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Professional development needs of primary EFL teachers: perspectives of teachers and teacher educators

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This study investigates the professional development (PD) needs of primary English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers whose professional field has received significant interest at the global level in the past two decades. The study takes a different stance from previous research that exclusively generated data from teachers because it sought the perspectives of teacher educators as well. The decision to include teacher educators in this study has proven useful to generate ample data that suggest the inseparable relationships between primary EFL teachers' profiles, their needs and the specific typicality of their professional environment. The study proposes a model of needs-based PD for primary EFL teachers that exemplifies these aspects. The discussion in the study brings implications for future research into the PD needs of primary EFL teachers. It will also inform teacher educators and educational policy-makers to develop a framework of reference for the design of PD programmes that well attend to primary EFL teachers' needs.

Keywords: professional development; primary education; English as a foreign language; primary English as a foreign language teachers; teacher educators

Introduction

In the past two decades, policies on introducing English as a foreign language (EFL) at a primary level of education have taken place literally all over the world (see Garton *et al.* 2011, Butler 2015). Since teachers are indispensable in the implementation of the policies, calls for enhancing their instructional practice through professional development (PD) have mounted (see Hamid 2010, Emery 2012, Copland and Garton 2014, Enever 2014). Despite this, identification of teachers' needs as they relate to PD has not received sufficient attention. Previous studies have focused on elaborating the kinds of challenges that teachers encounter in their classrooms (for example, Chen and Cheng 2010, Copland *et al.* 2014) and identified a number of pedagogical concerns, including implementing communicative approaches (for example, Butler 2005, Hamid and Honan 2012), assessing learning outcomes (for example, Wang 2002), incorporating corrective feedback (for example, Zhao 2009), utilizing code-switching for instruction (Qian *et al.* 2009) and examining the practical knowledge of teachers (for example, Chou 2008). On the other hand, other research places more emphasis on the kinds of PD programmes/activities without

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expounding on the specific needs of teachers (for example, Kabilan and Veratharaju 2013, Chien 2014).

Research that identifies teachers' PD needs in teaching EFL to primary school children is necessary to further elucidate an improved practice of PD that can help enhance teachers' instructional practice. This study is a response to the absence of such research. The study investigated the PD needs of primary EFL teachers by exploring the perspectives of both teachers and teacher educators.

The inclusion of data coming from both teachers and teacher educators in this present study marks a departure from previous research that exclusively generated data from primary EFL teachers. Earlier studies investigated the pedagogical practices of teachers (for example, Chou 2008, Qian *et al.* 2009, Chien 2014, Copland *et al.* 2014) and their perspectives (for example, Zhao 2009, Kabilan and Veratharaju 2013), and drew implications for PD without collecting data from teacher educators. It is true that teachers must be an integral part of PD design because, by carrying out proper needs analysis of the teachers' programme, developers can design activities and contents that are appropriate to their needs (Garet *et al.* 2001, Kennedy and McKay 2011, Goodwin and Kosnik 2013, Barlow *et al.* 2014). Nevertheless, the literature also demonstrates that when viewpoints coming from teachers combine with that of teacher educators, it is more likely to ensure congruence between teacher education contents and the needs of teachers as well as to better facilitate teachers' professional growth (for example, He and Levin 2008, He *et al.* 2011). Teacher educators have professional expertise and years of experience behind them, which enable them to offer insights into areas that teachers may not be fully aware of. He *et al.* (2011, p. 15) argued that insights of teacher educators might 'provide other educators who are engaged in such professional development efforts with ideas for moving the preparation of teachers beyond "just good teaching"'. It is expected that by exploring the perspectives of both teachers and teacher educators, more wide-ranging data on the identification of teachers' PD needs will be generated from the study to develop a framework of reference for the design of PD programmes that well attend to teachers' needs.

The study reported in this article is presented in the following order. First, the article reviews the literature on PD and teachers' needs. Second, it outlines the context of the study. Third, the article elaborates on the methodological tenets employed to gather and analyse data by focusing on participants, data collection and data analysis. What follows is a section that presents the findings of the study. Finally, a discussion section examines the findings and draws out implications for future research and PD programmes.

PD and teachers' needs

Quality primary EFL teachers are distinguished by their abilities to use the English language proficiently, to develop methodologically versatile approaches to dealing with children and to demonstrate strong performance in language-related pedagogies (Cameron 2003, Butler 2004, 2005, Emery 2012, Copland *et al.* 2014). But the production of such quality primary EFL teachers is not contingent upon pre-service preparation alone (see Emery 2012, Le and Do 2012). Opportunities whereby teachers can further enhance their professionalism in all aspects relevant to their knowledge, skills and the professional context of their vocation are necessary, and this is where PD operates (Emery 2012, Zein 2015).

Review of the PD literature demonstrates that most teachers' PD practices reveal the teachers' limited acquisition of knowledge and skills. Darling-Hammond (2010) identified the issue as being engendered by the providers' failure in designing PD programmes that cater for the needs of the teachers. In some cases, teacher educators are held responsible for their lack of clarity in specifying the goal and theory of action of their PD programmes, while in others teachers are even reluctant to take responsibility for their own professional growth (Daniel and Percy 2014). The accumulation of these factors in addition to the limited support at in-service level and the challenging school contexts that dramatically shape teachers' practices could adversely affect teachers' professional performance and may even contribute to teacher attrition (Farrell 2012).

On the contrary, studies consistently suggest that teachers' professional growth is viable through effective and continuous PD programmes which address teachers' needs; effective and meaningful PD programmes are those that fulfil the needs and interests of the participating teachers (for example, Garet *et al.* 2001, Kennedy and McKay 2011). PD programmes that attend well to teachers' needs are more likely to lead to teachers' enhanced instructional practice, deepen pedagogical knowledge and increase beliefs and self-efficacy. According to Penuel *et al.* (2007, p. 951), this is supported by the fact that 'teachers' interpretations of professional development activities, not just the design of the activities themselves, are important in shaping the effectiveness of those activities'. Enhancement in instructional practice is closely linked to the development and improvement of teaching and learning activities in the classrooms (Garet *et al.* 2001), and this is likely to contribute to the eventual advancement of students' performances and achievements (for example, Goodwin and Kosnik 2013, Barlow *et al.* 2014).

To that end, effective and meaningful PD programmes, or what Garet *et al.* (2001, p. 917) called 'high quality' PD programmes, place emphasis on core issues such as congruence between training contents and teachers' needs, assurance to active learning through collective participation and inquiry-based learning (Garet *et al.* 2001, Penuel *et al.* 2007, Cochran-Smith 2009, Warren *et al.* 2010). Failure to focus on these core issues is likely to lead to the failure of the PD programmes to sustain teachers' motivation (Penuel *et al.* 2007, Kennedy and McKay 2011).

Garet *et al.* (2001, p. 927) argued that a PD programme is 'more likely to be effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills if it forms a coherent part of a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development'. This requires the congruency between training contents with teachers' needs for PD, either in terms of knowledge or skills. Content congruency also appears when there are connections between what teachers have learned and the more advanced training that they are going to undertake as a follow-up. This is evident in Warren *et al.*'s (2010) study that demonstrates how such congruence contributes to the transformation of teachers' professional skills, increased understanding of their professional roles and improved teaching efficacy. PD programmes that are content focused and place significant attention on whether or not the contents match teachers' needs have larger positive effects on student achievement outcomes too (Garet *et al.* 2001).

High-quality PD programmes also ensure active learning through collective participation; that is, when teachers are encouraged to engage in activities that promote reflective inquiry through discussion, planning and practice. Opportunities leading to active learning can take place in various forms such as observing expert teachers and being observed teaching, planning and discussing lesson plans and syllabus,

curriculum, materials and teaching methods used in the classroom, and reviewing student work (Garet *et al.* 2001). Such opportunities will stimulate teachers to find the linkages between the intangible concepts and principles examined in the literature and the context of their classroom. Emphasis on the active engagement of teachers' participation, collectivism and cooperation during PD programmes is also likely to foster teachers' professionalism (DelliCarpini 2009).

When teachers are trained to challenge the goals and norms that underpin educational reform and problematize the roles they play in the design and implementation of PD programmes, inquiry-based learning is established (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999). The establishment of such a new culture of inquiry in teacher education 'builds the capacity within teacher education programs to assess progress and effectiveness, shifts accountability from simply external policy to also include internal practice, and generates knowledge that can be used both in local programs and more broadly' (Cochran-Smith 2009, p. 466). It would further revitalize teacher education curriculum, policies and practices, and potentially make consequential changes in the lives of teachers as well as students.

The context of the study

This study was set in the Indonesian context where two groups of primary EFL teachers – generalist and specialist teachers – were found. Generalist teachers are classroom teachers who are appointed because of the shortage of teachers with relevant English qualifications. They teach general subjects such as mathematics and science to students in their designated classroom only. In terms of employment, they work as permanent civil servants and are entitled to full salary, remuneration and health insurance. They graduate from Primary School Teacher Education, during which they study the compulsory four-credit-point English course in pre-service education. Specialist teachers, on the other hand, teach English only to children across grades, usually from Grades One to Six. Most of them are non-civil servant teachers whose employment is on a contractual basis and receive one-third to one-sixth of the full-scale salary without additional benefits. Some specialist teachers are graduates of general majors such as physics and biology, while others graduate from English departments, either the English Study Programme or the English Language Education Programme. The former is a four-year undergraduate degree focusing either on linguistics, English literature or translation, while the latter equips prospective teachers with knowledge and skills to teach English in secondary schools (Zein 2011).

PD programmes such as workshops, language training and seminars are available for both generalist and specialist teachers (Cahyono 2006, Chodidjah 2008, Zein 2012), some of which are developed by private training agencies like the Indonesia Australia Language Foundation and a great majority run by government-based training agencies such as The Centre of Training and Development of Language Teachers. The implementation of many of the PD programmes developed by these agencies has been criticized as being conducted without proper needs analysis and is often theoretically based rather than more practically oriented (Suyanto 2010). The sporadic nature of the PD programmes, their vulnerability to bureaucratic intervention and their non-transparent participant selection are also three managerial issues enmeshing their implementation (Zein 2015). Suggestions have been put forward to overhaul the PD system in order to contribute to the growth of teachers'

professionalism (Chodidjah 2008, Zein 2012, 2015). Bearing this in mind and the high expectations arising over the presence of quality primary EFL teachers (for example, Chodidjah 2008, Zein 2012, Asriyanti *et al.* 2013), research relating to the needs specification of teachers has gained its momentum, and this was another motivation to conduct the study reported in this article.

The present study

Research question

The study investigated the following research question: ‘What are the perspectives of teachers and teacher educators on the professional development needs of primary EFL teachers?’

Participants

Participants were located through purposive sampling. The main parameters were set out to ensure the representation of both generalist and specialist teachers and both novice (e.g. those who have just commenced teaching with less than two years of experience) and experienced (those with relevant qualifications and at least four years of experience) teachers (Gatbonton 2008), and to ensure a good institutional spread for the teachers and teacher educators (e.g. a balance between public and private schools, types of institution). Potential participants were identified through the researcher’s professional network that connected him to teachers and teacher educators who met these parameters. Potential participants were informed of the purpose of the study and that their participation was voluntary; after they consented to participate in the study, interviews and observations were scheduled. Their personal information was removed in order to ensure confidentiality (Bryman 2008).

There were institutional and scheduling constraints prior to the data collection phase, resulting in only two generalist teachers participating in the study. But teachers from public and private schools, and the novice and experienced teachers, as well as teacher educators from universities, private training agencies and government-based training agencies were all represented. Details of the participants are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for the purpose of this study because the contingencies of interaction between interviewer and interviewees are influential to allow the recursive process of data generation (Birks and Mills 2011). Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants coming from one institution, but in cases where there was more than one participant in one institution focus group interviews involving two to three participants were conducted (Bryman 2008). For example, T11 and T12 who taught in the same school were interviewed in one session; the same case applies to T2, T3 and T4. The interviews lasted between 15 and 50 minutes and were audio-recorded. The researcher made use of the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews by paraphrasing questions and added prompts in order to allow participants to provide the most genuine responses while retaining freedom when expressing their opinions (King and Horrocks 2010).

Table 1. Teachers' profiles.

Teacher	Sex	Experience (years)	English background	Qualifications	Type of teacher	School / status
T1	Male	1	Yes	Diploma in English	Specialist	School 1 / public
T19	Female	2	Yes	BEd in English	Specialist	School 2 / public
T10	Female	2	Yes	BEd in English	Specialist	School 4 / public
T13	Male	8	Yes	BEd in English	Specialist	School 7 public
T20	Female	6	No	BEd	Specialist	School 3 / public
T11	Female	7	Yes	BEd in English	Specialist	School 9 / public
T12	Female	5	Yes	MEd	Specialist	School 9 / public
T17	Female	2	No	BEd	Specialist	School 10 / public
T18	Female	1	Yes	Completing BEd	Specialist	School 10 / public
T14	Female	3	Yes	BEd in English	Specialist	School 12 / public
T15	Female	2	Yes	Completing BEd	Specialist	School 13 / public
T16	Female	4	Yes	Diploma in English	Specialist	School 14 / public
T4	Female	2	Yes	BEd and BA in English	Specialist	School 11 / private
T5	Female	10	Yes	BEd in English, MEd	Specialist	School 11 / private
T6	Male	11	Yes	BEd in English	Specialist	School 11 / private
T7	Female	38	No	Bachelor in Primary Education	Generalist	School 6 / private
T8	Female	22	No	Diploma in Education	Generalist	School 6 / private
T2	Female	2	No	BA in French	Specialist	School 5 / private
T3	Male	2	No	BA in Physics	Specialist	School 5 / private
T9	Male	18	Yes	BEd in English	Specialist	School 8 / public

Table 2. Teacher educators' profiles.

Teacher educator	Sex	Qualifications	Experience (years)	Institution / type
TE4	Female	Completing PhD	35	Institution 1 / private
TE6	Female	MEd	25	Institution 2 / private
TE2	Male	PhD in Elementary Education	35	Institution 3 / university
TE9	Male	MEd	10	Institution 3 / university
TE3	Female	PhD in Curriculum and Instruction	40	Institution 4 / university
TE8	Male	PhD in Applied Linguistics	35	Institution 4 / university
TE7	Male	MEd	38	Institution 4 / university
TE1	Female	MA TESOL	26	Institution 5 / private
TE10	Male	MA TEFL	16	Institution 6 / government
TE5	Female	PhD in Education	20	Institution 6 / government

The researcher also conducted 20 observations, each lasting for two lessons (70 minutes), to investigate teachers' needs in terms of pedagogy. The focus of the observations was on pedagogical criteria such as the use of their first language (L1) for classroom instruction, classroom management, feedback provision and error correction, lesson planning and material selection and adaptation (Nunan and Lamb 1996).

Notes of teachers' behaviours and instructions in the corresponding observational criteria were used in this study in order to allow comparisons with interview data; that is, to identify whether observational data challenge or validate the interview data. When data coming from observational notes matched those from interviews, explicit deduction of teachers' pedagogical needs was drawn (Bryman 2008). For example, further pedagogical training on integrating language skills for teachers is suggested since complementary data were found in both interviews and observations. Triangulating data from semi-structured interviews and observations in this study allowed concurrent data analysis that facilitates rigorous theoretical sampling (Birks and Mills 2011).

Data analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, the data analysis process went through several stages, following the principles of Grounded Theory (Birks and Mills 2011). First of all, a meticulous process of reading the whole interview transcripts and classroom observation field notes was conducted. These transcripts and observation notes were then entered into Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software package, NVivo9. This process allowed the data to be broken down into different parts and be coded. These initial codes were refined and reorganized into conceptual units, called focused codes. The focused codes were then given a frequency of reference, which refers to how many times all of the initial codes under a particular focused code occurred in total. For instance, there were 17 initial codes associated with the focused code 'Limited language proficiency', while there were three initial codes associated with 'Proficient language user' (see Table 4).

Table 3. Development of 'Teachers' knowledge' category.

Sample inter-view question	Initial codes	Focused codes	Content innovation Properties	Dimensions
What kind of knowledge do the teachers need?	Learning strategy, Psychology of learning, Examination of students' characters, Learner autonomy, Learning difficulty identification, Assist material design, Develop teaching approaches (n =17)	Knowledge of learners	Aspects of knowledge	Learning strategy, Psychology of learning, Learner autonomy, Teacher communication, Condition of learners, Good stakeholder coordination, Pedagogy, Methodology, Teaching techniques, Parent and community communication, Knowledge of content
	Teacher communication, Parent & community communication, Condition of learners, Good stakeholder coordination (n =12)	Contextual knowledge		
	Pedagogy, Methodology, Knowledge of content, Teaching techniques, Specific for young learners, Teachers' identity (n =22)	Pedagogical knowledge	Functions of knowledge	Examination of students' characters, Learner difficulty identification, Develop teaching approaches, Shows teachers' identity, Solve learning difficulties, Examine students' needs, Help adapt materials, Knowledge base determines success
	Knowledge base distinctive, Acknowledgement to knowledge base, Knowledge base determines success, Helps examine students' issues, Solve learning difficulties, Examine students' needs, Help adapt materials (n =16)	Knowledge base in EFL	Characters of knowledge	Knowledge Base Distinctive, Specific To Young Learners, Acknowledgement to Young Learners

All of the focused codes generated from interviews involving teachers and teacher educators were then compared with each other, and they were triangulated with data coming from classroom observations to identify underlying patterns. The results were distinctive categories which signify the themes emerging in the study (Birks and Mills 2011). Following this was an examination of relationships between initial codes in order to identify the characteristics of categories, called properties, and their dimensions. For example, the focused codes ‘Knowledge of learners’ and ‘Contextual knowledge’ have close relationships and are classified under the property ‘Aspects of knowledge’. The property ‘Aspects of knowledge’ has dimensions such as ‘Learning strategy’, ‘Psychology of learning’, ‘Parent and community communication’ and so forth (see Table 3).

There was a few times during the analysis process when contradictory data were found, so data validation was achieved through the elimination of their relationships and the exploration of possible alternative explanations within other categories (Dey 2004). The process of data analysis continued until theoretical saturation was reached; that is, when probes for categories and properties in final interviewing resulted in no further data modification (Birks and Mills 2011). The outcome of this Grounded Theory analysis was a model that indicates a comprehensive PD needs analysis of primary EFL teachers (see Figure 1 in the Discussion and Implications section).

Findings

The findings are presented according to the categories emerging in this study, namely: needs of teachers in terms of language; needs of teachers in terms of pedagogy; and needs of teachers in terms of knowledge.

Needs of teachers in terms of language

Table 4 demonstrates that teachers needed to improve their language proficiency – the majority of the teachers ($n = 17$) admitted having ‘limited proficiency’, while the other three stated their proficiency was ‘not too bad’. Teacher educators concurred, with TE7 in particular arguing how teachers’ English was ‘really basic’.

Other teacher educators such as TE1, however, maintained that the low proficiency among teachers might be true for the majority, but not all, as she remarked:

Even though there are many, many teachers who are not confident with their own knowledge of the language, it is imprudent to say they are primary teachers, therefore their English is not good. There are cases of teachers whose English proficiency that is better than a senior high school teacher, because they work hard and dig themselves. (TE1)

Table 4. Codes relating to needs of teachers in terms of language.

Focused code	Frequency
Limited language proficiency	17
Proficient language user	3
Speaking important	22
Accentless pronunciation important	16
First language used	9

Data from observations of T4, T11 and T12 provide evidence for TE1's contention. The three teachers were confident with their use of language and did not have major difficulties in expressing themselves in English. Their grammatical and pronunciation errors were also considerably less in comparison with other teachers (e.g. T1, T13).

TE3 related proficiency to language of instruction as she said: 'in terms of language performance, they need to know the language. They need to be able to identify the structure.' TE4 argued that what the teachers needed was 'particularly their speaking skill, their communication skill, how they actually grade their language, how they paraphrase and how they chunk the language'.

Further observational data show how teachers spoke with a heavily marked local accent. Teacher educators pointed to teachers' thick accent and poor pronunciation from their observations (e.g. TE5, TE6). TE8, for example, mentioned teachers' errors when 'pronouncing /k/ in "knife" and substituting /k/ with /tʃ/ when pronouncing "cucumber"'. It is of no surprise that in the interviews 18 teachers identified speaking/oral proficiency, and in particular their pronunciation, as the language skill that they needed to improve the most.

Finally, data in this study demonstrate that all teachers used children's L1 to varying extents. Teachers such as T3, T7, T8, T15 and T16 resorted to using Indonesian language or the students' local language when giving instructions or explaining. Interestingly, this phenomenon was not primarily because of teachers' lack of confidence with their English proficiency. Participants such as T5 and T14 stated that their decision to use L1 instead of English was based on 'children's needs'. Teachers stated that an overwhelming majority of children wished to have the lessons explained in their L1 instead of English. When necessary, the teachers decided to code-switch from the children's L1 to English and *vice versa*. Data from the observation sheets demonstrate that teachers including T4, T5, T10 and T20 quite frequently asked questions in English. When students responded appropriately, the teachers did not translate the questions. But when the students seemed confused or could not provide the desired responses, the teachers translated the questions into Indonesian. Some teachers such as T5, however, identified that they wished 'to learn more to code-switch more effectively, that is, when to do it, and when not to do it, and how, so that we could make sure children get enough English they need'.

Needs of teachers in terms of pedagogy

Table 5 presents the codes that are linked to the needs of teachers in terms of their pedagogy.

Table 5. Codes relating to needs of teachers in terms of pedagogy.

Focused code	Frequency
Classroom organization	20
Large number of students	4
Seating arrangement	3
Lesson planning	6
Language skill integration	30
Materials selection and adaptation	17
Error correction	9
Feedback provision	12

First of all, teachers stated that they needed to improve their skill in managing the classroom, but they also mentioned that the large number of students hindered their classroom management. Data from observation reiterate teachers' contention. Those who admitted having difficulty with classroom management, such as T1, T3, T7, T8 and T10, were indeed constrained by the large number of students and the rigid four-row seating arrangement. On the other hand, teachers such as T4, T11 and T12 did not have any particular difficulty. Observational data show that they easily maintained classroom organization because they only had to teach 20 children or fewer. Each of the children had a removable chair and desk, which made it easy for the teachers to group them when necessary.

Second, teacher educators such as TE8 suggested that teachers needed to learn how to break the syllabus down into a contextually appropriate lesson plan because they had difficulty with it. Some teachers agreed with this, but others argued that this difficulty was not a mere competence issue. Eighteen teachers stated that they had no particular difficulty in creating lesson plans, but they noted several reasons that had hindered the implementation of their lesson plans. Teachers such as T3, T10 and T17 stated that often they had to deviate from their lesson plan because of the chaotic atmosphere in the classroom caused by 'disruptive students'. They argued that the large number of students had made it difficult for them to fully implement their lesson plans. Observational data from these teachers confirm their statement, since their classroom was indeed quite chaotic and not conducive for successful learning. Other teachers (e.g. T12, T18) argued that another reason for the problem was because the English syllabus designed by educational administrators at the Provincial Education Office failed to match the local contexts of the school or the needs of the students.

Third, all teachers in this study stated that they needed further training on integrating language skills. T13 and T19 referred to integrating language skills as 'a really hard task', T3 and T9 called it 'a big problem', while others associated it with the word 'difficult' and confessed not knowing how to do it properly. Teacher educators such as TE2 and TE7 shared teachers' concern. TE1 commented: 'the fact that teacher training programmes are generally lacking practical skills makes it difficult for teachers to learn how to integrate language skills'. Observational notes further demonstrate that most teachers focused on one particular language skill as prescribed by the coursebooks. It was the reading skill that became the main focus of most teachers' lesson. Only four teachers (T4, T11, T12, T9) attempted to incorporate two language skills into their lesson (e.g. speaking and listening or reading and writing). While in the cases of T11 and T12 it was unclear as to how they linked the two skills together into the designated lesson topic(s), T9 and T4 failed to show coherence of their lesson because each skill was unrelated from one another.

Fourth, teacher educators stated that teachers needed training on teaching materials selection and adaptation. TE2 stated that 'teachers are not confident in using coursebooks, not to mention to adapt them', while TE4 maintained that teachers 'do not really focus on how to adapt the materials, they just focus on how to teach the coursebooks'. Data from observation echo TE4's assertion regarding the teachers' inclination toward following coursebooks' pedagogical prescriptions. The data demonstrate that none of the 20 teachers created their own materials or adapt their coursebooks, although some teachers (e.g. T4, T1, T11) attempted to shift the order of activities in their coursebooks according to what they saw fit for the needs of their students. Furthermore, teachers' need in materials selection was constrained by

the use of coursebooks created by educational administrators that were far from expectations due to its irrelevance to the students' needs. T11 explained that this was because 'the ones who wrote the coursebooks are incompetent educational administrators, and the selection of these administrators was not based on merit'.

Fifth, because teachers found their current approaches to dealing with students' errors and the way they provided feedback unsatisfactory, they needed further training in this area. They asserted that it was not only the technicality of error correction and feedback provision that they found challenging, but also the impact they brought on students' psychology. This was evident with less experienced teachers such as T1, T18 and T19. T4 stated she needed to learn how to correct students' errors 'properly without their knowing they are being corrected'. More experienced teachers, namely T7 and T8, did not find feedback provision and error correction demanding; neither did two other teachers who graduated from an English department (T11 and T12). Data from observational sheets are parallel to these teachers' interviews – the four teachers were able to correct errors effectively and even elicited correct answers from children. The absence of difficulty among these teachers was acknowledged by TE8 and TE9, who believed that experienced teachers like T7 and T8 had had so much experience that their pedagogical skills had matured to the extent that they had no difficulty with error correction and feedback provision. On the other hand, T11 and T12, according to TE3, 'graduated from a good English department, so they would not struggle with correcting children's errors or giving them feedback'.

While all observational data for the pedagogical practices of the other teachers are complementary to the interviews, contradictory evidence appears in the case of T13. In the interview, T13 claimed he 'didn't find providing feedback and correcting errors difficult', and yet the data from the observation sheets demonstrate that he did not correct four students who repeatedly mispronounced '15' as '/faifti:n/'. Moreover, when some students made other errors, he immediately corrected them instead of eliciting information from the other students who might have known the correct answers.

Needs of teachers in terms of knowledge

Table 6 demonstrates that a specific kind of knowledge is prerequisite to teaching English at primary level, as argued by teachers such as T7, T9 and T19. According to TE9, this is called the 'knowledge-base' of teaching English to children. TE9 stated: 'the knowledge-base of teaching English in primary education as a distinctive field has to be acknowledged. We need to realize that English in primary education is distinctive as a field of study'.

One area of knowledge that teachers needed is knowledge of children; evidence from the study is conclusive in highlighting the importance of knowledge of

Table 6. Codes relating to needs of teachers in terms of knowledge.

Focused code	Frequency
Knowledge of learners	17
Contextual knowledge	12
Knowledge base of teaching English to children	16
Knowledge about pedagogy	22

children in teaching English at primary level. According to some participants, including T2, T6, T9 and T12, reasonable knowledge of children helps teachers 'examine the children's characters and traits' as well as 'their specific needs'. This will inform teachers in the learning-teaching process; that is, to help them adapt materials and create lessons that are interesting for children and to help them solve any issues occurring when teaching.

Participants identified two areas of knowledge of children that teachers needed to master: knowledge of children's learning styles and strategies; and knowledge of children psychology. This is evident in the following statements:

About knowledge of children, I think we as teachers should fully improve our understanding about the ways children learn, so that we could develop appropriate teaching approaches and help the children. (T13)

Teachers should understand children's characters, their backgrounds...because these are related to psychology of children learning ... things that are related to children's psychology as they learn. (T6)

Data generated from teachers (e.g. T6, T10, T13, T16, T20) demonstrate that they were in need of provision of knowledge about pedagogy. They argued that knowledge about pedagogy 'marks the skill of a teacher' (T6) because 'if someone wants to become a teacher they need to know how to teach, otherwise they just can't do it' (T3). This is in line with TE1, who stated that 'knowledge of the pedagogy ... or things related to the methodology are vital for successful teaching'. TE10 stated that 'pedagogical knowledge for teachers is useful, but it needs to be specific, it needs to provide teachers with practical teaching techniques for young learners, not for adults'. Other teacher educators (e.g. TE4, TE9) concurred.

Participants further suggested that novice teachers, regardless of their educational background, needed contextual knowledge. The examples of contextual knowledge are given by participants as the kind of knowledge they need 'to communicate to other teachers' (T2), 'to understand the kinds of challenges teachers have inside the classroom such as large classes, students' behaviours' (T17) and 'to establish good relationship between school and home' (T9). For T12, contextual knowledge is needed because 'sometimes we need to do things in a certain way such as when dealing with parents, so they need this, the fresh graduate teachers need to know this'. The reason for novice teachers needing contextual knowledge, according to TE4, is 'because they were not prepared with such knowledge during their pre-service education'. More experienced teachers, such as T7 and T8, on the other hand, did not assert such need. According to teacher educators such as TE6 and TE7, this is because these experienced teachers had been well acquainted with their colleagues and had a good grasp of their professional environment.

Discussion and implications

Data from the study suggest that classroom observations are complementary to interviews, as in the case of teachers' use of students' L1 being detected during observations and their reasons for doing so being reported in the interviews. On the other hand, observations are useful to depict discrepancies between teachers' claims in the interviews and their actual pedagogical practice, as in the case of T13. This indicates that when it comes to tangible aspects such as teachers' pedagogy, observations can point out discrepancies and provide more accurate insights than interviews. Despite

this, observation is not an accurate tool for examining intangible aspects such as teachers' knowledge. Interviews from both teachers and teacher educators provide data on teachers' knowledge. Furthermore, the fact that interview data from teacher educators complement those generated from teachers as evident in teachers' needs to integrate language skills, to provide feedback and correct errors and to use L1 in the classroom has proven useful to generate ample data and to add validity to the study. Data from teacher educators also add depth to the overall data. For example, teachers point to the specific kind of knowledge needed to teach primary EFL but it was only identified as the knowledge base of teaching English in primary education after teacher educators such as TE9 said so. When no teachers remarked on teachers' need for improved pronunciation, teacher educators provided responses that highlight such need. It was also teacher educators who made the point that the pedagogical knowledge should not be general, but needs to be specific to children which, in the words of TE10, 'provide teachers with practical teaching techniques for young learners, not for adults'.

These findings bring implications for future research aiming to unravel PD needs of primary EFL teachers. First, there is a need for employing multi-data elicitation techniques in order to cater for both the tangible and intangible aspects of teachers' needs, which is in line with the use of mixed methods (e.g. observations, interviews, questionnaires, simulated teaching practice) that is on the rise in recent research on primary EFL teachers (for example, Chou 2008, Chen and Cheng 2010, Le and Do 2012, Chien 2014, Copland *et al.* 2014). This use of mixed methods will yield extra dimensions in the depth of overall data, as shown in this study when teacher educators are included as participants. Triangulating data from different groups of participants adds validity to research (Dey 2004, Bryman 2008, Birks and Mills 2011). In this study, the incorporation of multiple people's perspectives on a particular issue of interest that helps corroborate, complement and compare data has reduced potential bias resulting from the interpretation of results when only teachers were involved (Dey 2004).

The following sections discuss the findings from the study coming from both teachers and teacher educators.

A professional development model for primary EFL teachers

Comprehensive needs analysis requires scrutiny of the teachers' profile. One may assume that teachers with a previous English background would feel confident with their English proficiency, but those without an English background would not. It is true that teachers with an English background in this study appeared to be confident with their English proficiency (e.g. T4, T11, T12) and those without an English background (e.g. T7, T8, T2, T3) showed lack of confidence with their use of English. Nevertheless, there were instances in which this is not necessarily the case. Data generated from both interviews and observations of teachers with English backgrounds (e.g. T1, T9, T13, T17, T19) show either their reluctance in using English or their frequent grammatical errors. All of these findings are parallel to TE1's assertion about not making generalization on teachers' English language proficiency.

The same case applies to other areas of pedagogy and knowledge. Data of teachers with lengthy teaching experience such as T7 and T8 show they were pedagogically versatile in their pedagogical approaches and in their dealing with young learners. On the other hand, one might surmise that teachers from English

departments whose pedagogical preparation is limited would struggle. This was proven in the case of teachers such as T1, T15, T17, T18, T19 and T20. But other English graduate teachers, namely T4, T11 and T12, were found to be more pedagogically superior. For example, in terms of providing adequate feedback and correcting errors, T11 and T12 were able to handle the students appropriately, while others such as T13 struggled despite his self-confessed confidence.

These findings imply the relationships between teachers’ profile and their PD needs are not as simple as one might assume. Generalizations on needs analysis based on one aspect of teachers’ profile are ill advised. For example, although pre-service preparation might provide an initial signal of the kind of knowledge and skills that teachers might have acquired, it is unjustifiable to use it as sole indicator of their needs. Teachers’ prior learning is only one aspect of considerations of teachers’ needs, and it is largely inadequate if it is not well aligned with analysis of other profile-related and needs-related features. Comprehensive PD needs analysis occurs when relevant aspects of both profile and professional needs of teachers are seen as concomitantly related to each other within the professional environment in which the teachers operate. King stated:

Teaching and learning are contextual, and ensuring that PD processes take cognisance of individual professional identities, dispositions, roles and setting in which teachers work is important to ensure improved outcomes for pupils. (2014, p. 107)

This study therefore proposes a PD model for primary EFL teachers that is designed based on this principle (Figure 1). Comprehensive analysis must start with features of the teachers’ profile such as educational background, teaching experience,

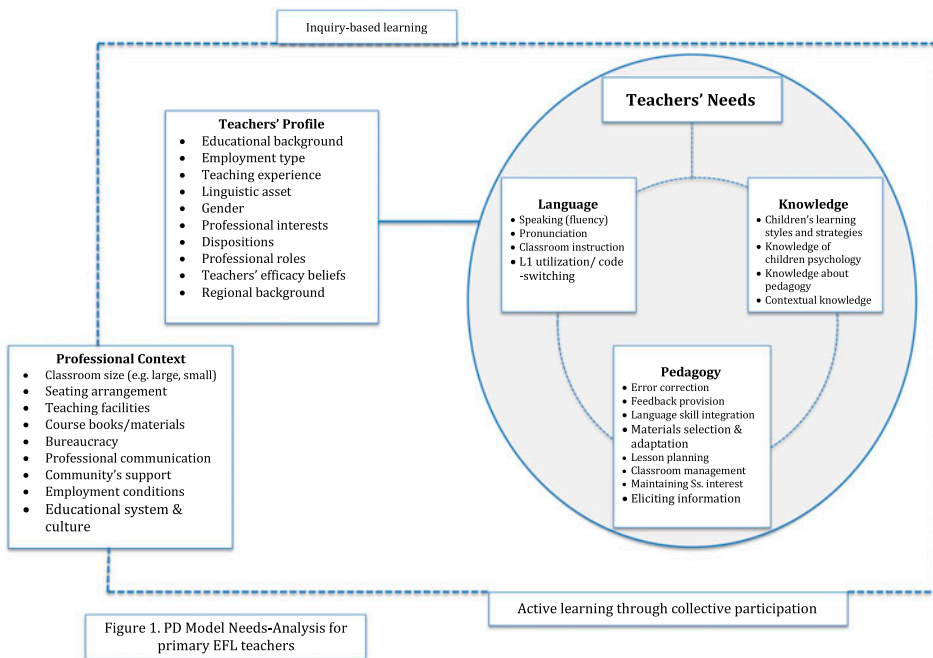


Figure 1. Professional development model needs-analysis for primary EFL teachers.

linguistic background, gender, professional interests, regional background, employment type (e.g. permanent vs. casual, civil servant vs. non-civil servant) and even teachers' dispositions. Teachers' efficacy beliefs also need thorough examination and reinforcement, especially because they are highly influential in determining teachers' PD experience success in relation to their classroom practices (Eun and Heining-Boynton 2007).

Teacher educators need to analyse how differences in the teachers' profile and the interplay of contextual factors may affect teachers' professional needs. This is parallel with further data of the study suggesting the need for provision of contextual knowledge. For example, as shown in this study, teachers need to be aware of how their pedagogy is to a large extent influenced by classroom context such as large classes. Teachers also need to be made aware of how educational administrators taking part in pedagogical domains such as creating syllabus and writing teaching materials could adversely affect teachers' pedagogical practices. This suggests that understanding the complexity of the classroom and the educational system where bureaucrat intrusion is common is a necessary inclusion in PD programmes.

Many aspects described in this proposed model may be applicable to PD programmes for teachers of other subjects, perhaps at other educational or policy levels. For example, classroom size and community support are not aspects exclusive to primary EFL teaching, they are also part of the day-to-day life of physical education teachers or music teachers. However, one unique factor about the proposed model is its specific attempt to tackle the particular needs of primary EFL teachers. This is further elaborated in the following section.

Catering for primary EFL teachers' professional development needs

The fact that teachers in this study voiced their concern with their language proficiency and pedagogical skills is not unique to the Indonesian context where this study took place. Similar concern has also been expressed by primary EFL teachers in Malaysia (Kabilan and Veratharaju 2013), Bangladesh (Hamid 2010) and Vietnam (Le and Do 2012), as well as teachers in other contexts worldwide (Copland *et al.* 2014). Nevertheless, the present study took a further stance from Kabilan and Veratharaju (2013), Hamid (2010), Le and Do (2012) and Copland *et al.* (2014) in that it provides further specifications to such practical orientation.

In terms of the improvement of language skills, teachers' aspiration for improved speaking can be broken down into their needs for pronunciation, L1 utilization and classroom instruction. PD programmes need to provide activities for teachers that can help them improve their pronunciation; for example, language improvement training emphasizing accent reduction. Having good pronunciation for teachers at primary level is necessary given the fact that young children would easily imitate the accent of their teachers (Cameron 2003). Furthermore, data from this study echo Qian *et al.* (2009) in that code-switching was deliberately used for clarifying instructions and eliciting responses from students. Effective code-switching strategies must be provisioned. Teacher educators from government-based training agencies and private ones must design PD programmes in ways that help teachers utilize the L1 whereby cultural diversity and even the local languages/dialects of the students are used to foster learning. PD programmes also need to incorporate classroom language training in which teachers learn about classroom instruction for teaching children. These include skills to grade the language and paraphrase information to a level that

is suitable for children as well as other skills such as praising students, encouraging student participation and eliciting information (Shin 2008).

In terms of pedagogical skills, findings generated from teachers and teacher educators demonstrate that teachers need more assistance to develop skills on classroom management, language skill integration, error correction and feedback provision, lesson planning and material selection and adaptation. Teacher educators need to provide support to teachers so that they can develop lessons and manage classroom in ways that meet the contextual challenges such as the large number of students and a non-conducive seating arrangement (Wichadee 2012). But rather than equipping EFL teachers with basic classroom management skills as Copland *et al.* (2014) argued, the findings of this study suggest that teacher educators need to train them with complex classroom management skills. The focus should go beyond activities where primary EFL teachers can learn strategies on how to monitor children's work and correct their errors and provide them with feedback as they work in pairs or in groups. It also needs to focus on training primary EFL teachers to tackle the unpredictable complexities of large classrooms typified by frequent noise, constant disruptions and students' misbehaviour. PD programmes also need to be geared toward providing tasks and activities that would help increase primary EFL teachers' creativity and versatility in designing engaging materials and well-integrated lessons that would work best for children. The provision of these tasks and activities, however, should not stand in isolation. For example, when teachers receive training on how to select, adapt and design materials, they would not only learn how to do these things; they would also need to learn how to sharpen their creativity when adapting or producing materials. Moreover, when teachers are given adequate training on properly integrating language skills, they need to learn how to be creative in their approach, such as when presenting lessons with a task-based approach (Carless 2002).

Furthermore, unlike previous studies that highlighted the need for practical oriented PD programmes emphasizing language proficiency (for example, Butler 2004, 2005, Le and Do 2012) and pedagogy (for example, Chou 2008, Kabilan and Veratharaju 2013), this study argues that attempts to create practical PD programmes for primary EFL teachers must be done by shifting the focus back to the children. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature by highlighting the need for PD programmes to also include a focus on knowledge of children. Teacher educators must develop PD programmes that could assist teachers in developing growing awareness of areas such as knowledge of children psychology and knowledge of children's learning styles and strategies. Psychological knowledge of children provides a frame of reference for teachers in recognizing the kinds of children they deal with, including lower-grade children who generally are more emotionally dependent, the extroverts and introverts, and the disruptive and needy children. Such understanding of children's characters will help teachers develop appropriate strategies they need to build the positive teacher-student interpersonal relationship that is influential in sustaining student motivation (Maulana *et al.* 2011). Teacher educators also need to train teachers with sufficient knowledge of children's learning styles and strategies. Teachers need to learn about different approaches to learning as applied to diverse individuals, so that they can effectively target instruction toward children's learning needs (Oxford 1990). Although the reference to the knowledge base of teaching primary EFL children has been pointed out, the limited data gathered in this study suggest that there is an urgent need for research

into the knowledge base of teaching EFL to children. This is necessary in an attempt to develop an integrated model of a PD programme for primary EFL teachers that is geared towards optimum acceleration of teacher learning.

All in all, meeting the PD needs of teachers through appropriate contents is not all there is to quality PD. Strategies to address teachers' PD needs in terms of language, pedagogy and knowledge as shown in this study must be built upon the framework of active learning through collective participation and inquiry-based learning that underpins high-quality PD programmes (Garet *et al.* 2001, Cochran-Smith 2009, Dellicarpini 2009). Activities in which teachers can discuss their pedagogical concerns related to meeting the specific needs of children as reflected in their lesson plans, teaching materials or teaching practice need to be stimulated. Collaborative projects and assignments that promote inquiry-based learning and engage teachers with continuous reflection on contextual aspects such as collegial communication and intrusion of bureaucracy are necessary to develop teachers' increased professional awareness. Active learning through collective participation and inquiry-based learning are central dimensions of highly effective PD programmes (Garet *et al.* 2001, Penuel *et al.* 2007, Cochran-Smith 2009), and they need to be the core principles in the design of PD programmes that are expected to produce quality primary EFL teachers in this even more challenging era of language education (Emery 2012, Butler 2015).

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