

Bridging policy and practice: A needs analysis of primary school class teachers in designing contextualized English materials

Sukarno^{a,1*}, Megan Jinabe^{a,2}, Fitriya Dessi Wulandari^{a,3}, Doni Dwi Hartanto^{a,4}, Ihtiara Fitriyaningsih^{a,5}, Dewi Nur Widiyati^{a,6}, Shabrina Yumna Azhra^{a,7}, Miftahurrizqi Insani^{a,8}, Shabrina Nahari Puteri^{a,9}, Arsyadania Faradisa^{a,10}, Fadhl Mohammed Awadh Gharamah^{b,11}, Yasir A. Alsamiri^{c,12}, Yue Xiong^{d,13}

^a Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Jl. Colombo No. 1, Karang Malang, Caturtunggal, Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^b Yafea University College, Lahej University, Yafa'a, Lahj Governorate, Yemen

^c The Islamic University of Madinah, Prince Naif Ibn Abdulaziz Road, in the Al Jamiah district of Medina, Saudi Arabia

^d Beijing Foreign Studies University, North Xisanhuan Road in Haidian district, Beijing, China

¹ sukarno@uny.ac.id, ² meganjinabe.2023@student.uny.ac.id, ³ fitriyadessi.2023@student.uny.ac.id, ⁴ doni.hartanto@uny.ac.id, ⁵ ihtiara.f@uny.ac.id,

⁶ devinurwidiyati@uny.ac.id, ⁷ shabrinayumnaazhra@uny.ac.id, ⁸ miftahurrizqiinsani.2025@student.uny.ac.id, ⁹ shabrinanahari.2025@student.uny.ac.id,

¹⁰ arsyadaniafaradisa.2025@student.uny.ac.id, ¹¹ fadhlgharamah2021@gmail.com, ¹² yalsamiri@iu.edu.sa, ¹³ yuxiong630@gmail.com

* Corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received 11 September 2026

Revised 18 September 2026

Accepted 21 September 2026

Available Online 26 September 2026

Keywords

Kurikulum Merdeka

Material adaptation

Needs analysis

Non-specialist teachers

Primary school EFL

TPD

ABSTRACT

The reinstatement of English as a primary school subject in Indonesia has exposed a policy-practice gap. In Yogyakarta, around 90% of primary English teachers are generalist classroom teachers who lack formal training in English Language Teaching (ELT). This situation contributes to language anxiety and dependence on largely unadapted commercial English textbooks. This study investigated a six-month blended workshop-and-mentoring professional-development initiative designed to support non-specialist teachers in evaluating, adapting, and developing contextualized English materials. Guided by Needs Analysis, the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design using baseline diagnostics, a post-intervention exit questionnaire, open-ended reflections and mentorship records. The findings indicate stronger self-reported understanding and confidence in materials evaluation and adaptation, while qualitative reflections suggest a perceived shift from passive textbook use toward more active evaluation, adaptation, and contextualization of materials. Teachers also identified longer-term needs for shared digital resource repositories, localized Communities of Practice, equitable university support, and future-ready pedagogical development. The study concludes that primary EFL curriculum reform should be accompanied by sustained, ecologically responsive professional-learning systems rather than one-off training.



The Authors 2026. Published by Universitas Ahmad Dahlan
This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



How to Cite: Sukarno, Jinabe, M., Wulandari, F. D., Hartanto, D. D., Fitriyaningsih, I., Widiyati, D.N., Azhra, S. Y., Insani, M., Puteri, S. N., Faradisa, A., Gharamah, F. M. A., Aldamiri, Y. A. & Xiong, Y. (2026). Bridging policy and practice: A needs analysis of primary school class teachers in designing contextualized English materials. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language Journal*, 5(2), 106-134. <https://doi.org/10.12928/tefl.v5i2.2413>

1. Introduction

The global increase in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in primary schooling has resulted in widespread policy changes across non-English speaking countries aimed at developing early language skills (Butler, 2015; Copland et al., 2014). Within Indonesia, this trend is reflected in the Kurikulum Merdeka policy, which reintroduces English in primary schooling. Nevertheless, there is often a systemic disconnect between the high-level policies of a curriculum and the realities of a classroom (Zein, 2017). Most primary schools in developing contexts allocate the responsibility for the teaching of English to generalist class teachers as opposed to trained English teachers (Butler, 2015; Zein, 2015). Although generalist teachers have developed advanced general pedagogical content knowledge, they lack the formal training of English Language Teaching (ELT) and early childhood/young learners (EYL) methodology, thus creating a significant instructional gap in the teaching of English (Copland & Garton, 2014; Widagsa et al., 2025). Recent ecological analyses of EFL curriculum reform likewise show that teacher agency is shaped by the interaction of policy demands, local resources, and institutional conditions (Wang, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023).

This section aims to elucidate key conceptual frames that foreground instructional readiness, particularly with regard to training, preparation, and resources. First, Needs Analysis (NA) entails a systematic approach concerned with the identification of (i) the knowledge that learners and educators require (what must be known), (ii) the missing or gap (the distance between current level and desired level of competence), (iii) the training perceptions or desires (what they believe to be the training they require) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Second, Materials Evaluation and Adaptation involves a cognitive and pedagogical examination process undertaken by teachers to a) observe, and b) critically modify, simplify and augment commercial materials to adapt to the (i) socio-cultural, and (ii) linguistic (McGrath, 2013; Tomlinson, 2011; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). Third, Contextualized Learning Materials are instructional materials designed to situate learners' experiences in their local cultural, situational context, and bring meaningful connections to the abstract target language (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Finally, Teacher Self-Efficacy in materials design stems from (i) Bandura (1997), and entails a teacher's belief in his or her ability to create learning resources and/or modify existing resources to suit his or her teaching, despite (ii) the pedagogical and linguistic constraints (Banegas et al., 2020). Recent scholarship increasingly positions language teachers not simply as textbook users but as materials analysts and designers whose decisions are mediated by institutional, cultural, and policy contexts (Li, Gao, et al., 2023; Li, Wu, et al., 2023). Material use itself can become an affordance for teacher learning when teachers critically interpret and adapt resources within classroom ecologies (Li, 2024). Recent evidence also connects teacher self-efficacy with sustained engagement in professional learning (Zhi & Yang, 2024).

Taken together, these concepts are treated in this study as an integrated developmental pathway rather than as parallel constructs. Needs Analysis diagnoses the necessities, lacks, and wants that define the gap between policy expectations and teachers' current resources; teacher cognition explains how teachers interpret those gaps through existing knowledge, beliefs, and prior experience (Borg, 2003); and materials evaluation/adaptation provides the professional activity through which those cognitions are translated into pedagogical decisions. When teachers are given structured criteria, opportunities to redesign resources, and feedback on successive drafts, materials development can become a site for exercising teacher agency rather than merely acquiring technical procedures. From an ecological perspective, agency is achieved through the interaction of individual capacity with cultural and structural conditions (Priestley et al., 2015), while identity commitments influence how teachers enact agentic choices during curricular reform (Tao & Gao, 2017). Contextualized materials are therefore understood both as instructional products and as evidence of teachers' developing capacity to make locally responsive pedagogical decisions. Comparative and longitudinal studies further show that language teachers' development as materials designers varies with experience and is mediated by access to social resources, feedback, and sustained participation in professional communities (Li et al., 2025; Li & Gao, 2025).

The theoretical requirement for contextualization may exist, yet evidence from the field in the Special Region of Yogyakarta shows a significant operational crisis. Nearly 90% of primary school English teachers are generalists with no formal training in English. This has caused structural and psychological problems, resulting in teachers' fear of teaching English, as they are terrified of making grammatical and pronunciation mistakes. As a result, teachers' ability and confidence to make pedagogical choices and evaluate commercially produced English textbooks is compromised, because 85% of generalist primary school teachers do not know which English language teaching (ELT) activities to include or exclude from a textbook, while 78% say they find it difficult to adapt materials or simplify the language. Without a localized assessment model, teachers are left with a crisis of self-efficacy, and as a result, are entirely dependent on (structurally) alien, commercially produced, and urban-centered teaching materials, leaving them "textbook-bound" (Garton et al., 2011; Tomlinson, 2011).

Although young learners' cognitive processes have become the focus of much research (Butler, 2015), as have general teacher training programs for teaching English to young learners (Copland et al., 2014; Zein, 2016), little research has been done on the material development needs of non-specialist, generalist teachers, especially those addressing the sudden shifts in curriculum. Most professional development programs assume that generalist teachers possess a basic level of English language teaching skills, which they do not. This study focuses on non-specialist primary teachers who adapt teaching materials. The study breaks new ground by not viewing teachers as consumers of teaching materials and creating a diagnostic map (empirically based) that connects language policies at the macro level to the design of teaching materials at the micro level. It is both urgent and important in order to avoid the impending instructional failures that will occur in primary EFL classrooms as generalist teachers remain dependent on the teaching materials provided, with no opportunity for practical adaptation. Technology-supported language teacher education can broaden access to professional learning, but its value depends on pedagogically purposeful integration and sustained support rather than tool exposure alone (Bahari et al., 2022).

Accordingly, the Indonesian case is used to examine a broader TESOL problem: how teachers without specialist preparation can be supported to become pedagogical decision-makers when curriculum expansion outpaces the professional infrastructure needed to enact it. The contribution is therefore not limited to identifying skills deficits; it examines the conditions under which materials work can mediate teacher agency, cognition, and professional identity in reform settings. To fill this gap, this study seeks to understand the needs for material development among non-specialist primary teachers in Yogyakarta within the Kurikulum Merdeka.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What pedagogical and linguistic competency gaps do non-specialist primary school teachers report in relation to teaching English in light of recent educational policy changes?
2. To what extent do non-specialist primary school teachers critically evaluate and modify commercially produced English language teaching textbooks to formulate contextualized teaching-learning materials?
3. What are the challenges and levels of self-efficacy perceived by classroom teachers with regard to the development of teaching-learning materials?

This study, in short, aims to fill a crucial empirical gap by providing insight into the constraints of material design for teachers of English to young learners. The ultimate goal is to provide a foundation for the creation of sustainable mentoring frameworks for teachers and contextualized guidelines for the adaptation of teaching resources, particularly for primary school teachers with no specialization.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This study conducted a comprehensive needs analysis of non-specialist primary school teachers' needs for contextualized English learning materials using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (QUAN + QUAL). A mixed-methods approach was appropriate because examining the policy-practice gap required both broad empirical mapping and contextual detail. A quantitative survey conducted in isolation would not make visible the more complex pedagogical and emotional challenges experienced by teachers, while the absence of a qualitative narrative would deny a systematic diagnosis of the challenges. In the current design, quantitative baselines and post-intervention self-report assessments were captured alongside qualitative narrative reflections. Both data strands were independently analyzed and for the purpose of the current study, integrated at the last stage to develop a triangulated needs assessment (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Importantly, the mixed-methods convergence occurred at the level of interpretation rather than as a matched individual pre-post experiment: the baseline diagnostics mapped system-level needs, whereas the professional-development phase generated exit ratings and qualitative reflections after the intervention.

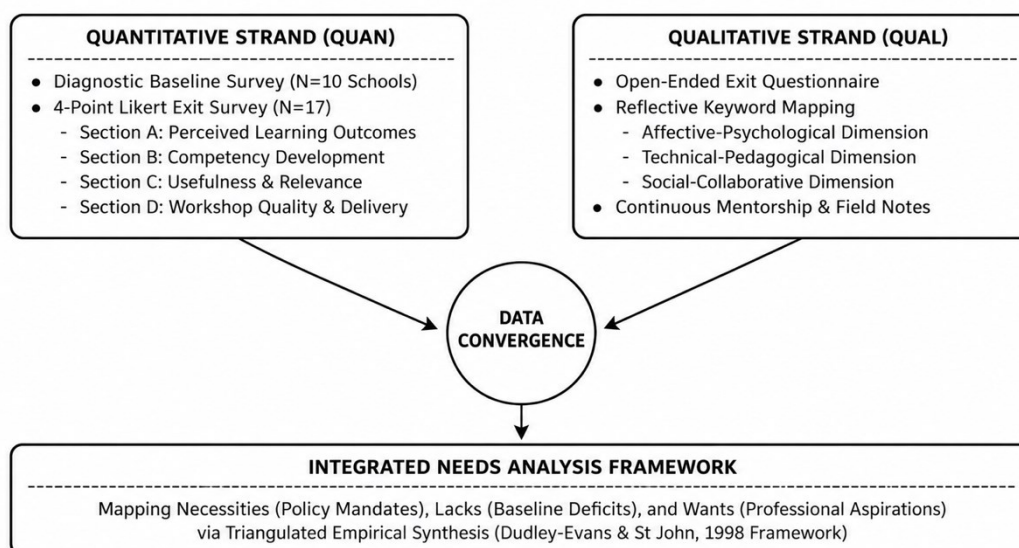


Fig 1. Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design

Figure 1 provides a graphical depiction of the convergent parallel mixed-methods framework as it was implemented in the current study. The quantitative strand (QUAN) encompasses the structured numeric assessments of the baseline school diagnostics and four of the post-intervention exit survey dimensions, and establishes a set of evaluative criteria for teacher learning and competency advancements. The qualitative strand (QUAL) collects narrative assessments through open-ended surveys, keyword mappings, and comments, and captures the psychological and social aspects of the experience of participants. Both independent strands converge during the analytical synthesis stage, where numerical trends and qualitative codes are merged into Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) Needs Analysis framework to establish a fully substantiated diagnostic map.

2.2. Context and participants

The empirical study was located in elementary schools across the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), Indonesia. It included urban, semi-urban, and rural education systems from all five of Yogyakarta's administrative districts. The backdrop to the study was the national implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which reintroduced English lessons in primary schooling. In the participating schools, English was commonly taught by primary school classroom teachers (guru

kelas) rather than English specialists. This created a significant gap between the expectations of curriculum policy and the teaching practices available within the classroom.

To capture the baseline systemic limitations and the outcome of the development work, the study employed two participant groups selected purposively. The first diagnostic baseline phase comprised 40 generalist classroom teachers from ten primary partner schools within the province. The second phase involved an intensive professional development engagement, during which 17 primary school teachers completed a summative exit survey, and both the survey and the development work participants provided qualitative feedback. Overall, the two study phases involved 57 teacher participants (40 in the diagnostic baseline and 17 in the professional-development phase). The purposive criteria reflected the focus of the study: participants were primary-school classroom teachers involved in English instruction or materials use, had no or limited formal preparation in ELT/EYL, and represented urban, semi-urban, and rural school contexts in Yogyakarta. Of the participating teachers, close to 90% were generalists with no or very limited training in English Language Teaching (ELT) or English for Young Learners (EYL). Additionally, the participants came from a variety of school contexts, from urban schools with many resources and participants to rural schools in the Kulon Progo district with very limited English development resources.

The two participant groups therefore served distinct but complementary analytical purposes and were not treated as a single longitudinal cohort. The diagnostic baseline drew on 40 generalist teachers from ten partner primary schools to map system-level needs across the participating school contexts, whereas the 17 teachers in the professional-development phase supplied post-intervention self-reports and qualitative reflections. Because the baseline and professional-development data were collected for different analytical purposes, no individual-level causal pre-post comparison is claimed.

2.3. Professional development intervention

The professional-development phase was implemented through a six-month Blended Mentoring Model that combined face-to-face and online support rather than through a single information session. The verified implementation sequence comprised four stages: Month 1, initiation and strategic consolidation with partner schools; Months 2-3, an intensive Developing English Materials workshop; Months 4-5, mentored materials production; and Month 6, dissemination, product display, desk evaluation, and final revision. The intensive workshop used an active-learning approach and addressed three interconnected areas: (1) EYL pedagogy appropriate to the cognitive characteristics of primary learners; (2) materials adaptation and re-authoring, including simplifying instructions, localizing cultural content, and modifying tasks for differentiated needs; and (3) production of worksheets and visually supported learning resources using locally accessible materials.

During the mentored production phase, teachers worked in regional groups to develop contextualized English materials. Student members of the programme acted as regional facilitators for technical support, while university lecturers provided periodic online supervision and instructional feedback. The process required teachers to evaluate existing materials, adapt or re-author content, produce draft units, and revise them in response to peer and mentor feedback. The programme design required each regional group to prepare three material units for presentation and desk evaluation at the final stage, with evaluation feedback used to guide final product revision. Teacher development was monitored through workshop participation, draft-redraft processes, mentorship records, exit-questionnaire responses, open-ended reflections, and formative product review. These mechanisms are analytically important because structured evaluation criteria supported pedagogical decision-making, collaborative production normalized shared problem solving, and iterative feedback supported refinement of teachers' materials and professional judgement. The formative desk evaluation was part of the programme's mentoring process and was not treated as an independent performance-based outcome measure in the present study.

2.4. Data collection instruments

A suite of diagnostic instruments was created to capture practitioner needs, encompassing a series of rapid, multi-level, and iterative techniques drawn from Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998)

model of needs analysis. The primary instrument was the Diagnostic Baseline Survey, which was administered prior to the intervention to gather the demographic, academic, and pedagogical profiles of teachers and to assess their teaching anxieties. This baseline was the quantitative point of reference to identify the structural gaps in primary schools before the provision of professional development.

Post-intervention perceptions were assessed using a quantitative exit questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of 21 items in 4 sections; each rated on a forced-choice 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Section A comprised 5 items assessing perceived learning outcomes and focused on the participants' understanding of the design of materials for the teaching of young learners and the evaluation of the materials using the SQRAR model. Section B included 6 items that assessed perceived competency development. Section C included 5 items that assessed the usefulness of the workshop, and Section D included 5 items that assessed the quality of the workshop.

Alongside the quantitative survey, a qualitative open-ended questionnaire was used to capture and provide a fuller picture of the professional aspirations and the qualitative dimensions of the teacher's lived experiences. This qualitative instrument contained three scaffolded items that required participants to provide textual reflections. Participants, first, reported five keywords that described their learning and feelings (in a psychological sense) during the material design session. Second, they indicated the types of teaching/learning support, feedback, and resources that they wished to have in order to sustain their professional development. Third, teachers offered systemic suggestions for institutional practices that university partners, such as Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, may adopt to facilitate support for primary EFL educators in underserved districts.

2.5. Data analysis procedures

The quantitative data from the 4-point Likert exit questionnaire were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS. For Sections A, B, C, and D, frequency and percentage distributions and measures of central tendency were computed. The forced-choice scale was intended to reduce neutral responding and required participants to indicate either agreement or disagreement with statements concerning their professional learning. Descriptive comparisons were used to summarize patterns across the diagnostic baseline and the post-workshop self-evaluation. Since the baseline diagnostic group and the professional-development group served different purposes, these statistics were used descriptively; they do not constitute a matched pre-post test of the same individuals.

An integration of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis and Miles, Huberman and Saldaña's (2014) data condensation framework was used to analyze the qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire, keyword reflections, and mentorship logs. The analysis commenced with a thorough and repeated reading of the verbatim transcripts in both the Indonesian and English languages. Systematic initial open coding was employed to capture the ideas that were recurrent. These codes were grouped into several overarching themes which included Affective Anxiety Reduction, Digital Resource Repositories, Peer Collaboration, and Geographical Inequity. These themes underwent several iterations, matching qualitative codes to relevant trends in the quantitative survey. The last phase included the organization of the validated themes within the context of Dudley-Evans and St John's needs analysis (1998) (i.e. necessities, lacks, and wants) and the provision of supportive, representative, and relevant citations for the derived conclusions.

2.6. Methodological rigor and quality assurance

To ensure scientific credibility and methodological rigor across the quantitative and qualitative segments, this study applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative criteria for naturalistic inquiry for qualitative segments, as well as standard content validation guidelines for quantitative segments.

Figure 2 shows a visual depiction of the dual pillar quality framework established to ensure methodological rigor across both research workstreams. There are two pillars, the left being qualitative trustworthiness and the right being quantitative validity. The left pillar shows the qualitative trustworthiness as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). It shows the processes of data triangulation, thickness of the contextual description, transparency of the audit trail, and direct/

verbatim grounding and shows how each process relates to (i.e. confirms) credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The right pillar shows the quantitative quality procedures: expert-panel review supported content alignment, while the forced-choice scale provided a consistent response structure for descriptive analysis. Both of these pillars, when viewed together, show and protect the scientific integrity of the conclusions of the study.

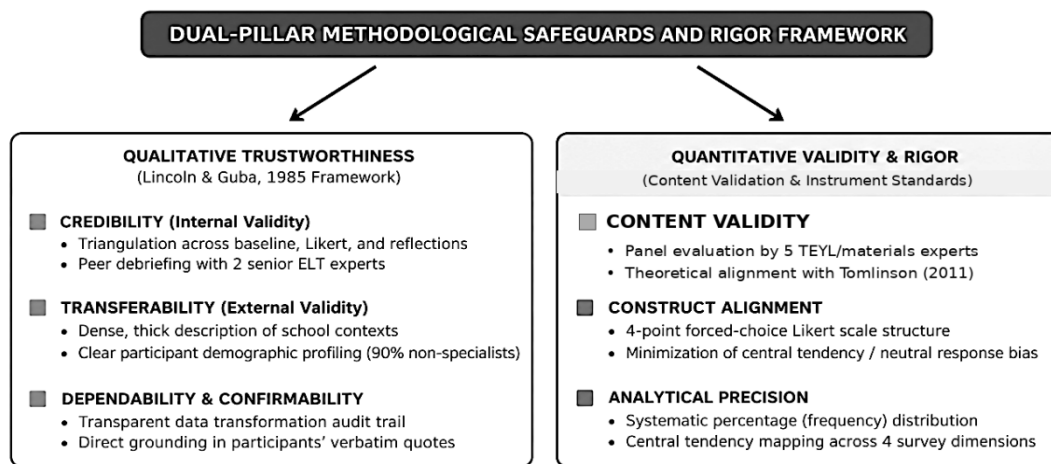


Fig 2. Integrated Methodological Rigor and Quality Framework

To establish qualitative credibility, data triangulation employed diagnostic baseline surveys, numerical Likert ratings, and qualitative reflections. No findings stemmed from only one data collection mode. To reduce researcher bias in thematic coding, two senior ELT researchers acted as debriefers and evaluated coded materials. Transferability was addressed by providing descriptions of the demographics of participants, the policies of the region, and the infrastructures of the schools located in the urban and rural districts of Yogyakarta. These descriptions enabled future researchers to evaluate if these findings can be applicable in other contexts of similar primary EFL expansions in developing countries. For dependability and confirmability, an auditable path was created with sufficient detail for readers to follow the researcher's processes, methods, and data analyses from surveys to the final thematic matrices, and all qualitative claims were rooted in participants' verbatim statements.

Content validity of the quantitative instruments was supported by expert review prior to field administration. Five experts in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) and materials development evaluated the clarity, construction, and theoretical alignment of the items with the Tomlinson (2011) framework of materials adaptation and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) model of needs analysis. The five experts served as instrument validators and were not included in the participant sample. A four-point forced-choice Likert scale was used to reduce neutral responding and require participants to indicate agreement or disagreement with items concerning perceived learning, materials evaluation, and professional-development needs.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Pedagogical and Linguistic Lacks of Non-Specialist Teachers under Policy Reform

The research highlights a striking divergence in the expectations of national curriculum policies and the challenges faced by primary schools in Yogyakarta. Diagnostic data reveal that 90 percent of primary school English teachers are general teachers, meaning they do not have formal training in the teaching of English (language) or in the teaching of English to Young Learners (EYL). Non-specialist teachers face multiple challenges, including a lack of understanding of textbook evaluation, with 85 percent reporting confusion in assessing commercial textbooks and 78 percent reporting difficulty modifying learning resources to the socio-cultural and developmental needs of their students. These challenges contribute to a lack of confidence in the classroom and result in high

levels of anxiety about the foreign language. Many teachers also commented that in small or rural schools, the lack of an English-speaking environment severely diminishes their confidence:

"Di sekolah kecil, atau yang di wilayah dusun, lingkungan mungkin kurang mendukung dan jadinya kita malu dan gak pede speaking in English... Berbeda dengan SD di kota atau yang memakai Cambridge curriculum, lingkungan dan guru-gurunya sudah mendukung."

This combination of insecurity regarding the English language, non-specialization, and lack of confidence, holds many teachers in a state of high dependence on commercially produced pedagogical materials that are highly standardized and incorporate an urban bias. Non-specialized teachers are extremely reluctant to modify or substitute the existing content.

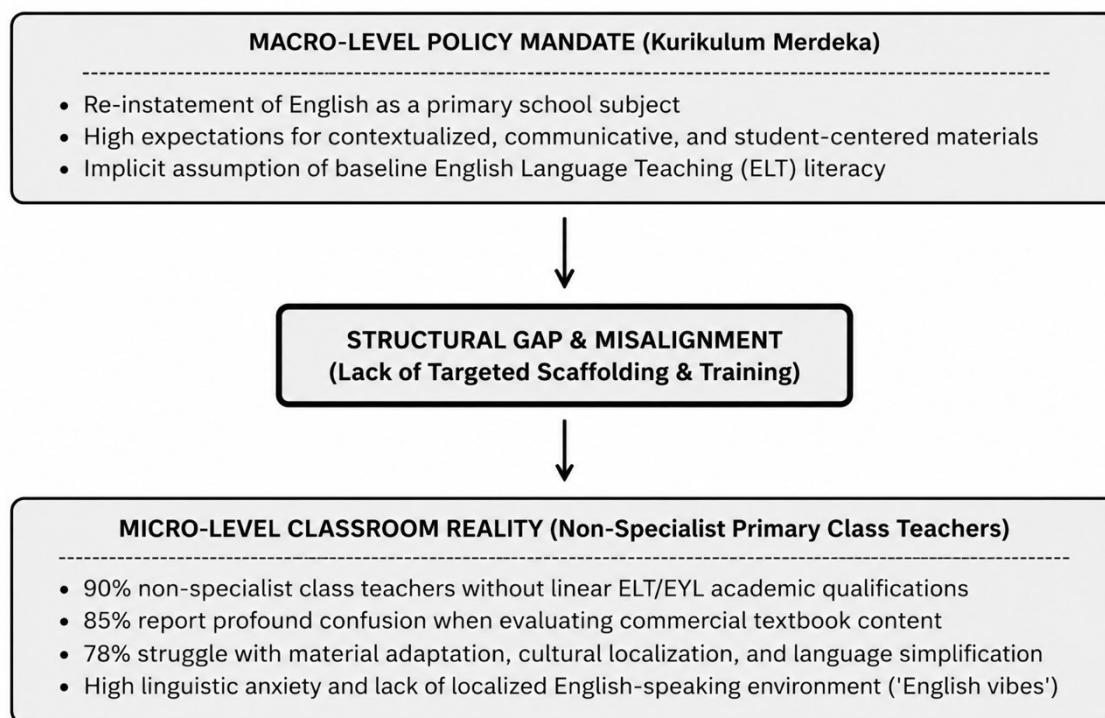


Fig 3. Policy-Practice Gap in Primary EFL Instruction

The structural flowchart in Figure 3 depicts the operational divide between macro-level national curriculum policies (Kurikulum Merdeka) and policies at the micro-level of primary school classrooms. The policies articulate a clear expectation of communicative and contextualized English teaching within the primary classroom, yet generalist primary class teachers face significant pedagogical blockages. These include a lack of formal qualification in EYL, difficulty adapting teaching resources, and anxiety about foreign language teaching in under-resourced schools. The flowchart emphasizes that significant structural support is needed for the policies to have the desired effect within the teaching/learning environment.

The findings of this study add to top-down language policy literature, especially in developing contexts, where educational authorities are often framed negatively for implementing primary English programs, but are not given funding to hire teaching specialists (Butler, 2015; Copland et al., 2014; Zein, 2017). Proponents of teaching English to young learners argue that generalist teachers are more engaging and are more skilled and knowledgeable in working with children and in teaching than are roving language specialists (Butler, 2015; Copland & Garton, 2014). However, the argument against this is that when generalist teachers do not have the required level of proficiency in the target language, they will lose teaching confidence, resulting in an unengaged, rote, and textbook-centered approach to teaching (Garton et al., 2011; Zein, 2017). The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Zein (2015, 2017) regarding Indonesian primary schools, where the teachers' level of

language proficiency and design of teaching materials were the predominant barriers to language policy implementation.

In the Yogyakarta context, this study shows that the limited English preparation of primary class teachers is not just a matter of grammatical and lexical knowledge, but is also associated with uneven policy implementation and insufficient structural preparation within participating contexts. Within this context, generalist teachers may struggle to critically evaluate commercial teaching materials and, therefore, need framework support to close the gap between policy and practice.

The pattern is best interpreted as a multi-layered implementation problem rather than as a simple language-deficit explanation. Linguistic insecurity constrains willingness to use and modify English; limited ELT/EYL pedagogical knowledge restricts teachers' ability to judge task and material suitability; uneven access to sustained professional development reduces opportunities to rehearse, receive feedback, and refine decisions; and local implementation conditions can place new subject responsibilities on generalist teachers without equivalent specialist preparation or continuing support. These layers interact: low proficiency may amplify anxiety, but anxiety and textbook dependence are also institutionally produced when teachers are asked to enact curricular change without adequate professional infrastructure. The central theoretical implication is therefore that the policy-practice gap in primary EFL is an ecological problem of teacher capacity, agency, and support, not merely an individual deficit in English proficiency (Copland et al., 2014; Widagsa et al., 2025; Zein, 2016, 2017).

3.2. Evaluating and Adapting Commercial Textbooks through Structured Needs Analysis

Following the professional development intervention, the quantitative exit survey indicates stronger self-reported understanding and confidence in materials evaluation and adaptation, rather than independently verified competence gains. In Section A (Perceived Learning Outcomes) and Section B (Competency Development), the majority of survey participants selected either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”, indicating that they perceived that their ability to analyze and modify teaching materials had improved. Specifically, participants reported stronger perceived understanding of materials evaluation, particularly when applying learner Needs Analysis (Necessities, Lacks, and Wants). Teachers reported greater confidence in identifying gaps and weaknesses in commercially published teaching books and in judging developmental activities designed for young learners.

Table 1. Summary of Post-Intervention Self-Reported Response Trends

Construct Section	Dominant Response Trend	Key Self-Reported Outcome
Section A: Perceived Learning Outcomes	Strongly Agree / Agree	High self-reported understanding of EYL concepts & Needs Analysis principles; reduced reliance on subjective material selection.
Section B: Competency Development	Strongly Agree / Agree	Perceived improvement in the ability to critically analyze, adapt, and localize commercial textbooks based on target learner needs.
Section C: Usefulness & Relevance	Strongly Agree / Agree	High intention to implement customized materials; increased perceived pedagogical confidence.
Section D: Workshop Quality & Delivery	Strongly Agree / Agree	High appreciation for detailed, individualized mentor feedback (Draft 1 & Draft 2) and hands-on design tasks.

Table 1 demonstrates the exit-survey results across the four evaluation criteria following the materials-design workshop. Across all four sections (A-D), the largest proportions of responses were “Strongly Agree” and “Agree.” Participants reported perceived improvement in understanding systematic Needs Analysis and contextualizing commercial texts, alongside strong appreciation for the individualized and time-demanding mentorship provided across draft and redraft cycles.

A perceived shift in teachers' orientation toward materials design is supported by the qualitative keyword analysis, in which survey participants reported that the main outcomes of the training were "Needs Analysis", "Material Development", "Contextual", "Interactive", and "Worksheets". Qualitative entries revealed that the combination of structured adaptation templates and detailed, individualized expert feedback was pivotal in demystifying material design. As two teachers noted:

"Template materi Bahasa Inggris yang telah dibagikan sangat bermanfaat untuk saya karena saya sempat bingung bagaimana menyusun sebuah bab yang menarik serta bagaimana agar sebuah materi disajikan secara runtut."

"Akan sangat bermanfaat apabila dosen memberikan gambaran tentang materi (contoh)... Hal yang saya rasakan bermanfaat adalah feedback dari dosen setelah membuat media (revisi 1 dan draf 2) yang diberikan secara detail dan personal."

These findings endorse Tomlinson's (2011) materials development framework and Tomlinson and Masuhara's (2018) account of materials development. Tomlinson views the adaption of materials as a cognitive skill that relies on learned stepwise criteria as opposed to intuitive guesswork. Advocates of stepwise evaluative procedures (e.g., [Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998](#); [Nation & Macalister, 2010](#); [McGrath, 2013](#)) advocate that the teaching of the principles of needs analysis provides non-specialists with the "pedagogical scaffolding" that enables them to overcome the rigid dependence on a textbook. On the other hand, critical materials theorists (e.g., [Littlejohn, 2011](#)) affirm that formal evaluative procedures can, at times, reduce the design of materials to a mechanical task that fetters the creativity of the teacher. However, the participants' self-reports provide a contrasting perspective to Littlejohn's concern; the non-specialist teachers surveyed claimed that stepwise templates and forms of advanced critique fostered their creativity and "memancing guru untuk lebih kreatif dalam menyusun materi." This corroborates recent investigations carried out in Southeast Asian primary EFL contexts that suggest that prior to exercising real instructional agency, non-specialist educators require stepwise scaffolding ([Butler, 2015](#); [Zein, 2016](#)). In providing non-specialist educators with detailed criteria on needs analysis and goal-orientated critiques, they may begin to move from passive consumption of text materials toward more proactive adaptation of educational materials. Teachers are then able to bring adaptive rationality to commercial coursebooks. The importance of individualized feedback and expert mentoring is consistent with recent EFL professional-development research showing that structured mentor-supported initiatives can strengthen pedagogical learning and professional engagement ([El Deen, 2023](#)).

Viewed through teacher cognition and agency, the mechanism is more than the acquisition of a technical adaptation routine. The sequence of the intervention helps explain the reported changes: the Months 2-3 workshop supplied explicit EYL and materials-development criteria; the Months 4-5 regional production phase required teachers to apply those criteria in contextualized drafts with facilitator and lecturer support; and the Month 6 desk-evaluation and revision stage created an additional cycle of feedback and refinement. Needs Analysis therefore provided a diagnostic logic for deciding what learners required, adaptation and re-authoring tasks externalized teachers' beliefs and pedagogical judgements, and collaborative and mentor feedback provided social and structural conditions in which those judgements could be reconsidered. In this sense, professional development can support agency when it expands teachers' capacity to make reasoned choices within local constraints rather than simply prescribing a new set of procedures ([Borg, 2003](#); [Priestley et al., 2015](#); [Tao & Gao, 2017](#)). Because the study did not experimentally isolate individual intervention components, their contribution is interpreted as a plausible mechanism supported by the convergent evidence rather than as a separate causal effect.

3.3. Teacher Self-Efficacy, Affective Transformation, and Long-Term Ecological Needs

The exit-survey and reflection data suggest a positive affective shift and stronger perceived self-efficacy following the intervention. Section C (Usefulness) and Section D (Workshop Quality) of the exit survey show high levels of agreement that the training supported teachers' confidence to engage in independent material development. In their reflections, participants used many positive affective descriptors, such as: "Fun," "Enjoy," "Confident," "Inspiring," "Motivating," and "Tidak Tegang."

Collaborative design tasks helped teachers feel less solitary, and normalized their experiences of being non-specialists. These affective outcomes should be interpreted as perceived change, not as direct evidence of independently assessed competence or sustained classroom enactment.

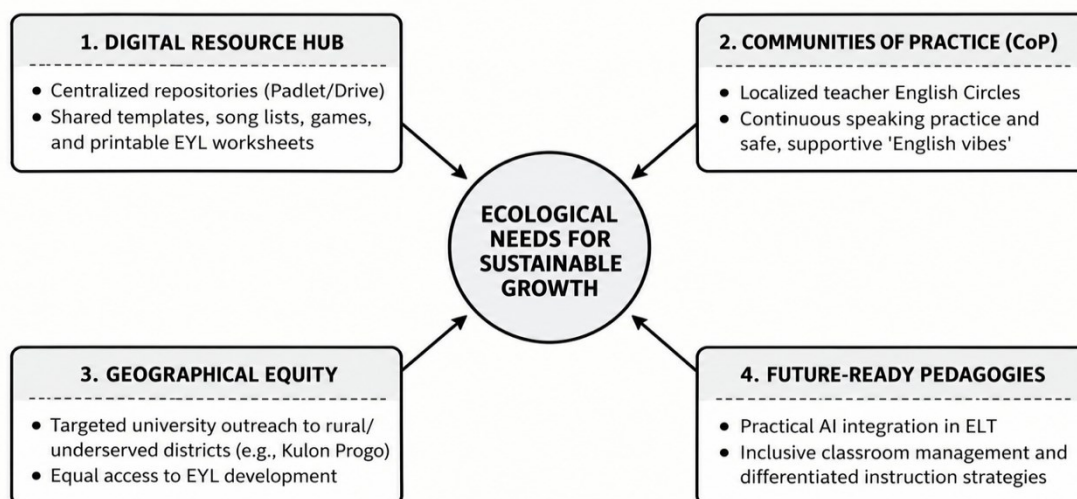


Fig 4. Ecological Needs Framework for Sustainable Professional Growth

Figure 4 depicts the four interconnected pillars of a sustainable ecology of teacher professional growth that goes beyond the confines of short-term workshops. Based on the qualitative aspirations of the participants, the framework underscores the importance of purposefully built, digitally accessible central repositories, localized Communities of Practice (CoP) for language maintenance, purposeful engagement of universities to overcome geographic inequities in rural districts like Kulon Progo, and the provision of training in pedagogies of the future, including AI and differentiated teaching.

Even with short-term favorable perceptions, analysis from the open-ended long-term “Wants” responses identifies four essential demands for the ecological framework aimed at the long-term sustenance of teacher self-efficacy following the provision of unconnected training sessions on: (1) Shared Digital Repositories: Teachers desired integrated digital space (i.e. Padlet, Google Drive) where they could share and access flexible game ideas, song lists, and printed resources designed for Indonesian elementary students. (2) English Communities of Practice (CoP): Participants wished for the establishment of teacher circles in order to practice English speaking and to maintain an “English vibe” while feeling safe and without the fear of being judged, especially for teachers working in rural schools. (3) Geographical Inequity Mitigation: Participants voiced concern about regional differences in professional development opportunities. A teacher from Kulon Progo stated: “*Saya adalah satu-satunya perwakilan guru B. Inggris SD dari Kulon Progo. Sepertinya Kulon Progo belum terpapar dengan kegiatan seperti ini... Mohon pelatihan khusus untuk guru SD di Kulon Progo.*” (“I am the only representative of B. Inggris SD teachers from Kulon Progo. It seems that Kulon Progo has not been exposed to activities like this... Please have special training for primary school teachers in Kulon Progo.”). (4) Next-Generation Pedagogies: Teachers suggested that training should focus on AI, elementary classroom inclusivity, and classroom management.

These results align with Bandura’s (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory and Banegas et al.’s (2020) work on teachers as materials designers, whereby teacher self-efficacy stems from mastery and self-

efficacy, socially validated through the positive feedback of peers and mentors. The need for English communities supports Lave and Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory and Communities of Practice (CoP). Research on continuous professional development (CPD) in EFL contexts (e.g., Copland et al., 2014; Zein, 2016) suggests that "one-shot" workshops are often insufficient for sustained professional learning. Proponents argue the excitement generated by these short-term workshops quickly dissipates without further support from the institution. The data in this study support this critique: while participants reported short-term benefits from the workshop, they explicitly identified that long-term implementation depends on sustained digital repositories, geographical equity in university outreach, and peer learning communities. In sum, building self-efficacy among non-specialist primary teachers requires moving beyond one-off training workshops toward continuous, ecologically embedded support systems. Establishing digital resource hubs, localized teacher communities, and equitable university outreach may help sustain initial perceived gains and support longer-term instructional improvement across school districts. Recent L2 teacher-development studies likewise show that sustained communities can extend professional learning beyond initial workshops through recurrent cycles of shared inquiry, identity negotiation, and collaborative knowledge construction (Abbott & Lee, 2022; Mehdizadeh et al., 2024). Research on professional learning communities further indicates that shared goals and supportive interaction are associated with teacher motivation, while systematic and online-community research underscores the importance of explicit structures and facilitation for meaningful collaboration (Long et al., 2024; Dzieciatko-Szendrei et al., 2024; Kourkouli, 2024).

Operationally, these findings suggest a three-level professional-development ecosystem. At policy and district levels, curricular mandates should be accompanied by funded minimum entitlements to EYL/ELT support and equitable access across districts. At the university level, teacher-education programs can function as regional mentoring hubs that maintain digital repositories, train mentors, and support periodic materials-design clinics. At school level, leaders can protect regular time for Communities of Practice, collaborative material review, small-scale classroom trials, and feedback. A recurring cycle—diagnose needs -> co-design/adapt -> trial -> peer/mentor feedback -> revise -> share—would convert one-off workshops into sustained professional learning. Because this model distributes responsibility across institutions rather than locating reform success solely in individual teachers, it is potentially relevant to other TESOL systems in which primary-English expansion has outpaced specialist teacher supply (Priestley et al., 2015; Tao & Gao, 2017; Zein, 2016).

4. Conclusion

The results suggest that systematic professional development organized around explicit Needs Analysis principles (Necessities, Lacks, and Wants) can help narrow the policy-practice divide when it is aligned with teachers' identified professional needs. In this study, that support was operationalized through a six-month blended sequence of initiation, intensive EYL/materials-development workshops, mentored regional materials production, and a final desk-evaluation and revision stage. The intervention was associated with a reported shift from reliance on pedagogical intuition toward more structured, evidence-informed materials decisions and a stronger sense of agency. Participants reported beginning to examine available instructional resources more critically and to adapt them for their own teaching contexts. These findings do not imply that non-specialist primary teachers no longer require language-focused professional development; rather, they indicate that language support should be combined with sustained, step-by-step pedagogical support for evaluating, contextualizing, trialing, and revising teaching resources in relation to national curriculum goals.

The research provides useful and practical suggestions for various levels of language education. First, for policy advancement, national curriculum goals should coincide with applicable language teacher preparation frameworks. Where subject-teaching mandates involve language non-specialist teachers, they should be accompanied by accessible preparation and sustained professional support. Effective policymaking requires realistic assessments of practitioner capabilities instead of idealistic assumptions. Second, professional development should combine relevant theory with targeted

practice in resource evaluation, adaptation, and modification. The present findings suggest that providing teachers with modifiable resources, explicit evaluative criteria, and opportunities for guided adaptation can strengthen their perceived agency and willingness to improve instructional resources. They also support moving beyond one-off, passive professional-development offerings toward recurring cycles in which teachers create or adapt resources, receive personalized expert and peer feedback, trial or review their materials, and revise them iteratively.

To operationalize these recommendations, collaboration among policymakers, universities, and schools should be organized as an ongoing support architecture rather than a sequence of isolated workshops. Policymakers can fund district-level access and establish minimum professional-learning provisions; universities can coordinate mentor networks, digital resource banks, and design-feedback clinics; and schools can institutionalize protected collaborative time for teacher communities to adapt, trial, discuss, and revise materials. Such a distributed model links national reform to local professional learning and offers a transferable pathway for other EFL systems facing shortages of specialist primary English teachers.

This study illuminates aspects of the development of non-specialist teachers. There are several shortcomings and suggestions regarding forthcoming research. The focused intervention was for primary teachers in the Yogyakarta area. Future research should consider models in a wider range of provincial contexts, especially in remote or outer-island locations with little opportunity for English exposure and limited educational resources and infrastructure. The present study examined post-workshop self-reported competency development, confidence, and professional orientation rather than independently verified gains in teaching competence. Future studies should examine the actual classroom practice for a full academic year and quantify the impact of modified resources on learners' language skills and willingness to communicate. Participants in this study voiced the need for a central digital repository and AI-based material design. Further studies should examine the potentially ethical use of generative AI to adapt materials for non-specialist teachers and sustain a pedagogical balance. Therefore, further study is needed to assess the impact of localized Communities of Practice and university-school partnerships on the provision of language support to teachers in rural schools and the reduction of professional isolation.

Although the Month 6 programme stage included formative desk evaluation and final revision of the teacher-produced material units, those records were used to support mentoring and product refinement and were not analyzed as an independent performance-based research outcome. The post-intervention quantitative evidence reported in this article therefore remains self-reported, and the study did not include systematic classroom observations, independent rubric-based outcome scoring of teacher-produced materials, or evaluation of adapted resources in sustained classroom use. The findings should consequently be interpreted as evidence of perceived learning, confidence, and agency rather than definitive proof of objective competence gains or causal intervention effects. Future studies should add these performance-based measures and, where possible, use matched longitudinal samples to examine whether reported changes are sustained in classroom practice.

Acknowledgment

The authors gratefully acknowledge Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) for providing institutional and financial support through the 2026 Community Service Program (Program *Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat*/PKM). The authors also extend their sincere appreciation to the participating primary schools, teachers, and all parties involved in the implementation of the programme and data collection. Their participation, insights, and cooperation were essential to the completion of this study.

Declarations

- Author contribution** : All authors contributed to the development and implementation of the study. The authors were involved in conceptualization, implementation of the professional-development programme, data collection and analysis, interpretation of the findings, and preparation and revision of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.
- Funding statement** : This study was supported by Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) through the 2026 Community Service Programme (*Program Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat/PKM*).
- Conflict of interest** : The authors declare no conflict of interest.
- Additional information** : No additional information is available for this paper.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, M. L., & Lee, K. K. (2022). Researcher-supported professional learning and development for instructors in adult L2 programs: Factors leading to ongoing communities of practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 106(3), 617–634. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12793>
- Bahari, A., Barrot, J. S., & Sarkhosh, M. (2022). Current state of research on the use of technology in language teacher education and professional development. *TESOL Journal*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.672>
- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. W. H. Freeman.
- Banegas, D. L., Corrales, K., & Poole, P. (2020). Can engaging L2 teachers as material designers contribute to their professional development? Findings from Colombia. *System*, 91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102265>
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36(2), 81–109. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444803001903>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Butler, Y. G. (2015). English language education among young learners in East Asia: A review of current research (2004–2014). *Language Teaching*, 48(3), 303–342. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444815000105>
- Copland, F., & Garton, S. (2014). Key themes and future directions in teaching English to young learners: Introduction to the special issue. *ELT Journal*, 68(3), 223–230. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccu030>
- Copland, F., Garton, S., & Burns, A. (2014). Challenges in teaching English to young learners: Global perspectives and local realities. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(4), 738–762. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.148>
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dziedziatko-Szendrei, B., Pantić, N., Joksimović, S., Gašević, D., & Viry, G. (2024). Systematic review of the operational definitions and indicators of teacher communities. *Educational Research Review*, 45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2024.100640>

- El Deen, A. A. M. M. A. (2023). The role of educational initiatives in EFL teacher professional development: A study of teacher mentors' perspectives. *Heliyon*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13342>
- Garton, S., Copland, F., & Burns, A. (2011). Investigating global practices in teaching English to young learners. *ELT Research Papers* 11(1), 1-24.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733031>
- Kourkouli, K. (2024). Unlocking in-depth forum discussion and perceived effectiveness: Teaching and social presence categories in online teacher communities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104630>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>
- Li, D. (2024). Material use for EFL teacher learning in classroom ecology: A perturbation or affordance?. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 37(2), 186–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2023.2288132>
- Li, J., & Gao, X. (2025). Language teachers' developmental trajectories as materials developers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 59(3), 1719–1749. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3380>
- Li, J., Gao, X., & Cui, X. (2023). Language teachers as materials developers. *RELC Journal*, 54(3), 881–889. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882211061627>
- Li, J., Wu, Y., & Gao, X. (2023). Language teachers' engagement with ideological representations as materials designers. *System*, 117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103121>
- Li, J., Wu, Y., & Gao, X. (2025). Novice and experienced language teachers' experiences of designing materials: A comparative case study. *Porta Linguarum*, 43, 167–182. <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi43.29379>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE.
- Littlejohn, A. (2011). The analysis of language teaching materials: Inside the Trojan Horse. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (2nd ed., pp. 179–211). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139042789.011>
- Long, C., Li, C., Huang, G., & Fu, J. (2024). How to better promote teaching? Unveiling the links between Professional Learning Communities and Intrinsic Motivation among Foreign Language Teachers. *Heliyon*, 10(16). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e36011>
- McGrath, I. (2013). *Teaching materials and the roles of EFL/ESL teachers: Practice and theory*. Bloomsbury Academic. A&C Black.
- Mehdizadeh, M., Pourhaji, M., & Derakhshan, A. (2024). Evolution of communities of practice, realignment of possible selves, and repositionings in EFL teacher professional identity development: A longitudinal case study. *The Language Learning Journal*, 52(3), 336–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2022.2163685>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Nation, I. S. P., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203870730>
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2015). *Teacher agency: An ecological approach*. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474219426>
- Tao, J., & Gao, X. (2017). Teacher agency and identity commitment in curricular reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 63, 346–355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.01.010>

- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences. SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506350288>
- Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2011). Materials development in language teaching (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139042789>
- Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2018). The complete guide to the theory and practice of materials development for language learning. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wang, L. (2022). English language teacher agency in response to curriculum reform in China: An ecological approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.935038>
- Widagsa, R., Senom, F., & Hutagalung, F. D. (2025). Teaching out-of-field: Exploring the non-specialist English language teachers' knowledge base and practices. *Cogent Education*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2514914>
- Zein, M. S. (2015). Preparing elementary English teachers: Innovations at pre-service level. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(6), 104–120. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n6.6>
- Zein, M. S. (2016). Government-based training agencies and the professional development of Indonesian teachers of English for Young Learners: Perspectives from complexity theory. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 42(2), 205–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2016.1143145>
- Zein, M. S. (2017). Elementary English education in Indonesia: Policy developments, current practices, and future prospects. *English Today*, 33(1), 53–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078416000407>
- Zhang, Q., Liu, Y., & Peng, J.-E. (2023). Unpacking EFL teachers' agency enacted in nested ecosystems in developing regions of Southern China. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2023.100775>
- Zhi, Y., & Yang, H. (2024). The predicting role of EFL/ESL teachers' self-efficacy and grit in their professional development. *Porta Linguarum. An International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, (42), 161–177. <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi42.27900>