

## 2 Current trends and future directions in pre-service teacher training programmes for English Language in ASEAN Plus Three

A synthesis of recent research

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### **Introduction**

The main objective of this chapter is to assess current trends and future directions in pre-service English Language (EL) teacher training programmes for ASEAN Plus Three. Though there has been research in pre-service English Language teacher education, there has been no qualitative meta-synthesis study that addresses current trends and future directions specifically. To address this important gap, first we provide the background through a literature review of the areas identified in the research questions as well as the methodology of meta-synthesis. We then describe the method adopted for this meta-synthesis study and how we have derived the findings to the four claims pertaining to pre-service EL teacher education in ASEAN Plus Three: (1) Globalization and internationalism impact pre-service EL teacher training programmes. (2) Research in pre-service EL teachers focuses on theory-practice links (through practicum, microteaching and reflection), teacher identity and beliefs, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). (3) National English Language policy impacts pre-service EL teacher training programmes and teacher education. (4) English Language teaching approaches adopted for pre-service teacher training are country specific, ranging from traditional rote learning to communicative learning. The findings for the claims for the period 2002 to 2017 will form the basis for discussing emerging trends in pre-service training in terms of the development of more effective pre-service teacher training and future directions in research for pre-service education in areas such as teaching practicum, policy on teacher preparation and classroom research.

### ***Background to the study***

Before embarking on looking at the ASEAN Plus Three context, we will review literature on the key areas in the research questions from a generic perspective

as part of existing research on pre-service EL training so as to situate our findings and discussion in a broader context.

English is used for intranational and international communication (Honna, 2005; McKay, 2002) as the working language of the ASEAN Economic Community, as well as China, Japan and South Korea. In the globalized world, there is a “pressing need for a common language of communication, which would make it possible to overcome interlingual and intercultural barriers standing in the way of integrating nations into a common economic and cultural area” (Smokotin, Alekseyenko and Petrova, 2014, p. 509) and English meets that need as a global language (Crystal, 1997). English as the language for globalization and internationalisation is taught as foreign language or second language in the ASEAN Plus Three context, which has impact for pre-service teacher training as this study will reveal. Globalization and internationalism has impact on national English policy affecting EL pre-service teacher training programmes. For example, countries such as Korea, Japan and China are now giving English language teaching and learning much greater priority in their foreign language policy (Tsui, 2004). National policy also determines the age children learn English; according to Ho’s (2002) overview of “English Language Teaching in East Asia Today”, in ESL countries (Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore), children start to learn English early in school, in the primary grades or even in the pre-school year. National policy will likely influence the national curriculum, which “functions as the basic guideline and principle on what and how to teach or learn, and what and how to test, for example, by specifying learning contents, achievement standards, and teaching methods and testing” (Choi and Lee, 2008, p. 8) so that EL teaching approaches adopted for pre-service teacher training are country specific, ranging from traditional rote learning to communicative learning.

The chapter looks at research in pre-service EL teachers’ theory-practice links in terms of practicum, microteaching and reflection in addition to issues regarding teacher identity and beliefs as well as ICT. In the literature, practicum is seen as a key period for achieving reflective practice and addressing the theory-practice gap (see Allen and Wright, 2014; Stenberg, Rajala and Hilppo, 2016). Microteaching enables prospective teachers to convert theory into practice in the actual teaching environment or bridge the gap between theory and practice (Benton-Kupper, 2001; Capel, 1997), while reflection is seen as enhancing theory-practice links through practicum or microteaching (see Farrell, 2006, 2007; Ng, 2016). Research into pre-service education has also looked at the emerging professional identity of pre-service teachers and the role of emotions in the professional identities of non-native English-speaking teachers (Cheung, Ben Said, and Park, 2015) or teachers’ own voices, learning about becoming a teacher, and theories and expectations about teaching as a profession (Flores, 2014). In terms of ICT, to meet the demands of the 21st-century classroom, pre-service teachers need exposure to and experience with diverse technologies during their teacher preparation programmes, especially for English

teachers dealing with multiple literacies and collaborative learning (see Hogue, Nellen, Patterson and Schulze, 2004; Kim and Kamil, 2004).

Meta-synthesis<sup>1</sup> is adopted for the study. According to Sandelowski, Docherty and Emden (1997), meta-synthesis has implications for both knowledge development and research utilization, as the findings are “situated in a larger interpretive context . . . [and presented for] a variety of potential users, including theorists, researchers, practitioners and policy makers” (p. 365). The aim of meta-synthesis is to

integrate, compare and analyze in a constructivist way many previously unrelated studies, allowing interpretive themes to emerge from the synthesis [where] the results from the literature were synthesized, in order to identify key themes . . . and understand these emerging themes in relationship to each other.

(Togia and Korobili, 2014, p. 222)

In the present study, meta-synthesis provides a broader understanding of complexity of pre-service teacher training through allowing links and patterns to emerge, identifying areas requiring more research, and revealing practices across different countries and different institutions to enable discovery of commonalities and differences.

This brief literature review has highlighted research conducted in the areas identified by the research questions in various contexts but not all studies are related to the ASEAN Plus Three context, which our chapter will address.

## Method

To guide our selection and interpretations of research publications, we formulated a central research question: What are the commonalities or differences in pre-service teacher training programmes for English Language in ASEAN Plus Three? As meta-synthesis research looks for evidence from previous empirical studies, we followed conventional procedures for research synthesis specified by Cooper, Hedges, and Valentine (2009), and Norris and Ortega (2006). A preliminary search of international peer-reviewed articles led us to decide on a research synthesis that is more of a systematic content analysis. This approach is adopted because training of pre-service EL teachers in ASEAN Plus Three involves diverse educational contexts and populations, different purposes, research designs and reporting of varying quality.

To identify research published between 2002 and 2017, we conducted systematic searches of the computer data bases (such as Taylor and Francis, Elsevier, ProQuest and Wiley) in the National Institute of Education (Singapore) library for journals such as *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *Professional Development in Education*, *Asian EFL Journal* and *RELC Journal*. Five categories

of keywords were used for the searches: (1) ‘Pre-service’ and ‘training★’ or ‘teachers★’; (2) ‘English language’ or ‘ESL’, ‘EFL★’; (3) ‘Brunei’ or ‘Cambodia’ or ‘Indonesia’ or ‘Laos’ or ‘Malaysia’ or ‘Myanmar’ or ‘Singapore’ or ‘Thailand’ or ‘The Philippines’ or ‘Vietnam’ or ‘China’ or ‘Taiwan’ or ‘Hong Kong’ or ‘South Korea’ or ‘Japan’; and (4) ‘ASEAN★’. We excluded studies that did not involve empirical research (e.g., simple self-attestations about teaching practices) and examined the reference sections to identify relevant book chapters, unpublished theses or conference presentations.

Upon closer scrutiny of actual content of the articles generated through keyword search, publications on English Language education or in-service training pertaining to pre-service EL training issues were also included since research focusing specifically on pre-service could not be found for certain countries (see Appendix A for a breakdown of individual ASEAN Plus Three country representation and Appendix B for a list of journals). We read each of the more than selected 60 publications to do content analysis, generate themes, and identify claims related to pre-service training for English language in relation to commonalities and differences. As a qualitative study, the findings of our study were derived based on the researchers’ reflexivity to support judgements about claims while discrepancies were resolved through discussions. The results of these analyses are presented as four general claims in the findings section.

## Findings

### *Claim 1. Globalization and internationalism impact pre-service EL teacher training programmes*

With English as a language of modernisation and international communication (Kirkpatrick, 2012), issues of globalization and internationalism have impacted pre-service training for English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Globalization involves “the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, [and] ideas . . . across borders” (Knight, 1997, p. 6), while to O’Neill and Chapman (2015), internationalization of education encompasses curriculum (e.g., multicultural or intercultural education), mobility-related activities, and transnational or cross-border delivery of education (e.g., student exchange programmes). In O’Neill and Chapman’s (2015) view, internationalization of education is “a proactive response to globalization, with schools internationalising rapidly, especially through greater use of new communications technologies” (p. 4). For instance, the National Institute of Education in Singapore includes international practicum exchange programmes with universities from the United States, Europe, New Zealand and Asia where student teachers go for a five-week stint to observe English language lessons conducted in native, ESL and EFL settings (National Institute of Education, 2018).

In the climate of globalization and internationalism, educators and researchers have investigated the level of proficiency and competence of pre-service teachers teaching EL. According to Hu (2005), China’s MOE issued a curriculum directive

requiring primary schools to start offering English classes beginning in 2001. However, a major problem is that many English teachers simply do not have the proficiency or confidence to teach in English (Shen, 2009). For Malaysia, it was only during the 1990s that the “deterioration in the standards of English is seen as a major obstacle to the aspiration that Malaysia be declared a developed nation by 2020” (Nunan, 2003, p. 602). For Vietnam, Dang, Nguyen, and Le (2013) showed that global influences on teaching practices were mediated by social and community pressure, trends due to the internationalization of education, and the availability of teaching resources for 20 Vietnamese pre-service teachers. Le (2014) talks about how Vietnam’s effective participation in the global economy means “the country needs to have competent English language teachers” (p. 217) and to improve English proficiency level, teacher training programmes are beginning to use the English Teacher Competencies Framework (ETCF). Dudzik and Nguyen (2015) highlight how two universities have revised their five bachelor teacher education programmes to be in line with the ETCF. However, in the study by Vu and Burns (2014), several of the 16 interview participants teaching first-year pre-service students experienced difficulties in using English themselves. In investigating the challenges Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers face during microteaching, Koesoemo and Shore (2015) discovered that they had little confidence in their English language knowledge and competence. Ellis, Chong, and Choy (2013) did a study on Singaporean student teachers’ written proficiency levels in EL. The results showed that pre-service teachers needed to strengthen their writing skills in order to become more effective teachers at schools.

Globalization and internationalism have led educators and researchers to explore teaching English as an international language (EIL). The 144 Cambodian pre-service teachers of Moore and Bounchon’s (2010) study perceived English as important for facilitating international communication. It is because the status of English in Cambodia has evolved in a remarkably short time from that of a ‘foreign language’ not spoken within Cambodia to both an ‘international language’ that is spoken in Cambodia (by people of different nationalities) and a ‘second language’ spoken between and among Cambodians themselves. Suzuki’s (2011) three Japanese pre-service teachers believed that teaching only American/British English for international communication was best for their future students. Zacharias (2014) explores integrating EIL pedagogy into existing pre-service teacher education curriculum by looking at ten Indonesian bilingual English student teachers during microteaching and teaching practice. The study points to the limited understanding of EIL pedagogic models as native English speakers (NES)/standard English was the desirable pedagogical model.

In summary, with globalization and internationalism, educators and researchers have been concerned about the issue of whether English teachers have the requisite level of proficiency and competence to teach in English and have explored the possibility of teaching English as an international language in pre-service programmes.

***Claim 2. Research in pre-service EL teachers focuses on theory-practice links (through practicum, microteaching and reflection), teacher identity and beliefs, and ICT***

Educators and researchers have examined theory and practice links in pre-service teacher EL education programmes through assessing teaching programmes and incorporating practicum, microteaching, and reflection. In terms of pre-service teaching programmes, educators and researchers have expressed concern about the lack of links between theory-based training programmes and actual teaching practice. In China, Lou (2003) reported that a four-year primary EFL pre-service teacher training programme did not adequately integrate theory and practice and the participants questioned the value of formal training in contributing to their teaching practice. One hundred and fifty-four Taiwanese trainees in Chu's (2006) study gained some valuable teaching skills, though they highlighted that the programmes lacked effective integration across courses. Most of the six Korean in-service secondary school teachers interviewed by Yook and Lee (2016) "were dissatisfied with the largely theory-oriented pre-service teacher education programmes that they attended" (p. 522).

In terms of studies on practicum, educators and researchers have looked at these diverse issues related to practicum: mentoring issues with Vietnamese researchers being the most concerned, pre-service teachers' practical concerns, and the match between theories and actual practices or the expected and actual levels of competence. In ASEAN countries, the 21 junior and senior pre-service teachers in the Philippines in Ulla's (2016) study reported challenges in practicum as classroom management, teaching confidence and lack of teaching resources. Researchers from Vietnam seemed especially concerned about mentoring, as several studies dealing with the issue have emerged. Anh Le (2007) interviewed participants and looked at 23 post-classroom observation discussions between 15 EFL student teachers and 23 school-based cooperating teachers in Vietnam to reveal that the school cooperating teachers tended to impose their own ideas about how to plan and deliver a lesson on the student teachers. More than 50% of Hudson, Nguyen, and Hudson's (2009) 106 Vietnamese pre-service teachers felt that they had not received mentoring for developing their teaching of English writing. Nguyen's (2013) study of 65 Vietnamese pre-service EFL teachers doing a six-week school-based practicum in secondary schools showed that the experimental peer-mentored group had more psychosocial support from their peers than those in the non-peer-mentored control group. Looking at interviews and post-classroom observation discussions between 15 EFL student teachers and 23 school supervisors in Vietnam, Lee (2007) found school supervisors doing much more talking and how criticisms predominated which demoralized student teachers. Le (2014) looked at the diaries of five Vietnamese EFL student teachers during a six-week practicum to reveal their strong inclinations towards the cooperating teachers' models of teaching rather than attempting to adapt the theories they had learnt and reflect critically on the process. To Le, the present pre-service teacher education programme in

Vietnam fails to prepare the student teachers adequately to make a transition to the real classroom or provide student teachers with observational skills and skills of reflective practice to make the practicum a useful professional learning experience. Nguyen (2015) investigated the effectiveness of EFL teaching practicum of 18 teacher educators and 141 EFL trainee teachers at three Vietnamese universities in terms of training programme, practicum arrangements and mentoring practices. Nguyen's (2015) view is that university courses must link with practices in school and the gap between the experienced teachers and the novice bridged by emphasising a shift in role of the practicum mentors.

For the Plus Three countries (i.e., China, Japan and South Korea), researchers also look at the match between theories and actual practices or the expected and actual levels of competence. Tsang (2004) showed that, during classroom teaching, Hong Kong student teachers did not always refer to personal practical knowledge (PPK), though they could discuss lesson improvement during post-lesson conferences. She termed this a "delayed access to personal practical knowledge" due to competition between circumstances of the classroom, thoughts on teaching, coursework at university and the PPK. Liaw (2009) demonstrated that a one-year extended practicum enabled Taiwanese student teachers to improve in teacher efficacy; there was close collaboration among student teachers, cooperating teachers and teacher educators so that group discussions about teaching experiences "enhanced their personal teacher efficacy" (p. 179). However, Lee's (2011) Korean secondary pre-service teachers experienced difficulties connecting coursework to four-week teaching practices because the programmes "touched on these concepts only in the surface, theoretical, and abstract levels" (p. 15).

Researchers have also started looking at the issue of whether microteaching enhances theory-practice links and ways to enhance such links. For ASEAN countries, from questionnaire responses of 13 Malaysian lecturers teaching Linking Theory to Practice (LTP), Ghanaguru, Nair and Yong (2013) advocated incorporating a microteaching template to encompass learning objectives, lesson stages and activities. Koesoemo and Shore (2015) investigated 86 pre-service EFL Indonesian teachers to highlight these as microteaching issues: English language capacity, knowledge of teaching, access of resources and managing English language use in the classroom. Ng (2016) looked at how 23 pre-service teachers' reflective practices in the context of their microteaching revealed their acquisition of pedagogical knowledge. Ng (2017) also explored four groups of pre-service teachers' teaching of critical literacy in microteaching to highlight how they translated critical literacy into teaching practice.

Researchers have been studying how theory-practice links can be developed through reflective practice such as through reflective journaling. In looking at Hong Kong EFL pre-service teachers, Lee (2007) advocates using dialogue (via email) and response journals as tools for reflection. Brooke's (2012) three case studies of 3rd-year Hong Kong ESOL trainees on their first intensive block practice suggest that an online environment can support and develop reflective practice at a deep level if there is an online model to scaffold reflections and

asynchronous Socratic dialogue to prompt further reflection. Astika's (2014) 40 Indonesian pre-service English teachers reflected more on the personal and contextual domains of teaching in three-month practicums. Farrell's (2008) study with 18 Singaporean EL trainee teachers reported on at least two critical incidents during their practicum using reflective journals. Analysis of the 33 trainees' lessons in weekly journals by Kim and Yi (2010 in Moodie and Nam, 2016) showed that student teachers' "self-observation of critical incidents in their own classroom helped them to generate powerful insights about teaching" (p. 373). Through reflective journals, Farrell (2006) examined three Singaporean pre-service English teachers before, during and after a six-week practice teaching experience regarding the use of metaphors. Results showed that a three-part typology of metaphors – social order, cultural transmission and learner-centred growth – could be generated.

Research on pre-service teacher identity/teacher beliefs has become increasingly important (Cheung et al., 2015) with the studies focusing on ASEAN Plus Three countries emerging only after 2008. Lim (2011) utilized a concept mapping method to examine 90 Korean EFL student teachers' autobiographical reflections on their professional identity formation. Ghanaguru and Rao (2013) asked 10 Malaysian English language pre-service teachers to record the most memorable experience during their school days to derive conceptions and ideas related to beliefs about how to establish classroom climate, establishing identity and teacher personality. Zacharias (2012) investigated 30 Indonesian pre-service teachers' written response journals to discover that many negotiated their identities based on a core identity derived from their assumed first language (L1) culture and how encounters with native speakers would trigger a sense of linguistic inferiority as they deemed their non-native status (NNS) status as a drawback. In looking at 13 Indonesian English pre-service teachers' practicums, Kuswando (2014) advocates using more reflective dialogues to increase motivation and to shape pre-service teachers' identity and professionalism. Astuti (2016) identifies challenges that EFL novice teachers in Indonesia may face in developing the professional identity of a practitioner of the cooperative learning (CLT) approach as: (1) the unavailability of community of cooperative learning practitioners, (2) hegemony versus identity development, (3) agency in the midst of tensions, and (4) institutional identity versus professional identity. Lim (2016) examined Cambodian pre-service teachers' cognitions to derive their self-acknowledged identities as speakers whose pronunciation was not native-like. They had a positive attitude towards ASEAN English (with its varieties) as a lingua franca.

In Plus Three countries, the response journals and interviews of all 13 female Hong Kong English teacher participants of Lee (2008) revealed that they had become more reflective through journal writing while developing their teacher professional identities. Trent's (2012) six pre-service Hong Kong EL teachers had to confront, question and reject various identity positions, including 'student teacher', 'full-time teacher', and 'teacher researcher' in



identity conflicts as they engaged in a research project across institutional and educational boundaries. Xu's (2012) four participants' imagined cue-based or exemplar-based professional identities transformed into rule-based or schema-based practiced identities due to the institutional pressures of school rules and regulations. He and Lin (2013) discuss an ethnographic case study of the teaching practice experience of a student teacher, Lynn, in mainland China to reveal tensions between the school and university activity systems on Lynn's professional identity formation. Despite conflicting cultural and ideological beliefs and practices, Lynn's identity transformation seemed to be affected by her telos of teacher identity/goals of her teaching self. These studies from ASEAN Plus Three countries have examined different aspects of teacher identity in terms of professional identity formation and identities in relation to language teaching beliefs and approaches such as whether one is a practitioner of cooperation learning or one's status as NNS.

There are many studies about ICT for pre-service teachers in general but few focusing on EL and ICT. One such study was by Sudsuang (2005), who conducted a survey on the use of the Internet to reveal that Thai pre-service EFL teachers were generally positive about the use of the Internet for teaching and learning. Fook, Sidhu, Kamar and Aziz (2011) investigated 70 Malaysian pre-service Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) teachers to reveal their positive attitudes, their moderate level of competency and how they were adequately prepared to integrate ICT in the classroom despite the lack of facilities and technical malfunction in schools. Shin (2015) conducted two studies for 60 Korean trainees to raise awareness of critical, ethical, and safe use of information and communication technologies through evaluating and discussing the selection of instructional materials and lesson activities. In Singapore, Hanington, Pillai and Kwah (2013) describes a blended digital storytelling course to promote pre-service teachers' own language proficiency and development of awareness of teaching techniques for classroom use. The 46 Malaysian pre-service EL teachers in Tam and Nooreen's (2017) study were confident users of ICT, though there was no clear relation between their actual and perceived confidence in using ICT to teach.

This section has looked at diverse areas that have been researched upon in the ASEAN Plus Three context. Educators and researchers are concerned about the lack of links between pre-service training programmes and actual teaching practice. In studying practicum specifically, these were the areas of focus: mentoring issues with Vietnamese researchers expressing the most concern, pre-service teachers' practical concerns, and the match between theories and actual practices or the expected and actual levels of competence. Researchers have also started looking at enhancing theory-practice links through microteaching and reflective practices (mainly through reflective journaling). Teacher identity formation has been studied in relation to development of professionalism, pre-service teachers' NNS status as well as language teaching beliefs and approaches. Lastly, there is scant research in focusing on EL and ICT.

***Claim 3. National English language policy impacts pre-service EL training programmes and teacher education***

There has been little research into how national language policies impact pre-service EL programmes in ASEAN Plus Three, though national policies dictate importance accorded to the teaching of English language from primary to tertiary levels. Despite “considerable country-by-country variation, the age at which English is a compulsory subject in most of the countries has shifted down in recent years, a shift that is predicated on the importance of English as a global language” (Shen, 2009, p. 118). According to Choi and Lee (2008), national policies have mandated that English be taught at these levels: primary – Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Korea (recommended, but mostly not), Taiwan (required, but not in remote areas); junior secondary – Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Korea (recommended, but mostly not), Indonesia (varies with schools), Hong Kong (30%); senior secondary – Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Korea (recommended, but mostly not), Indonesia, Hong Kong (varies with schools); tertiary – Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Korea (varies with schools/courses), Taiwan (mixed), Indonesia, Hong Kong, China (mostly), Thailand (mostly). For Indonesia, English is taught as an extracurricular subject at primary level under the new Curriculum 2013 outside school hours and English is not part of schools’ final year exam (Sahiruddin, 2013). In Laos, English as the first foreign language is introduced from Primary 3, despite a lack of suitably qualified and proficient English teachers (Phommanimith, 2008). In Japan, since 2002, English is a compulsory subject in the first year of junior high. Students receive three 50-minute lessons a week in each of the three years of junior high (Shen, 2009). The Taiwanese Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced a new English-in-education policy in 2001 involving English teaching and learning in elementary schools, an English language exit requirement for college students to obtain the certificate of proficiency in English, and English as a medium of instruction (EMI) for courses in higher education (Chen and Tsai, 2012). Thailand’s Ministry of Education has required schools to provide at least one hour of English instruction beginning in Grade 1 since the early 2000s, a reflection of the growing trend among Asian countries to start English learning at young ages (Baldauf, Kaplan, Kamwangamaly and Bryant, 2011; Butler, 2015; Kaplan, Baldauf and Kamwangamalu, 2011; Nunan, 2003) and part of growing interest in teacher education for EYL teachers due to the global rise of English (Copland, Garton, and Burns, 2014).

Teacher preparation for EYL teachers and its practices in Asia have been widely discussed. Choi and Lee (2008) have highlighted how the lack of government support for English language education is a national policy problem in Taiwan and Japan, especially for primary English education. Kim’s (2010 in Moodie and Nam, 2016)<sup>2</sup> 137 Korean pre-service primary teachers reported higher anxiety for oral production in a classroom. Jung and Choi (2011 in Moodie and Nam, 2016) found that about half of the 50% of the 868 Korean pre-service teachers who had the chance to teach English during the practicum

felt their own lack of proficiency inhibited their teaching of English and that they were inadequately prepared for teaching English in primary schools. Le and Do (2012) have suggested that for primary teacher training programmes in Vietnam, priority be given to improving pronunciation and fluency in classroom English. Zein (2015) investigated the perceptions of 16 English teachers and nine teacher educators on educational policy measures for the improvement of pre-service education to offer suggestions to better prepare elementary English teachers professionally. Zein (2015, 2016a) argues for more research on pre-service teacher preparation programme to cater for the needs of elementary English teachers in the global world, while asserting for more attention to be paid to contextual factors that could impede teacher professional development (Zein, 2016b).

ASEAN Plus Three countries have varying bilingual or multilingual national policies that promote or sideline English language teaching. According to the Ministry of Education in Singapore (2012), “(preschool) children will learn in two languages; English as the first language and Chinese, Malay or Tamil as a Mother Tongue language”. In the Philippines, an official Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) has been in place since 1974 stating that English should be the medium of instruction for mathematics and science from Primary 1, while Filipino should be used in the teaching of other subjects (Tupas, 2009). Tupas suggested that the bilingual policy has not diminished the role of English in education and society as the symbolic power of English has remained strong. However, the Philippine Department of Education announced a radical change of policy in 2009 when it issued the order Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (<http://mothertongue-based.blogspot.com>), which recognizes the importance of using the learner’s mother tongue as the medium of instruction in the early years of primary schooling (Kirkpatrick, 2012). For Malaysia, in 2003, there was an abrupt shift from Bahasa Malaysia to English for mathematics and science which was reversed in 2012 with the introduction of the policy “To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to Strengthen the English Language” (Phan Le Ha, Kho and Chng, 2013). The shifting status and role of English in multicultural and multi-linguistic Malaysia also affect EL teacher preparation (O’Neill and Chapman, 2015). Therefore Singh and Choo (2012) advocate a long-term plan to improve the quality of EL teaching and learning through quality pre-service EL teacher training.

It is worthy of note that national policy has mandated English is used as the medium of instruction (EMI) in non-language classes (e.g., mathematics or science) and across school levels in Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore (Choi and Lee, 2008). The study by Vizconde (2006) described the attitudes of science and mathematics student teachers towards English as the medium of instruction together with Filipino. Vizconde (2006) conducted interviews with 16 student teachers from two institutions in the Philippines and found the majority of them preferred the alternate use of both Filipino and English inside their classrooms, which contradicted the policy of English as the *only* medium of instruction for science and mathematics teachers.

In short, ASEAN Plus Three countries have initiated national policies regarding the teaching of English language from primary to tertiary levels with the observable trend of children starting to learn English as a compulsory subject at a younger age. This has led researchers to raise concerns about pre-service teacher education of EYL teachers. Given the varying bilingual or multilingual national policies, English language teaching could be promoted or sidelined in these countries, while English as the medium of instruction varies from country to country.

***Claim 4. EL teaching approaches adopted for pre-service training are country specific, ranging from traditional rote learning to communicative learning***

According to Nunan (2003), the “rhetoric in Malaysia is that of the communicative movement” (p. 602) and the “prevailing rhetoric in Vietnam appears to be ‘communicative’” (p. 604). Cooperative learning, part of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach adopted by English instruction in Indonesia beginning in the 1980s, is a mandated teaching method both in the 2006 and 2013 Indonesian curriculum (Astuti, 2016). Shen (2009) too holds the view that Task-Based Language Teaching (methodological realization of CLT) is the central pillar of government rhetoric for Japan, Korea, Chinese Taiwan and China’s Mainland. Japan’s national policy Guidelines in 2003 stated as its objective: the development of “practical communication abilities”; “fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages” (MEXT, 2003, p. 7); and lessons with native speakers to develop students’ communication abilities and deepen their international understanding (MEXT, 2003). Korea’s MOE has also attempted to change teaching methods (e.g., the recommendation of CLT, Teaching English in English [TEE], Task-Based Teaching, Whole Language Approach) (Yook, 2010).

However, there appears to be “a large gap between the rhetoric and the reality” (Nunan, 2003, p. 604) with varying levels of success in attempts to embrace the CLT approach. In Ho’s (2002) view, partly because of the lack of training for teachers of English, “traditional practices such as text-centred grammar translation seem to die hard” (p. 19). For instance, though CLT is advocated, Zulfikar (2009) reported the prevalence of teacher-centred instruction and rote learning in Indonesian classrooms and Marcellino (2008) highlighted ineffective classroom interactions in most EFL classrooms in Indonesia. According to Baker (2016), EL teaching in Thailand “consists largely of outdated grammar translation instructional methods that give little attention to authentic communication or oral language skills” (p. 24). In the ELT policies of Japan, Korea, Taiwan and mainland China,

it would seem that rhetoric rather than reality is the order of the day. Poor English skills on the part of teachers as well as inadequate teacher

preparation make it very difficult, if not impossible, for many teachers to implement CLT in their classrooms.

(Shen, 2009, p. 119)

In terms of EL teaching methodology for pre-service training for ASEAN countries, in evaluating an in-service English Language Teacher Training Project (ELTTP) in Vietnam, according to Watson (2003), “Teacher training (pre-service, BA upgrade and MA) will be increasingly based on communicative approaches as the new modules become firmly embedded in professional training programmes” (p. 15). De Segovia and Hardison (2009) offered this suggestion for inclusion of CLT in Thai classrooms: “Pre-service training for teachers should include English proficiency improvement, coursework on materials development and assessment, and importantly, observations of CLT classes” (p. 161). However, when Hayden and Martin (2013) interviewed students, teachers and educational managers during site visits to educational institutional institutions in Myanmar from 2011 to 2013, they identified these key concerns in their report: rote learning being the main mode of transmission, predominance of the teacher-centred approach and teaching to the examination, though a student-centred approach is being encouraged. These same issues were also found in Brunei Darussalam (Mundia, 2010). The report could be indicative of the nature of pre-service teacher training for many ASEAN countries – teacher-centred and rote learning for English as EFL. Koesoemo and Shore’s (2015) Indonesian study revealed that most pre-service teachers could list key language teaching methods such as suggestopedia, inquiry-based teaching and Communicative Language Teaching, but in terms of teaching practice, the majority teach according to textbooks and student worksheets, and students rarely use the target language for peer interaction.

As for the Plus Three countries, to encourage his pre-service teachers to move beyond reliance on textbooks and traditional teaching and learning methods, Cheng (2013) has introduced principles of materials design to develop critical awareness and build a sense of agency. Jones and Fong (2007) interviewed 30 pre-service and 27 in-service Macau secondary EFL teachers and found the experiences the participants had as EFL learners played a significant role in the formation of their pedagogical beliefs, which tended to be teacher centred, textbook based, grammar oriented and examination driven despite exposure to different teaching theories and methods (e.g., CLT) in their teacher education programmes. Many of them believed in the effectiveness of CLT but did not practice it in their teaching due to external constraints (e.g., large class size, lack of time for preparation). Choi (2008) interviewed 20 Korean EFL pre-service teachers to find their belief in grammar-based, teacher-centred, and text-oriented teaching and learning led them to negative perceptions of the “pro-communication policies” issued by the Korean MOE. Ahn (2009) investigated four pre-service Korean EFL teachers’ four-week practicum experiences to find them enacting recommendations based on their experiences as EFL/ESL

learners, their ‘everyday concepts’ about EFL teaching, the mentors’ perceptions of and attitudes towards CLT, and institutional constraints such as pupils’ lack of classroom participation and a washback effect of grammar-focused, reading-based tests. Ahn (2011) also described how one pre-service teacher, Bohee, had limited success with encouraging participation through communicative activities during practicum, have students use only English and complete her lesson plans. Lee (2011) did a content analysis of more than 100 pre-service Korean secondary school syllabi to find that “communicative competence and communicative functions are discussed significantly; . . . while activity-, process-, task-based learning is dealt with at the surface level” (pp. 13–16).

This section has shown how in EL teaching methodology for pre-service training for ASEAN Plus Three countries, the desire to move from teacher-centred instruction and rote learning to communicative approaches has been largely rhetorical due to factors such as teachers’ poor language skills or external constraints (e.g., the large class size, lack of time for preparation).

### **Implications: current trends and future directions in pre-service teacher training programmes**

Current trends and future directions in research and teaching practice for pre-service education in ASEAN Plus Three and how they could be related to the development of more effective pre-service teacher training in ASEAN Plus Three countries, including those with limited technological resources, can be looked at in terms of policy on pre-service teacher preparation and curriculum development.

Internationalization and globalization in ASEAN Plus Three has given rise to increasing interest in teaching English, which has an impact on policies for teacher preparation, the development of pre-service curriculum and classroom research in future. The findings have affirmed that pre-service teacher training has to take account of how “the language policies of ASEAN countries Plus Three require people to learn their respective national language and English” (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p. 331) and how in “multilingual and multi-ethnic countries, the formulation of a language policy is a political balancing act in which the interests of the various ethnic, social and political groups should be catered for” (Tsui, 2004, p. 6). This implies that in researching and/or teaching, in future, researchers and educators have to understand how pre-service training methods can differ according to whether English has been accorded status as ESL or EFL by policymakers of ASEAN Plus Three and to contextualise the teaching or findings in terms of the language policies of the various countries. The review has highlighted how policymakers, educators and researchers have to address concerns about the English proficiency level of the pre-service teachers for a number of ASEAN Plus Three countries because quite a number are non-native English speakers lacking confidence in using English to teach. In terms of policy implications, there is the need for policymakers/administrators to put in place measures to increase the proficiency level of teachers in

EFL and ESL settings, with educators and researchers looking into enhancing proficiency levels through pre-service training.

In terms of curriculum development in pre-service education, the findings have shown increasing focus in these areas regarding EL teaching: teacher education especially in teaching English to young learners; theory-practice linkage during teaching practice; teacher beliefs and identity development and use of ICT.

Looking at these diverse areas, one key area meriting more attention is teaching English to young learners. All of the ASEAN Plus Three countries have policies mandating the age English is introduced in schools and, given the lowering of age requirements, this has implications in terms of the need for policymakers to offer more support, as Choi and Lee (2008) talk about how the lack of government support for English language education is observed as national policy problems in Taiwan especially for primary English education. The review also points to the increasing necessity for educators to provide pre-service training specifically for teaching young learners English in terms of English for Young Learners (Baldauf et al., 2011; Butler, 2015; Kaplan et al., 2011) and how to tailor pre-service EL teacher training for primary school and to young learners (Zein, 2015, 2016a).

In relation to pre-service curriculum to enhance theory-practice links, future research focusing on teaching methodology for English can look at how to resolve this issue: though policy rhetoric has advocated the teaching of CLT, researchers have demonstrated that the reality of the classroom remains teacher centred, textbook based, grammar oriented and examination driven (Jones and Fong, 2007). Teacher educators and researchers can continue to address theory-practice links through examining issues related to practicum and the incorporation of microteaching and reflective practice into pre-service training curricula. For the area of reflection, besides reflective journaling, educators and researchers can look at Farrell's (2017) recent study regarding a five-level framework for reflective teaching: Philosophy, Principles, Theory-of-Practice, Practice, Beyond Practice. In terms of practicum, quality of mentoring is a rich area for future research, as demonstrated by emerging studies from Vietnam. Though teacher identity formation has been examined in terms of professional status, language teaching beliefs and approaches, and NNS status, educators and researchers can continue to study teachers' identity in terms of teachers' own voices, learning about becoming a teacher, or theories and expectations about teaching as a profession (see Flores, 2014). Lastly, scant research on the incorporation of ICT for English language learning makes it a rich area for future research.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the chapter have revealed that policy on teacher preparation for the English Language is strongly dependent upon individual countries' stands on the status of the English Language in the milieu of bilingualism and/or multilingualism and the need for English as the lingua franca for intranational

and international communication with the prevalence of globalization and internationalism. It is encouraging to see how educators and researchers have sought ways to connect theory and practice in pre-service teacher education programmes through programme revamp, microteaching and practicum, specifically the use of reflection and quality mentoring and increasing interest in the professional identity development of these non-native EL teachers. In terms of directions for future research, this chapter has shown how these areas regarding EL pre-service teaching are increasingly important in the ASEAN Plus Three context: teacher education especially in teaching English to young learners; theory-practice linkage during teaching practice, as well as teacher beliefs and identity development. Lastly, even though pre-service teacher education has heeded the call for integrating ICT, research specifically on English teaching is still rather limited, so the use of ICT is another potential research area.



# Appendices



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# Appendix A

## A breakdown of individual ASEAN Plus Three country representation

<i>Country</i>	<i>EL pre-service training</i>	<i>EL teacher training issues but relevant/reference to pre-service</i>
Brunei	Mundia (2010)	
Cambodia	Lim (2016); Moore and Bounchon (2010)	
Indonesia	Astika (2014); Astuti (2016); Koesoemo and Shore (2015); Kuswandono (2014); Zacharias (2012); Zein (2015, 2016a)	Marcellino (2008); Zein (2016b); Zulfikar (2009)
Laos	A, 2016bDeng et al. (2007) (removed)	Phommanimith (2008)
Malaysia	Fook et al. (2011); Ghanaguru et al. (2013); Ghanaguru and Rao (2013); Tam and Nooreen (2017)	O'Neill and Chapman (2015); Phan Le Ha et al. (2013); Singh and Choo (2012)
Myanmar		Hayden and Martin (2013)
Singapore	Ellis et al. (2013); Farrell (2006); Farrell (2008); Hanington et al. (2013); Ng (2016); Ng (2017)	
Thailand	Sudsuang (2005)	Baker (2016); de Segovia and Hardison (2009)
The Philippines	Ulla (2016); Vizconde (2006)	
Vietnam	Anh Le (2007); Dang et al. (2013); Dudzik and Nguyen (2015); Lee (2007); Le (2014); Nguyen (2013); Nguyen (2015)	Le and Do (2012); Vu and Burns (2014); Watson (2003)
China, Taiwan, Hong Kong	Brooke (2012); Cheng (2013); Chu (2006); He and Lin (2013); Jones and Fong (2007); Lee (2007); Lee (2008); Liaw (2009); Lou (2003); Trent (2012); Tsang (2004); Xu (2012)	Chen and Tsai (2012); Jones and Fong (2007)
Japan	Suzuki (2011)	
South Korea	Ahn (2009); Ahn (2011); Choi (2008); Jung and Choi (2011 in Moodie and Nam, 2016); Kim and Yi (2010 in Moodie and Nam, 2016); Lee (2011); Lim (2011); Shin (2015)	Yook (2010); Yook and Lee (2016)
Asia		Choi and Lee (2008); Kaplan et al (2011); Kirkpatrick (2012); Nunan (2003); Shen (2009)

## Appendix B

A list of journals from which the sources were taken

*Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*  
*Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*  
*Australian Journal of Teacher Education*  
*Canadian Social Science*  
*Changing English*  
*Current Issues in Language Planning*  
*Education Research and Perspectives*  
*Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*  
*EFL Journal*  
*ELT Journal*  
*English Teaching*  
*International Education Studies*  
*International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*  
*International Journal of Educational Research*  
*International Journal of English Language Education*  
*Journal of Applied Linguistics*  
*Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities*  
*Journal of International and Comparative Education*  
*Journal of the Korea English Education Society*  
*Language Learning & Technology*  
*Language Teaching*  
*Language Teaching Research*  
*Linguistics Journal*  
*Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*  
*Professional Development in Education*  
*RELC Journal*  
*Teacher Development*  
*Teacher Education Quarterly*  
*Teaching and Teacher Education*  
*TEFLIN Journal*  
*TESL Canada Journal*  
*TESOL Journal*  
*TESOL Quarterly*

*The English Teacher*  
*The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*  
*The International Journal of Diversity in Education*  
*The Journal of Asia TEFL*  
*The Language Learning Journal*  
*Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*  
*World Englishes*

## Notes

- 1 Meta-synthesis research differs from a literature review. The former has implications for both knowledge development and research utilization. The latter is a review of the research literature relevant to a study, or a review of theoretical perspectives that inform a research project.
- 2 Articles in Korean cited in Moodie and Nam (2016).

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