The other group of elementary English teachers typically attends a four-year undergraduate degree in English departments. The English departments are divided into two programs: 1) English Language Education Program and 2) English Study Program.

In an English Language Education Program, student teachers decide to become English teachers right from the beginning. This means prospective student teachers have already decided to become English teachers by the time they commence their study. The program is typically offered in The Institution for Education and Teacher Education (*Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Keguruan*-henceforth LPTK), which is the main form of pre-service teacher education for English teachers in Indonesia. The institution consists of both public and private higher education institutions whose main role is providing education and pedagogical training. The programs run by LPTK-including the English Language Education Program-are aimed to prepare its graduates to teach English at secondary level (junior and senior high schools). In other words, the English Language Education Program is not specifically designed for teaching English at elementary level (Cahyono, 2006).

Upon completion of their study, the graduates of the English Language Education Program are conferred with a Bachelor of Education in English Language. They will have acquired strong English language proficiency, and knowledge and skills related to curriculum, syllabus, language testing and assessment, teaching methodologies, teaching

skills, and materials development. With the ubiquitous appointment of PSTE graduates, there have been exceptionally high expectations over the enhanced quality of elementary English teachers in the past few years (Asriyanti, Sikki, Rahman, Hamra, & Noni, 2013; Chodidjah, 2008; Suyanto, 2010). Evidence of strong aspirations for increasing the professionalism of elementary English teachers can be seen in the proliferation of English departments offering EYL as an elective unit within their curriculum for 2 (two) credit points (Saukah, 2009).

The second mode of study in English departments is the English Study Program. It is a four-year undergraduate degree consisting of 146 credit points. Variations of concentrations in English Study Program between universities are evident; however, the most prominent ones are: 1) Linguistics; 2) English Literature; and 3) Translation. Upon completion of their study, graduates of this program are conferred with a Bachelor of Arts in English. They are expected to have strong foundation in areas of English linguistics (e.g. phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics), English literature (prose, poetry, and drama), and translation skills. They may not undertake EYL during their study because the unit is not offered. However, they may encounter English pedagogy of some sort through elective units such as the two credit points *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* (TEFL).

**Has the pre-service education been effective?**

Scholars argued that the main issue with elementary school English teaching in Indonesia is the huge shortage of competent and qualified English teachers (Luciana, 2006; Sadtono, 2007; Suyanto, 2010). The quality of English education at primary level is not particularly satisfying (Chodidjah, 2008a; Sadtono, 2007), primarily because many of these teachers are employed without consideration of whether or not they possess relevant qualifications and adequate English proficiency. Research has demonstrated that these teachers not only have limited English proficiency (Chodidjah, 2007) but they have limited skills in terms of pronunciation (Suyanto & Chodidjah, 2002), spelling, the use of technology in language teaching, classroom management (Asriyanti, et. al., 2013), the use of textbooks and teaching materials (Karani, 2006).

Even those with the relevant qualifications have not produced satisfactory results (Asriyanti, et.al, 2013; Chodidjah, 2008; Damayanti, et. al., 2008; Karani, 2006; Suyanto, 2009, 2010). Many parents are not satisfied with the quality of English education at primary level that they send their children to attend private English courses in addition to the regular school hours (Chodidjah, 2008; Lamb, 2008).

The root of the problem can be traced back to the role of pre-service education in the professional development of English teachers at elementary level. Zein (2014) argued that the pre-service streams overall fail to provide maximum support to prepare elementary teachers to deliver successful English instruction. The inadequacy of pre-service level education in preparing professional English teachers with good skills and knowledge to teach at elementary level largely contributes to this situation. Due to its lack of specificity, both PSTE and teacher preparation at English departments have failed to provide effective preparatory courses for prospective English teachers at elementary level.

While suggestions have been made to overhaul pre-service education in order to better prepare student teachers to teach English at elementary level (Zein, 2014), specific measures that indicate how this can be undertaken at pre-service level are yet to be seen. Directions for better preparation of graduates of teacher training colleges and English departments to teach English at elementary level remain obscure. In other words, it is relatively unclear as to how specific policy measures can be developed to help enhance the professionalism of elementary English teachers.

This study was conducted in order to fill in the gap. The aim of this paper was to probe suggestions for improvement in the domain of pre-service education to professionally educate elementary school English teachers. This is particularly important in order to provide clear policy recommendations in relation to overhauling the pre-service education system for preparing elementary English teachers. Although the study was conducted in Indonesia and may provide solutions that are relevant to the present situation in the country, the implications may also shed some light on the quandary currently faced by many other educational contexts where increasing interest in EYL teaching is currently popular.

Moreover, review of the literature in the fields of teacher preparation and language policy revealed urgency for research on pre-service teacher preparation programme to cater for the needs of elementary English teachers in the global world (Chodidjah, 2008b; Escudero, Reyes, & Loyo, 2012; Kaplan, Baldauf, & Kamwangamalu, 2011; Hamid & Honan, 2012; Nguyen, 2011; Nunan, 2003; Suyanto, 2010). The conception of a pre-service education that will intervene in the preparation of prospective teachers to keep abreast with the considerable changes in the global world is crucial (Zhan, 2008). The findings of this study are therefore expected to contribute to the literature.

The presentation of this paper is as follows. First, the methodology employed for collecting and analysing data is presented. Then the findings of the research are presented, followed by a discussion section that highlights implications arising from the study.

**Methodology**

**Design of the study**

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect the data. Participants were asked their suggestions for the improvement of pre-service education in preparing elementary English teachers. A total of sixteen teachers and nine teacher educators participated in the study. The teachers (Ts) consisted of two groups: 1) those who had no tertiary English qualifications; and 2) those who had tertiary English qualifications. Their teaching experiences range from 2 to 38 years. On the other hand, the teacher educators (TEs) had extensive experience in tertiary education, research, and teacher training, all ranging from 10-40 years. Further information related to the participants is specified in *Appendix 1*.

**Procedure and Analysis**

Participants gave their consent after being informed of the study. As opposed to most participants who chose to be interviewed in the Indonesian language (some code-switched from Indonesian to English or vice versa), two participants (TE1 and TE4) chose to be interviewed in English. These interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and where necessary translated into English. The transcriptions are quoted in this study; and in order to distinguish the transcriptions of interviews conducted in English from those in Indonesian, the former are presented in italics while the latter are in normal font. Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the demographic information for the participants in this study.

| Teachers' Demography | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Types of Teachers** | **Teachers** | **Sex** | **Pre-Service Education** | | **Experience** |
| | | | Degree | EYL | |
| Teachers without English Qualifications | T15 | Male | PGSD | No | 2 years |
| | T16 | Female | PGSD | No | 4 years |
| | T2 | Female | B.A. in French | No | 2 years |
| | T3 | Male | B.A. in Physics | No | 2 years |
| | T7 | Female | SPG | No | 38 years |
| | T8 | Female | PGSD | No | 22 years |
| | T14 | Female | PGSD | No | 3 years |
| | | | | | |
| Teachers with English Qualifications | PSET1 | Male | Diploma 3 in English | Yes | 2 years |
| | PSET4 | Female | B.A. in English Language & Literature and Certificate IV in Education | No | 2 years |
| | PSET5 | Female | B.Ed. in English Education | No | 10 years |
| | PSET6 | Male | B.Ed. in English Education | No | 11 years |
| | PSET9 | Male | B.Ed. in English Education | No | 18 years |
| | PSET10 | Female | B.Ed. in English Education | Yes | 2 years |
| | PSET11 | Female | B.Ed. in English Education | Yes | 7 years |
| | PSET12 | Female | Diploma 3 in Business English and B.Ed. in English Education | Yes | 5 years |
| | PSET13 | Male | B.Ed. in English Education | Yes | 8 years |
| | T16 | Female | B.Ed. in English Education | Yes | 4 years |

**Table 1: Teachers' Profile**

| **Teacher Educators** | **Education** | **Experience** |
|---|---|---|
| TE1 | MA in TESOL | 25 years |
| TE2 | PhD in Early Childhood Education | 27 years |
| TE3 | PhD in TEFL | 40 years |
| TE4 | PhD in Language Education | 35 years |
| TE5 | PhD in Language Education | 18 years |
| TE6 | MA in TEFL | 12 years |
| TE7 | PhD in Education Management | 38 years |
| TE8 | PhD in English Education | 37 years |
| TE9 | MA in TEFL | 10 years |

**Table 2: Teacher Educators' Profile**

Data was analysed using methods from grounded theory. First of all, meticulous reading of the interview transcriptions was undertaken. Appropriate key words and associates were selected and entered into a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package, NViVo9. This was necessary in order to "open up data" and identify initial codes (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 95).

Data from NViVo9 were then classified in a process called *focused coding*. After the identification of certain *sub-categories* within the data, they were put under scrutiny during the process of *theoretical coding* in order to identify *core categories* (Dey, 2004). These categories were then triangulated with the memos that were written out throughout the data analysis processes. The final stage of the data analysis appeared when codes pertaining to the categories and their frequency of reference were presented in tables to visually represent the data (Birks & Mills, 2011).

## Results

Findings of the study are presented and discussed under the following categories: 1) Redesigning pre-service curricula; 2) Specific preparation for elementary English teachers; and 3) Training scheme for teacher educators.

## Redesigning Pre-Service Curricula

| Codes | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|
| Content-based education | 3 |
| Technology utilization | 6 |
| Practical components necessary | 13 |
| Practical components early | 2 |
| Communicative approach | 5 |
| Methodology and approaches | 4 |
| Teaching techniques | 5 |
| Classroom management | 2 |
| Learning styles | 6 |
| Psychology of learning | 3 |
| Classroom observation | 2 |
| Knowledge of contents | 2 |
| More English in PSTE | 6 |
| PSET graduates to teach English | 2 |
| Language assessment | 2 |

**Table 3: Codes relating to Redesigning Pre-service Curricula**

Table 3 reveals codes that highlight the necessity to redesign pre-service curricula. First of all, when it comes to English departments, the participants argue that elementary English education requires an emphasis *"on the practical side of teaching and what teachers are going to be facing in the real life classroom in the future"* (TE1). Other participants, such as TE4, TE5, and TE6 point out that the inclusion of practical components in English programs should be *"the content"* that student teachers *"need for the purpose of their teaching, for the profession"* as English teachers at elementary level. These include *"knowledge of content, and the knowledge of the learners",* "their learning styles", "lots of experience of observing other teachers teach", "methodology, pedagogy, learning styles, and the content of course", "technology of teaching" and "communicative approach and "learner-centered" (TE1, TE9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T7, T9); "approaches to learning", "psychology of learner development" (TE7, T5, T8, T10, T2, T4); "provision on English teaching, methodology, didactic", and "components on testing" (TE5, TE9, TE8, T15, T16, T9, T10, T1, T2).

In addition to provision in practical components, participants suggest the importance of equipping the prospective teachers with "sufficient language skills, so they are strong, the language components are strong" (TE3). This is viable through "the utilization of technologies" (TE4), where prospective teachers could use relevant ESL/EFL software to practise their pronunciation *"on their own time, so that teacher educators can focus on very much other skills that need the presence of the, of the trainer* (TE4). Language skills may also be strengthened through *"content based teacher education"* which allows a great degree of flexibility for teacher educators to combine contents and language skills. For example, current theories or methodologies in language pedagogy can be embedded within *"reading lesson, writing lesson, and speaking lesson"* (TE4). Group discussions could focus on *"how to set up pair work in large classes"* (TE4) or how to employ different techniques when teaching a class consisting of more than 30 students (T1, T4).

Because many English teachers are graduates of PSTE, participants also suggest the necessity of providing more English components in this stream of teacher preparation in order to "prepare the graduates to teach English" (T13). According to TE3, "some general teacher education programs prepare student teachers with English units" so that "once their student teachers graduate from the program they could teach English". Other participants express their aspiration that such initiative needs to take place in other programs, especially because the employment of prospective teachers with strong English proficiency is highly desirable (T8, T11, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16). TE6 asserts:

"Those who enter teacher education colleges need to get a lot of credit points in English, so they can develop themselves in order to teach English when it's needed. This means there are extra courses that we place in the colleges."

## Specific Preparation

Table 4 demonstrates the aspiration of participants for specific preparation for elementary English teachers. English departments attempt to "modify and revise their curriculum by including a unit under the umbrella of English for Young Learners (EYL)" (TE5) in order to prepare English teachers. However, EYL is considered insufficient; as suggested by T10: "…within 2 credit points in one semester there are so many things we did not cover." T1, T9, T11, T12, and T13 share a similar contention. TE5 further argues "professionalism of English teachers at elementary level is different from teaching English in junior or senior high schools. So it is specific, only for primary schools".

| Codes | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|
| EYL not sufficient | 6 |
| Concentration on EYL important | 10 |
| Concentration on EYL specific | 4 |
| Primary school teaching specific & complicated | 5 |
| Concentration developed later | 3 |
| Certification for alumni necessary | 4 |
| Transferrable subjects available | 2 |

**Table 4: Codes relating to Specific Preparation**

Participants argue that this can be done through the establishment of a specific concentration developed within the pre-service system, which "specifically prepares undergraduate students from semester 6, 7, or 8 in order to become teachers of English at primary level" (TE6). A minimum of "8 credit points" in these last three semesters is considered to be necessary by TE4, so that the early years of English programs *would ensure provision on fundamental principles of teaching English in general first before providing exposure to teaching English to young learners"*.

Furthermore, participants suggest another a certification for alumni of English departments who have the foundation in English language but have not been specifically prepared to teach. TE5 states "preparation for alumni ought to provide greater flexibility for them to obtain a certificate to formally teach English at primary level". TE6 concurs. He further specifies,

"We have alumni of English departments, right? Why don't we further prepare them by posting them to a university to attend one more semester, and then we worked very hard to prepare them? I could see this is more feasible; it's much easier. That's because they have already mastered the methodology after completing 150 credit points, perhaps they just need to add another 20 credit points for one semester, which then enables them to obtain a certificate to formally teach English at primary level."

## Training scheme for teacher educators

Data from Table 3 consists of codes that are linked to the importance of a training scheme for teacher educators to help them teach EYL at pre-service level. TE3 states that a teacher educator who "trains student teachers but knows nothing of primary school English teaching is a lie. It's a big non-sense" (TE3). TE6 concurs with TE3, by stating "in order to produce professional teachers, the first thing to do is that, the teacher educators at pre-service

level have to be professional." TE4 further states that *"if we cannot guarantee the trainers, then why, why bother having those trainings?"* (TE4).

| Codes | Frequency of reference |
|---|---|
| EYL exposure for teacher educators | 4 |
| More interactive teaching | 4 |
| Become language model | 4 |
| Training scheme important | 9 |

**Table 5: Codes relating to Training Scheme for Teacher Educators**

Other participants defend the need for professional teacher educators, as they relate professionalism to mastery of practicality of elementary teaching. For example, TE5 points out, "lecturers and professors at tertiary education should teach in primary schools, if they know how to teach". TE1 asserts, *"lecturers at pre-service teacher education need to be trained to lecture properly, not the old style, the old-fashioned way"*. The presence of teacher educators who teach in more interactive and participatory ways is vital otherwise, the government should *"get them out and bring ones that can"* (TE1).

Professionalism is also associated with the teacher educators being a language model. TE5 states, "anyone who is interested in developing teaching English in elementary schools must ensure the existence of teacher educators who are capable of becoming a language model" (TE5). He further argues that "teacher educators should have very good command of English, with whatever variety they have, their pronunciation has to be very good. If possible, it has to be close to native speakers of English" (TE5).

**Discussion and Implications**

The limitation of the study is clear in the fact that it involved a relatively small number of participants. This implies that the scope of the study was limited to the identification of trends in particular groups of participants in this study and that generalizations are imprudent. Further research needs to be directed toward increasing the number of participants, particularly those involved in teaching EYL from rural or underprivileged areas. Other research instruments such as observations may be put in place in order to gain broader perspectives into their teaching practices, while other contextual factors, including the teaching of English at secondary level and teaching materials, also need to be considered.

Despite this, the paper may shed light on the prospects for development of pre-service education for elementary English teachers in a variety of other contexts. In countries where the pre-service system is exclusively aimed at preparing teachers at secondary level and provides minimum support for elementary English teachers such as Vietnam (Dang, Nguyen, & Le, 2013; Nguyen, 2011), Bangladesh (Hamid, 2010), China (Li, 2010), Cambodia (Chodidjah, 2008), and Turkey (Kirgkoz 2008), the following recommendations may provide solutions.

## Concentration on EYL

The findings of the study have demonstrated the importance of redesigning the pre-service curricula. The first step would be to establish concentration on EYL. This makes a suitable response to the absence of specific preparation on EYL in English departments (Zein, 2014), while at the same time provides answer to Nunan's (2003, p. 609) contention: "with the introduction of English at the primary school level, teachers need special training in the needs of younger learners".

What this means is that in addition to the currently operational pre-service preparation that is intended for secondary English teaching, a preparatory course for elementary English teachers also needs to take place. In most cases, opportunities in which prospective teachers can make direct career-decision making are not provided (Mahon & Packman, 2011). The establishment of Concentration on EYL at pre-service level is expected to ensure adequate emphasis on young learner pedagogy, while at the same time warrants a more systematized process of career direction for prospective teachers prior to graduation.

## Certification in Teaching EYL

Another avenue in which graduates of English departments can be better prepared is through Certification of Teaching EYL. They may take another semester of study in other majors such as Education and Psychology where they can attend classes to better equip themselves with relevant knowledge and skills to teach young learners. The transferable nature of the certification well suits the provision of components as varied as theories in child language acquisition and psychology of learning, as well as material development for young learners, all of which alumni can greatly benefit from.

## Practical and Reflective Components

Redesigning pre-service curricula also means more provision in practical components in teaching English. Areas such as knowledge of learners and learning styles, classroom observations, communicative approach in language teaching, learning methodology, and psychology of learning are deemed important. Fields of instruction in which teacher candidates may benefit greatly from professional development include focused feedback on oral communication, explicit modelling, and revision and assessment (Aminy & Karathanos, 2011).

Focusing on instructional strategies is undeniably central. However, teacher educators should also examine the standards, assessments, practices, and beliefs underpinning the instruction. They also have to consider the language needs of the elementary students and frame their instruction based on these needs (Molle, 2013). The provision of reflective activities in which teachers are given opportunities to continuously reflect on their beliefs, ideas, and practices, and develop further their strategies based on the interplay of their reflection and relevant theoretical knowledge is also vital (Cirocki, Tennekoon, & Calvo, 2014).

The structure of these practical and reflective components, however, must not adopt a 'one size fits all' approach that weighs everything equally. Rather, it must adopt an integrated approach to language teacher education (Nguyen, 2013). The specific context of EYL teaching must be the main consideration for what should be included and for how much. This means the needs of the teachers, context analysis, as well as the continuous and evolving

process of needs and changes that they undertake throughout their career should be taken into account (Fradd & Lee, 1998; Graves, 2009). These need to be conducted in participatory modes of instruction whereby prospective teachers are encouraged to participate actively throughout the course. Meanwhile, teacher educators could flexibly adjust their questioning style and instruction in order to engage those participants with lower confidence (Barnes & Lock, 2013).

## Integrated Language Components

When redesigning pre-service curricula it is also necessary to provide instruction-focused components with a strong foundation in language proficiency. In areas where the bulk of English teaching force at elementary level are not proficient users of English (Agustina, Rahayu, & Murti, 1997; Chodidjah, 2008; Dardjodiwjodo, 2000; Jazadi, 2000; Karani, 2006; Lestari, 2003; Suyanto, 2010) stronger provision in English language development for teacher candidates is vitally important (Aminy & Karathanos, 2011). Pre-service language teachers everywhere are already burdened with the expectations to master practical classroom teaching skills and the prescribed curriculum (Nguyen & Baldauf, 2010), and so pressure is mounting as they they also have to learn and adequately utilize the language. Clearly, emphasis on language proficiency must not be neglected. As suggested by Murdoch (1994) and Cullen (1994), efforts to develop the teaching competence of teachers must go hand in hand with the improvement of their language proficiency.

The need for integrated language components is even higher in PSTE. Deliberate efforts to ensure the applicability of units relevant to English in general teacher education programs are desirable in order to compensate for their lack of knowledge of English and limited English proficiency. This is particularly relevant given the ubiquity of employment of this group of teachers. This means candidate teachers who will soon become classroom teachers need to be given strong provision in language skills to boost their language proficiency.

However, language components need not be English only. In fact, learning activities need to be designed to guide candidate teachers to perform analytical critique in the viability and repercussions of various instructional strategies based on particular institutional settings and serious considerations of 'native-language use' (Kibler & Roman, 2013). This is where the linguistic diversity occurring in the classroom is taken into account. Therefore, field-based experience that allows candidate teachers to continuously evaluate the linguistic diversity of the classrooms is of high importance. They also need to be provided with opportunities to address the distinctive moral contexts in which such diversity occurs for the benefits of their teaching practice (Cho, Rios, Trent, & Mayfield, 2012). Ways in which they can work with linguistically proficient or bilingual children along with continuous discussion and reflection need to be promoted for the enhancement of their second language acquisition understanding and better classroom practices (Fitts & Gross, 2012).

## Content Based Approach in Language Teacher Education

A relevant approach for the newly designed pre-service curricula seems to be a content-based one where the integration of language and content throughout a sequence of language levels is made. This is particularly useful as Content Based Instruction has the potential to address the gaps occurring when teachers learn teaching methodologies but have limited language levels. Research in various programs suggests the usefulness of Content

Based Instruction in language learning, content-learning, and increased motivation (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). As suggested by Cruishank, Newell, and Cole (2003), the approach is most effective when students with similar learning aspirations attend a course that perfectly aligns with their identified content and language learning objectives. One way to accomplish this is through the utilization of technology. Scholars argue that technology is positive for the development of both language proficiency and pedagogical competence of student teachers and it holds great potential for affecting the teaching and learning process as well as student achievement (Hall & Knox, 2009; Cohen, Pellegrino, Schmidtz, & Schultz, 2007).

This implies technologies can be further utilized for assisting various skills in which student teachers are lacking. It is a useful measure for developing their autonomous learning without necessarily ruling out the continuous support and encouragement in the supervision given by their teacher educators. Doing so means candidate teachers would no longer be seen as mere recipients of knowledge but rather as active participants in the development of their knowledge, linguistic, and pedagogical skills. It is also parallel with the recent development in teacher education that places larger emphasis on "the promotion of a shift from teacher educator-directed learning to student-directed learning among student teachers" (Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2003, p. 41).

As long as these policy measures are consistent in stipulating their conceptual framework of reference with specific knowledge and skills pertaining to teachers' occupational needs, they may provide answers to the absence of specific teaching preparatory courses for elementary English teachers. However, one thing worth considering is the heavy burden placed on the shoulders of candidate language teachers. The expectations for them to be able to implement the prescribed curriculum as well as to master practical classroom teaching skills and fully utilize the language they teach may not be met through pre-service education alone. This is especially true in many educational contexts whose pre-service preparation for elementary English teachers has been considered to be largely inadequate (Nunan, 2003; British Council, 2007; Kaplan, Baldauf, & Kamwangamalu, 2011). This necessitates the presence of training continuation conducted at in-service level that serves as a catalyst for the professional development of the teachers. A teacher preparatory course at pre-service level is not an end in itself but a trajectory course where professionalism begins and continues while their professional practice is underway.

**EYL Certification for Teacher Educators**

The findings have suggested the need for teacher training schemes for teacher educators. Alternative certification for EYL teachers is necessary, as dissatisfaction with traditional teacher professional development programs often leads to the development of alternative certification in special education (Quigney, 2010). The fact is Article 46 Act No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers requires teacher educators to possess a master's degree if they teach undergraduate courses and a doctorate degree if they teach a graduate degree (Pemerintah, 2005).

However, the challenges in teaching young learners require professional training more than a master's or a doctorate degree. In countries where a specific training scheme which enables the provision of expert teacher educators in order to support the operation of units within the content-based approach (Cruishank, Newell, & Cole, 2003) related to EYL is absent, such certification is necessary.

EYL Certification for teacher educators needs to give considerable provision in exposure to young learner pedagogy. This is because when teacher educators have insufficient exposure to young learner pedagogy it is difficult for them to inspire the

candidate teachers. The enhancement of teacher professional development is viable when "…the teaching and learning approaches advocated in the program are modeled by teacher educators in their own practice" (Korthagen, Loguhran, & Russell (2006, p. 1034).

Only when teacher educators are familiar with the daily challenges in elementary school English teaching can they inspire their student teachers. The congruency of action of teacher educators with what they teach means the abilities of teacher educators to become role models for the approaches they use and to explain the pedagogical choices they employ in the classroom (Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2003; Aminy & Karathanos, 2011). For example, the ability of teacher educators to align student expectations with their own especially when correcting errors is extremely important. It makes for a positive attribute in teacher educators, and it also creates more harmonious learning environment where success is within reach (Barnes & Locke, 2010).

Certification in EYL for teacher educators with such features is imperative for the success of preparing teachers of English at primary level amidst a move from more conservative approaches to more interactive participatory ones. It may take place in communities of practice where provision of support and collaboration in a collegial environment is viable in order to attend to pedagogical concepts and the recurrent challenges in teaching young learners.

Nevertheless, it requires the creation of transitional space between the traditional professional context to the new one in order to enable identification of needs through participants' voluntary contribution (Margolin, 2011). The collegial endeavors built in the transitional space need to allow participants' rigorous practice, experiment, inquiry, and the connection they make throughout the process in order to increase ownership and contribute to success (O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008). Where possible, some sort of field-based professional development activities in which teacher educators in certification are paired with teachers working in public schools may also be needed as a means of keeping abreast with real-life classroom situations (Linek, Sampson, Haas, Sadler, Moore, & Nylan, 2011).

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**Acknowledgements**