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Pre-service education for primary school English teachers in Indonesia: policy implications

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Although English is only an extra-curricular subject at primary level in Indonesia, expectations over the improved quality of the teachers are exceptionally high. This is the case in the past few years in which the low proficiency of primary English teachers and their lack of teaching competencies have repeatedly been pointed out as major constraints. Unfortunately, it remains unclear whether this problem is attributed to the delivery of pre-service education in preparing primary school English teachers. This paper gathered data from teachers, language teacher educators, primary school principals, members of educational boards, and educational consultants. The data were analysed using Grounded Theory in order to examine the adequacy of pre-service education in Indonesia to prepare primary school English teachers as well as factors that contribute to its efficacy or lack thereof. The findings of the study demonstrate the need for specific preparation for primary school English teachers as well as further training for teacher educators. This present study is highly relevant to Indonesia and other Asian countries where teacher efficacy is a major concern.

Keywords: language teacher education; pre-service education; Indonesia; primary schools; English teachers

Introduction

Recent curricular development in Indonesia stipulates a status alteration for English language at primary level from a local content subject to an extra-curricular one. This means the teaching of English under the new Curriculum 2013 is given outside school hours and the subject is not part of schools' final year exam (Sahiruddin, 2013). This status alteration however does not demote the requirements related to teacher qualification. Section 1.b of The Decree of Minister of National Education Republic of Indonesia No. 16/2007 on Standards of Teachers' Academic Qualification and Competence and Chapter 29 of The Government Law of Republic Indonesia No. 20/2005 On National Standard on Education (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2006, 2007) are retained. As a consequence, teachers of English at primary level are required to possess an undergraduate degree from a pre-service institution in order to fully implement the curriculum at primary level.

Efforts to increase the qualifications of English teachers to meet the minimum requirements are evident, and the proliferation of English departments that offer English for Young Learners as an elective unit within their curriculum is indicative of such aspiration (Saukah, 2009). Nevertheless, expectations over the enhanced quality of English teachers at primary level remain exceptionally high over the past few years especially because of the low proficiency of teachers and their lack of teaching competencies (Asriyanti, Sikki,

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Rahman, Hamra, & Noni, 2013; Chodidjah, 2008b; Suyanto, 2010). One thing that is unclear however is whether this overwhelming issue is attributed to the delivery of pre-service education in preparing primary school English teachers.

This paper investigates the efficacy of pre-service education in the professional preparation of primary school English teachers. It also examines the factors that contribute to such efficacy or lack thereof. The structure of the paper is as follows. First, it reviews relevant literature on teachers and pre-service education for English teachers at primary level in Indonesia. Second, the methodological tenets employed for collecting and analysing data are discussed. A section on the findings of the research appears after that, followed by a discussion section. Finally, implications arising from the present study are presented.

Literature review

Unlike secondary level in which English is a compulsory subject and is better established in terms of teacher preparation and material provision, English is currently an extra-curricular subject at primary level. The inclusion of English in the primary school timetable in 1993 resulted from the societal pressure demanding stronger foundation of English instruction at primary level in keeping with the demands of globalization. Sadtono (2007) stated that proponents of early English instruction in Indonesia argued that the teaching of English in secondary schools had been considered a failure; therefore, it is expected that early English instruction would contribute to advancing students' overall language competence. English at primary level is expected to improve the overall input of students' quality entering secondary schools.

To carry out English pedagogy in these primary schools, there are 47,577 primary school English teachers appointed, of whom 41,304 teach in the public primary schools, whereas 6,271 teach in the private ones. These teachers teach English only, 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 the compulsory subjects such as Indonesian Language and Science (Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional, 2009). Zein (2011) categorized the teachers who teach English at primary level into two major categories on the basis of their prior educational background at pre-service level.

Teachers without English background

English teachers who have no prior English background are those who did not undertake a major in English during their pre-service teacher education. They come from three pools of the education system: (1) SPG (*Sekolah Pendidikan Guru/* School for Teacher Education); (2) PGSD (*Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar/* Primary School Teacher Education); and (3) general undergraduate programmes such as Physics, Mathematics, Biology, among others.

A few of the currently in service primary school teachers are those graduating from SPG, which is equivalent to a high school level of education. The largest bulk of primary school teachers, on the other hand, comprise those who graduate from PGSD. PGSD is a four-year bachelor degree aiming to produce qualified and competitive primary school classroom teachers; to conduct research that involves lecturers, students, and primary school teachers in order to further improve the quality of learning and teaching at primary level; and to conduct community services and become part of the solution of the national education. Graduates of PGSD are conferred with a Bachelor degree in Primary Education, which is the minimum qualification to teach in Sekolah Dasar (SD) as stipulated by Section 1.b of The Decree of Minister of National Education Republic of Indonesia

No. 16/2007 on Standards of Teachers' Academic Qualification and Competence and Chapter 29 of The Government Law of Republic Indonesia No. 20/2005 On National Standard on Education (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2006, 2007).

Although they might have acquired knowledge and skills related to young learner pedagogy, classroom pedagogy, theories of teaching, educational philosophies, teaching practicum, and learning assessment, PGSD graduates' exposure to English is limited. The reason is because they only learn a unit called *English for University Students*, which is taught for 2–4 credit points (100–200 minutes/week) in order to provide them with some general English preparation (Suyanto, 2010). Similarly, most graduates of other non-English programmes such as Biology, Mathematics, Indonesian Language, would have learned the unit at their undergraduate level. This group of teachers might have also obtained a certificate in English language of any kind from a private English course but have no specific preparation in English education during their pre-service education (Author, 2011).

The appointment of teachers who have no English background is prominent in many areas throughout the country such as Bandung, DKI Jakarta, Medan, Malang, Sidoarjo, and Blitar (Damayanti, Muslim, & Nurlaelawati, 2008; Ernidawati, 2002; Lestari, 2003; Nizar, 2004; Suyanto & Chodidjah, 2002). The fact that English occupies an important space in Indonesia, as it is encouraged by stakeholders at various levels: government, employers, and parents (Lamb & Coleman, 2008), seems to have resulted in a widely held belief amongst the community which associates English with beneficial intellectual capital. A school's reputation in the community may also be lifted as long as it offers English in their curriculum timetable. As Suyanto (2010) pointed out, this explains why many school principals put value in offering English instruction in their school. While in most cases classroom teachers are appointed to teach English to the students in their class, in some cases teachers with slightly higher English proficiency despite lack of qualifications are appointed to teach.

Teachers with English background

Teachers of English at primary level with English background are those who undertook a major in an English-related field during their pre-service education. Saukah (2009) stated that the establishment of the consecutive system within higher education in Indonesia allows student teachers to plan their study in two modes.

First, students may attend the English Language Education Programme, in which they decide to become English teachers right from the beginning. In other words, prospective student teachers have already decided to become English teachers by the time they enrolled in the English Language Education Programme. The programme is generally offered in The Institution of Education and Teacher Education (*Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Keguruan* – henceforth LPTK). The LPTK is the main form of pre-service teacher education for English teachers in Indonesia, consisting of both public and private higher education institutions whose main role is providing education and pedagogical training for those who are interested in teaching in junior and senior high schools (Cahyono, 2006). According to Saukah (2009), those who graduate from this programme are conferred with a Bachelor of Education in English Language. Teachers graduating from the English Language Education Programme will have acquired English language proficiency knowledge, and knowledge and skills related to curriculum, syllabus, language testing and assessment, teaching methodologies, teaching skills, and materials development. Depending on the emphasis of their curriculum, some English Language Education Programmes offer EYL (English for Young Learners) while others do not.

The second mode is the one that allows students to attend the English Study Programme. The programme is a four-year undergraduate degree consisting of 146 credit points, and offers its graduates a Bachelor of Arts in English. Concentrations in the English Study Programme vary between one university and another, but the most prominent ones are: (1) Linguistics; (2) English Literature; and (3) Translation. Students graduating from the English Study Programme will have acquired a strong foundation in areas of English linguistics (e.g., phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics), English literature (prose, poem, and drama), or translation studies. EYL (English for Young Learners) is not offered to students of this programme, but English pedagogy is covered in general from units such as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

What can pre-service education do?

The main issue with primary school English teaching, like it has ever been, is the huge shortage of competent and qualified English teachers (Luciana, 2006; Sadtono, 2007; Suyanto, 2010). It has been demonstrated that the quality of English education at primary level is not particularly satisfying (Chodidjah, 2008a; Sadtono, 2007). Many teachers are employed by the schools, even though they are not qualified in English and have limited English proficiency (Chodidjah, 2008a, 2008b; Karani, 2006; Suyanto, 2009, 2010). Chodidjah (2008b) pointed out that some parents are so dissatisfied with the quality of English education at primary level that they send their children to private English courses as well.

But the extent to which such a grim picture is attributed to the delivery of either in-service or pre-service education or both remains unknown. As a consequence, calls for studies on language teacher education for primary school English teachers have been made (Chodidjah, 2007, 2008a; Sadtono, 2007). While Zein (2012b) responded to the calls by conducting a study on policy recommendations for language teacher education for English teachers at primary level, no studies however have been specifically focused on pre-service education.

The examination of the efficacy of pre-service education in the professional development of English teachers at primary level remains a relatively underexplored area. It is largely unknown whether the pre-service teacher education has been effective in enhancing the professionalism of primary school English teachers. Furthermore, it remains to be seen what factors contributed to its efficacy or lack thereof.

This study was carried out in order to fill in the gap. It is the aim of this paper to investigate whether or not the pre-service education system in Indonesia has been adequate to prepare the teachers to teach English at primary level. It also examines factors that contribute to the delivery of pre-service education. Such examination is a vital starting point to frame the reference for a language policy proposal on teacher education for primary school English teachers. As Zein (2012a, pp. 85–86) argued, “the continuously increasing advocacy for a policy on educating primary school English teachers cannot be fully understood without an adequate framework of the various contexts in which the policy is situated”.

Research methodology

A total of 24 respondents participated in this study; they spread across five groups, namely teachers, language teacher educators, members of an educational board, primary school principals, and educational consultants.

The 13 teachers participating in this study were from seven provinces in Indonesia, namely Banten, DKI Jakarta, Central Java, East Java, Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, and North Sulawesi. They were selected based on the type of schools and location in order to ensure reasonable representation. Five teachers were from private schools, five were from public schools, and three were from national-standard public schools. Previous research relevant to primary school English teachers was conducted involving teachers in areas such as Bandung (Sary, 2010), Medan (Ernidawati, 2002), and Palangkaraya (Karani, 2006). It was decided to conduct research involving teachers in other areas such as Tomohon, North Sulawesi; Denpasar, Bali; Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara; Rempoa, Banten; and Tegal, Central Java, primarily to cover areas which had not been included in previous research. Furthermore, previous research in Malang (Rachmajanti, 2008) and DKI Jakarta (Suyanto & Chodidjah, 2002) may need to be followed up, and so it was decided to also involve teachers in these two areas.

Other groups of participants were four language teacher educators (LTEs), two members of the educational board (MEBs), two primary school principals (PSPs), and two educational consultants (ECs). These groups of participants were selected in order to match the purpose of the study, to generate rich and insightful data, and to corroborate information as gathered from the other group of participants (teachers), as suggested by scholars including Boije (2010) and Marshall and Rossman (2010).

Boije (2010) suggested the recruitment of participants through networking and formal invitation, and so these were implemented in this study. First, the researcher contacted his acquaintances to help find teachers who might be willing to participate in the study. After the teachers confirmed their willingness, they were contacted by the researcher who described the nature of the study. A formal letter was then sent to the school principals requesting to conduct an interview session with the teachers. Upon receiving the approval letter from the principal, the teachers were then contacted again to set up the interview schedule. The list of the teachers is provided in Appendix 1.

In sessions of semi-structured interviews, participants were asked the following questions:

- (1) Do you find pre-service education adequate to prepare teachers to teach English at primary level?
- (2) What factors contribute to the efficacy of pre-service education or lack thereof?

While most participants chose to be interviewed in Indonesian, some chose to code-switch from Indonesian to English or vice versa. Only two participants decided to be interviewed in English. These interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Interview quotations occurring in Indonesian were initially translated into English. In this paper, these quotations are typed in normal font, whereas quoted interview responses that took place in English are typed in *italic*.

The data collected from these participants were analysed by using Grounded Theory. Meticulous reading of the interview transcriptions was undertaken. In doing so, initial codes were identified by selecting appropriate key words and associates to “open up data” (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 95). These key words were then entered into a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package, NViVo9, in order to help facilitate data management and analysis. Data from NViVo9 resulted in initial codes, which were then classified in a process called focused coding. When certain sub-categories became identifiable within the data, they were then put under scrutiny during the process of theoretical coding in order to identify core categories (Dey, 2004), and these were

triangulated with the memos that were written during the process of data analysis (Birks & Mills, 2011).

The categories and focused codes are presented in the tables. The frequency of references is provided in the tables to indicate the degree of importance that the participants attached to a particular code.

Findings

Findings are presented under the following sub-categories: (1) The inadequacy of pre-service education; (2) The lack of specificity of English departments; (3) The lack of specificity of PGSD; (4) The lack of quality of teacher educators in English departments; (5) Overhaul of pre-service education.

The inadequacy of pre-service education

According to EC1, there are two approaches currently in use in pre-service education to produce English teachers at primary level. The first approach is “English department which focuses on English” and the second approach is “PGSD which focuses on several different subjects” (EC1). The data in Table 1 shows that most participants were dissatisfied with pre-service education in preparing the teachers to teach in primary schools, from both approaches. The teacher who graduated from PGSD (PSET8) did not give a positive response, a stance shared by the teacher who graduated from the SPG (PSET7). Both PSET7 and PSET8 stated that in their pre-service education they were “prepared to become a classroom teacher”, and not an English teacher (PSET8). Similarly, PSET3 stated that he had “just graduated to become a Physics teacher” (PSET3), PSET2 had graduated from an undergraduate degree “since 1996 to become a French teacher” (PSET2). Furthermore, seven out of these nine teachers who had a prior background in English expressed dissatisfaction with their pre-service education. These include PSET1, PSET4, PSET5, PSET6, PSET9, PSET10, and PSET13. They pointed out that their pre-service education did not well-prepare them to successfully teach English at primary level. PSET9 stated that “the knowledge for teaching English in primary school is difficult” but what he “obtained from pre-service education was not sufficient” (PSET9).

Other groups of participants also showed their agreement with this, namely LTE1, LTE4, LTE2, MEB2, MEB1, PSP1, PSP3, EC1 and EC2. PSP3, for example, pointed out that “little of what graduates receive from pre-service education can be applied” in their vocation (PSP3).

Only two teachers (PSET11 and PSET12) expressed their satisfaction with their pre-service education. Both teachers graduated from the same university and stated that their pre-service education was “very useful” (PSET11) and “was very helpful for developing the lessons, especially classroom management” (PSET12). Their opinion was supported

Table 1. Codes relating to the inadequacy of pre-service education.

Codes	Frequency of references
Pre-service unsatisfactory	11
Pre-service inadequate	7
Pre-service satisfactory	2
Pre-service adequate	1
Quality gap between pre-service institutions	1

by LTE3 who stated that the course EYL offered in the university in four credit points was “adequate” to help prepare student teachers with the challenges of teaching English at primary level (LTE3). Such gap between pre-service institutions was shrewdly observed by PSP3 who stated:

If we see some English departments, they have good English departments. They are adequate in terms of preparing teachers to teach English at primary level, so when the graduates teach in schools they are good already. But I could tell you that there are many English departments that have not been able to do so.

Specific issues contributing to this gap of quality between one teacher education programme and another are further specified in the subsequent sections.

The lack of specificity of English departments

Table 2 shows that the inadequacy of pre-service education to help prepare English teachers at primary level was distinctively characterized by lack of specificity of English departments. The majority of the participants referred to English departments as being “not specific”, “not practical”, “generic”, and “too theoretical”. Seven out of nine teachers who graduated from English major programmes expressed dissatisfaction with their pre-service education in English departments. These include PSET1, PSET4, PSET5, PSET6, PSET9, PSET10, and PSET13. They pointed out that their pre-service education was not adequate as it did not specifically prepare them to successfully teach English at primary level. The lack of specificity of English departments here is not exclusive to the English Language Education Programme but also includes the English Study Programme, because the teachers who stated their dissatisfaction above graduated from these two streams of English departments.

PSET9 and PSET13 who graduated from the English Education Programme revealed the presently occurring gap between the theory they had received in their pre-service education and the classroom realities, while PSET13 highlighted that during college he was “not prepared to teach English to children” (PSET13). PSET6 found it confusing when he had to apply his experience of “teaching practice in a senior high school that” he conducted “during his pre-service teacher education” in the primary school he was teaching (PSET6).

The findings also show that English programmes place a large emphasis on the theoretical aspect of teaching. Teachers such as PSET6, PSET9, and PSET10 believed that English programmes neglect the practicality of English pedagogy in pre-service education. PSET6 stated that English programmes “ignore the practical components such as teaching experience and classroom management”. PSET10 stated that her pre-service teacher education “did not provide her with opportunities to prepare lessons and topics and to design materials that are appropriate for young learners” (PSET10). In a quite reasonably similar fashion, PSET9 pointed out that “the knowledge we received during pre-service

Table 2. Codes relating to the lack of specificity of English departments.

Codes	Frequency of references
English departments not practical	8
English departments not specific	5
English departments insufficient	5
Limited curriculum in English departments	2
2 credit points EYL insufficient	1
English departments old-fashioned	1
EYL varies in quality	1

was limited. It was useful yes, but in terms of techniques and methods, it's very limited, very limited" (PSET9). Data from PSETs were consistent with that of participants from other groups (LTE, PSP, MEB, and EC) who identified English departments as being "not specific", "not practical", and "lack of update".

Participants stated that both the English Study Programme and the English Education Programme without EYL are not specifically designed to prepare student teachers to successfully teach English in primary schools. The student teachers in the English Education Programme in particular are trained to become teachers of English at junior and senior high school levels. Two participants confirmed it in the following:

So the curriculum of English for Young Learners is very limited, still limited. Because those who graduate from Manado State University, the undergraduate students, are projected to become English teachers in senior and junior high schools. (MEB2)

Yes, in my view, in universities, as far as I am concerned, those teaching colleges prepare their students to become English teachers in junior and senior high schools, not to teach English in primary schools. (EC2)

Participants further suggested that not all graduates of English Language Education Programmes that offer EYL are reliable because the programmes are varied in terms of quality; not all programmes are of exceptional quality. This was confirmed by participants such as PSET11, PSET12, and LTE1 who asserted the quality of an English department in a pre-service education institution in East Java, while PSET10 highlighted the inadequacy of two credit points of EYL in a pre-service education in West Java. She stated that "within two credit points there are so many things we didn't cover" because "most of these two credit points are theories, very raw" (PSET10).

LTE1 stated that teaching English to primary school children is considered "*just as complicated and as complex as teaching older children, if not more so, more difficult, more challenging*" than teaching in high schools (LTE1), but practical components that prepare student teachers with hands on experience have not been given strong emphasis in the curriculum of English departments. The departments provide methodology units such as "*how to teach (.) speaking, how to teach reading, how to teach writing*" but provide no specific reference to prepare students teachers with young learner pedagogy (LTE2). Components such as "teaching methods, learning strategies, as well as using learning facilities, and most importantly the contents in language teaching" are the ones that have often been missing (MEB1) in many English departments.

LTE1 made a remark that during the early years of pre-service teacher education "*there's too much time wasted and not enough time spent on the practical skills of teaching*" (LTE1). During the first year of their pre-service teacher education student teachers "*have got to do citizenship, religion*" and other units that were deemed as irrelevant to language pedagogy (LTE1). This explains that even when practical components do exist they are usually provided near to completion of the teacher education programme or in LTE3's words "*it is not until later in their course that they do teaching practice*" (LTE1). LTE4 agreed with LTE1 as she stated that many English major programmes "*are very much focusing on*" topics or units "*which are not related to the teaching itself*" (LTE4).

For this reason, EC2 stated that graduates of English departments are not ready to teach English successfully at primary level because "they are lacking of practical training during their pre-service education" (EC2). This explains why EC1 made the following cautionary remark:

Do not assume that those who graduate from Education University of Indonesia or other teaching colleges are capable of teaching English at primary level proportionately. (EC1)

The lack of specificity of PGSD

Table 3 shows that PGSD is not specific to prepare teachers of English to teach in primary schools. Participants argued that PGSD is not adequately specific in preparing student teachers to successfully teach English in primary schools because “graduates of PGSD are prepared to become classroom teachers” (LTE3) to teach various subjects and “not a particular subject (English)” (EC2). Relying on PGSD to produce English teachers has been reproached by three groups of participants: PSET, LTE, and EC because it does “not provide sufficient input on English”, is “not aimed to teach English”, and is actually aimed “to teach other subjects”.

Table 3. Codes relating to the lack of specificity of PGSD.

Codes	Frequency of references
No sufficient English in PGSD	4
PGSD graduates to teach other subjects	3
PGSD graduates not to teach English	2
Teachers from English departments preferred	1
Employing PGSD graduates imprudent	1

Although PGSD students are required to enrol in *English for University Students*, no significant amount of provision on English language proficiency is given to them. As a consequence of such limited provision on English, LTE4 pointed out that:

Graduates of PGSD have almost no proficiency in using English, but they have some knowledge of English. But they have been teaching English in primary schools for some time, so they understand how to handle children, and, and how they actually talk with children in the first language, but they have no English to deliver the message. (LTE4)

For PSET11, this results in the occurrence of a phenomenon in which “the right person is not in the right place. Teachers have to teach English, but their background is not English”. Furthermore, PSET9 pointed out that the fact that PSET graduates “have not been prepared to teach English” makes the employment of teachers with no English background “not a prudent decision”.

The lack of quality of teacher educators in English departments

Table 4 demonstrates that the inadequacy of pre-service training is distinctively marked by the lack of quality of teacher educators.

The reason for this, LTE1 argued, is because there are many “*old-fashioned lecturers*” whose teaching practices are in contradiction to what they prescribe. LTE3 further asserted that “the lecturers should become a model” but unfortunately “many lecturers teach but do not give examples” to the student teachers. They are incapable of giving “*inspiration*” and “*ideas to the teachers, to the candidate teachers on how to actually handle the learners*” (LTE4). Student teachers are given preparation on general pedagogy but are left without sufficient theoretical knowledge and practical ideas on how to deal with young learners.

LTE4 further pointed out that often teacher educators do not have sufficient exposure to classroom practice. This is evident in the following:

So many lecturers in English departments in Indonesia have no exposure to the classroom practice and therefore it's very hard for them to give inspiration, to give ideas to the teachers, to the candidate teachers on how to actually handle the class. So I guess, eh, the failure of teacher training in our context is because the lecturers, which, you know, which they have to call themselves trainers instead of showing. While in primary schools teachers are demanded to be very practical and become a strong model. (LTE4)

Table 4. Codes relating to the lack of quality of teacher educators.

Codes	Frequency of references
Teacher educators not a good model	3
Teacher educators lacking exposure to classroom practice	2
Teacher educators old fashioned	1
Teacher educators do not give examples	1
Teacher educators qualified	1

It is worth noting that findings relating to lack of quality of teacher educators were generated almost exclusively from language teacher educators. None of the school principals, members of the educational board, and educational consultants raised their concern on the quality of teacher educators. Most teachers also did not express any views in regard to the quality of teacher educators. The only commentary gathered from teachers came from PSET11 who stated, “all teacher educators” in the university where they graduated from “are qualified” (PSET11).

PSET11’s statement above should not be seen contradictory to the evidence generated from teacher educators. It instead indicates that there is a gap of quality between teacher educators in various English departments across universities in Indonesia, which reiterated the previous finding on the inadequacy of pre-service education. EC2 provided a similar view:

In big universities, so far, we have good human resources. Some teaching colleges like Education University of Indonesia and other universities, they have good human resources, in my opinion, but others no. (EC2)

Overhaul of pre-service education

Table 5 includes codes relating to the necessity to develop an overhaul of pre-service teacher education to prepare teachers of English at primary level. For PSET1, an overhaul is vital for the presence of a pre-service education that caters for “the needs of the teachers” and takes into account “the situation of primary schools in Indonesia” (PSET1). Similarly, LTE1 stated that

If we’re looking at the needs of, if we’re looking what the needs of the teachers a:re, it all has to start back at the teacher training colleges, and it it’s u:hm, that needs an overhaul, that that needs a complete change of direction. (LTE1)

Participants stated that reform on the pre-service teacher education is necessary to help prepare student teachers with the demands of their vocation. However it is not something that can be done sporadically because “*the whole thing needs rethinking*”, “*money*”, and “*careful setting up*” (LTE1). Both LTE2 and EC2 confirmed their agreement. They highlighted the importance of having a master plan for redesigning the pre-service teacher education to provide adequate preparation for teachers of English at primary level. This is evident in the following:

Table 5. Codes relating to overhaul of pre-service education.

Codes	Frequency of references
Overhaul necessary	4
Overhaul needs setting-up	3
Overhaul needs master plan	1
Overhaul focuses on practice	1
Overhaul contextual	1

Yes, so the first thing is we need a master plan, it's something like a grand design of teaching English at pre-service level. (LTE2)

At the moment we need designing, eh what is it, redesigning teacher education in Indonesia. (EC2)

It has been suggested in the previous section that the inclusion of practical components in English departments is necessary to help prepare student teachers to teach English at primary level. Evidence drawn in this section however suggests that practical components are not exclusive to English departments. The curriculum at the whole pre-service education (including PGSD) needs to be redesigned by placing large emphasis on the practicality of teaching. This was highlighted by LTE1 in the following:

The whole pre-service teacher training, syllabus, is in need of overhauling with so much focus on the practical side of teaching and what teachers are gonna be facing in the real classrooms in the future. (LTE1)

Discussion

The findings generated from this study have demonstrated that three factors contribute to the inadequacy of pre-service education in preparing English teachers at primary level, namely: (1) the lack of specificity of English departments; (2) the lack of specificity of PGSD; and (3) the lack of quality of teacher educators.

The lack of specificity at pre-service level occurring in both English departments and PGSD reflects a similar situation in other Asian countries such as Vietnam (Hoa & Tuan, 2007), China (Hu, 2005; Li, 2007), Japan (Honna & Takeshita, 2005), Bangladesh (Hamid, 2010), and South Korea (Shiga, 2008) where no specific in-service preparation for English teachers at primary level is officially stipulated. Taiwan is the only country that obligates its teaching colleges to establish a specific programme within English departments to prepare English teachers at primary level (Tsao, 2008). The fact that educational policymakers in many Asian countries do not seem to have considered specific preparation for English teachers at primary level as necessary reflects their naïve conception of the professional qualities of foreign language teachers at primary level (Hu, 2005). It is in fact one of the factors contributing to the failure of primary school English teaching (Baldauf, Kaplan, Kamwangamalu, & Bryant, 2011).

Considering the fact that primary school English teaching in Indonesia has not been considered exceptionally successful (Chodidjah, 2008a; Sadtono, 2007; Suyanto, 2010), it is reasonable to argue that such situation is primarily attributed to the minimum preparation that is given to the prospective teachers.

The findings therefore are critical to the current pre-service system for English teachers at primary level. The current two approaches of pre-service (PGSD and English departments) seem to only produce a majority of teachers who found it difficult to make a linkage between theoretical references they had studied with the particular situation of teaching English to young learners.

This means the findings of this study challenge the employment of PGSD graduates. PGSD may enable student teachers to acquire knowledge and skills related to young learner pedagogy, classroom pedagogy, theories of teaching, educational philosophies, teaching practicum, and learning assessment but it does not prepare them with sufficient English skills. The irony is providing student teachers with knowledge and skills on young learner pedagogy, classroom pedagogy, and theories of teaching without particular reference of how they are useful to teach English is groundless. Without adequate

provision on both the language skill and relevant references of knowledge and young learner pedagogy, teacher cognition is incomplete (Borg, 2006). This clearly suggests that the current PGSD is not an ideal avenue for those undergraduate students intending to teach English in primary schools.

Second, the findings of the study also challenge the current consecutive and concurrent systems that only allow those interested in primary school English teaching to come from either one of the three majors in English departments: English Language and Literature, English Language Education without EYL, and English Language Education with EYL. Relying on the current systems, which provide no specific preparation to teachers of English at primary level, may only maintain the present situations but provide no long-term solutions. The present pre-service English departments are inadequate to cater for the particular needs of teaching English at primary level. Even in English Language Education Departments that offer EYL, it is no guarantee that the allocation of 2–4 credit points of EYL will be able to tackle the increasing demand of primary school English teaching.

Another major finding of the study is the presently occurring gap of quality between pre-service institutions. This particular finding is consistent with Luciana (2006) who maintained that there is a lack of uniformity between various English departments throughout the country; the majority of English departments are inadequate in preparing English teachers at primary level. The culprit is argued to be the bulk of teacher educators who are not satisfactorily competent and have limited exposure to classroom practice, much less to young learner pedagogy. When teacher educators fail to give examples as well as to become models for their student teachers, it indicates a gap between theory and practice. Teacher educators have been old-fashioned in their practice that they may have made a call for a constructivist approach, which puts large emphasis on reflection, but employ knowledge-transmission approach of teacher education. They argue for an active teaching-learning process but actually implement a passive teaching-learning process. This is not exclusive to Indonesia, however. As demonstrated by Morais, Neves, and Alfonso (2005), such issue is one of the most frequently occurring problems in pre-service education.

Conclusion and implications

The inadequacy of pre-service education in preparing student teachers to teach English at primary level has been argued in this paper. Several policy implications arising from such inadequacy are as follows.

First, the fact that PGSD has been argued not an ideal avenue for those who are interested in primary school English teaching, is however not an excuse to exclude it from the equation. The statistics show that there are only 47,577 primary school English teachers but there 144,228 primary schools throughout the country (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2009). This means there are more primary schools that need English teachers than those who currently have them. PGSD may possibly help to fill in the large gap by producing English teachers, but this is only viable through adequate provision of English skills and relevant practical teaching components. PGSD curriculum therefore needs to be restructured, and an overhaul on the system needs to be made.

Furthermore, the provision of practical components in English departments to attend to the needs of the student teachers to teach English at primary level is vital. This is in line with the contention that the view on teacher education, which does not put large emphasis on practice, has been increasingly challenged for its limitations and inadequacies. A growing pressure to rethink both the structure and practices of teacher education requires that consistent conceptual framework of reference that prepares student teachers

with specific knowledge and skills pertaining to their occupational needs is made available within the pre-service system. This provides an answer to Lengkanawati's (2005) assertion for the setting up of standards within teacher education institutions.

Overhaul in English departments needs to allow more practical provision and techniques in teaching English to Young Learners, and this implies the current curriculum at English Language Education Programmes may need to be reformulated. What this means is that English Language Education Programmes may need to introduce innovations that allow specific preparation for students to teach English at primary level in conjunction with English at secondary level. This is of high importance because provision in English for Young Learners needs to be in perfect alignment with the currently established English teaching at secondary level. It has been argued that "with the introduction of English at the primary school level, teachers need special training in the needs of younger learners" (Nunan, 2003, p. 609), and so such innovation is expected to provide the answer to the need for a specific preparation (Raja, 2011) as well as to provide more robust foundation in English language to students prior to their secondary level education enrolment.

The overhaul that includes both PGSD and English departments needs to be contextually and carefully set up. Such an overhaul is expected to produce prospective teachers with relevant educational qualifications to conform to the Decree of Minister of National Education Republic of Indonesia No. 16/2007 on Standards of Teachers' Academic Qualification and Competence and Chapter 29 of The Government Law of Republic Indonesia No. 20/2005 On National Standard on Education.

Second, teacher educators at pre-service level must be given considerable provision in exposure to young learner pedagogy. The reason is because it is difficult for them to inspire their students who train to become teachers, if they have insufficient exposure to EYL. Preparation for student teachers to teach English at primary level is groundless without adequate preparation given to teacher educators who have no specific knowledge and skills relevant to teaching EYL. This is parallel to Korthagen, Loguhran, and Russell's (2006, p. 1034) contention that "learning about teaching is enhanced when the teaching and learning approaches advocated in the program are modeled by teacher educators in their own practice". Only when teacher educators are familiar with the daily challenges in primary school English teaching can they inspire their student teachers. The congruency of action of teacher educators with what they teach means teacher educators have the ability to become role models and to explain the pedagogical and didactical choices they employ in the classroom (Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2003).

While in the Indonesian case these two implications need to feature in the overhaul as recommended in this study, such implications are also relevant to other Asian countries where English is taught at primary level. In countries where a specific professional programme for English teachers at primary level is absent, such a programme needs to be made available within the pre-service education system. This is necessary in order to provide systematic, theoretical, and practical preparation to those intending to teach English at primary level. Moreover, teacher educators who teach in the pre-service system also need to be professionally certified, so they can better equip their students with both knowledge and skills that correspond to the occupational demands of their profession. Such a training scheme for teacher educators seems to go along with the policy alteration that needs to take place within the pre-service education system.

It is however important to note that the scope of the study was particularly limited to the identification of trends in the certain groups of participants in this study. This implies that the relatively small subjects participating in this study makes generalizations from this study undesirable. Further research that involves larger numbers of participants and other

research instruments such as observations is highly necessary. Such research needs to display how other contextual factors such as the teaching of English at secondary level and the provision of materials, among others, are taken into account.

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Appendix 1. Teachers' demography

Types of Teachers	Teachers' Demography				
	Teachers	Sex	Pre-Service Education		Length of Experience
			Degree	EYL	
Teachers without English Background	PSET2	Female	B.A. in French	No	2 years
	PSET3	Male	B.A. in Physics	No	1 year
	PSET7	Female	SPG	No	38 years
Teachers with English Background	PSET8	Female	PGSD	No	22 years
	PSET1	Male	Diploma 3 in English	Yes	1 year
	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	