

From Inland to Outland: Experiences of Non-native Expatriate Teachers Teaching in a Foreign Context

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ARTICLE INFO

o-ISSN:2502-6909

p-ISSN: 2502-9207

Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2019

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31327/jee.v4i1.898>

Received	:	23 March 2019
Reviewed	:	24 March 2019
Accepted	:	29 April 2019

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Suggestion for the Citation and Bibliography

Citation in text:

Dumlao & Mengorio (2019) or (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019)

Bibliography:

Dumlao, R. P. & Mengorio, T. (2019). From Inland to Outland: Experiences of Non-native Expatriate Teachers Teaching in a Foreign Context. *Journal of English Education*, 4(1), 24-37. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31327/jee.v4i1.898>

Abstract

The numbers of English language learners and limited domestic English language teachers have grown exponentially in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as to the ASEAN region over the past decades due to the demand of globalization. Given the huge cultural and linguistic diversity among learners, educating these populations of English language learners can be a challenging but also beneficial for foreign language teachers. This study aimed to analyse the experiences of fifteen Non-native English Speaking Foreign Teachers (NNEST) teaching in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. The results of this study suggested that although teachers' reasons in teaching English language in a foreign classroom were more extrinsic reasons rather than intrinsic and altruistic. NNEST recognized benefits of teaching in foreign classroom, namely, financial aspects, personal development, and building cultural awareness. Meanwhile, challenges were reported include as a non-native English speaking teachers in a foreign classroom, on the part of textbooks and curriculum, and cultural differences in the classroom. Implications were discussed in light of the findings and recommendations formulated for future research directions.

Keywords: ASEAN, education, benefits, challenges

A. Introduction

In recent decade, there has been a tremendous increase in teacher migration and mobility due to exponential increase in the number of learners learning English as a foreign language (Altbach, 2004; Butler, 2009; Cameron, 2003) because parents think that strong English background skills can offer their children better employment opportunities in the future. However, with these huge numbers of English learners, Native English Speaking Foreign Teacher (NESFT) and Domestic English Teachers (DET) are not enough to fill the demands (Medgyes, 2001). This opens an opportunity for Non-native English Speaking Foreign Teacher (NNEST) to teach in a foreign classroom (Graddol, 2006; Llurda, 2005a; McKay, 2000). Therefore, more and more NNEST are being enticed and attracted in teaching abroad due to some reasons (e.g. salary, employability, opportunities).

In Southeast Asian region context, Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam are the top countries who are continuously recruiting foreign-teachers, because of growing population of English language learners and limited English language domestic teacher (Hoang, 2010; Choi & Lee, 2008; Suwarsih, 2007; Warschauer, 2000) and also the situation of English policy where English is being learned as a foreign language. Several studies explained the importance of English in these countries such as: economic development (Chalapathi, 2007; Baker, 2012; Phillipson, 2009), globalization impact (Sitorus & Budhwar, 2003; Duflo, 2001), English for communication (Hiranburana, 2015) and educational purposes (Tsui, 2004). Correspondingly, this brings benefits to other English teachers around the world. For instance, teaching abroad can make internationally minded teachers (Cushner, 2007), intercultural development (Howard, 2003), and once foreign teachers returns home they are more likely to seek out multicultural experiences, careers and organizations (Merryfield, 2000; Gay, 2002) where their new acquired skills are needed.

Undeniably, teaching abroad is a significant credential that allows foreign teachers to develop new skills and facilitate the establishment of new peers that could result in future professional development. Conversely, the number of reports of teachers from abusive employers and blogs advising on how to break contract (e.g. ajarn.com, International labour organisations, UNESCO) is an indication of dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is essential to explore the experiences of foreign-teachers in general, non-native English speaking teachers in particular, while teaching in a foreign context, to know what is really happening in a foreign academic community.

In Asian studies of teacher education, most studies so far were concerning the experiences of student-teachers teaching abroad, relatively little to non-native English speaking teachers teaching in a foreign classroom apart from the study of Ulla (2018), where he studied about the perspective and challenges of Filipino teachers in Thailand. This study addressed the challenges facing NNEST while teaching in a foreign classroom, regardless of the type of school in which they work. This study did not totally investigate NESFT or NNEST dichotomy in foreign classroom; this was another area requiring research due to the ease information with sensitive issues. Knowing and understanding the experiences of NNEST abroad, this may guide international law makers, manpower agencies around the world, and policy maker in decision making towards internalization. This may also help curriculum designers to see if their courses offered and taught are aligned on what is really happening in the field, thus helps aspirant teachers who were planning to teach in an international arena. Additionally, the findings contributed to the research literature regarding the relationship between NNEST teachers' experiences, transference, adaptation, and integration into the classroom practice of beginning teachers in foreign classroom —an area in which research remains sparse.

B. Literature review

1. *Becoming a Foreign English Language Teacher*

Becoming a foreign teacher did not only convene with one decision even one reason, rather a product of complex decisions and a couple list of reasons (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Frederiksen, 2014; Ubalde, 2007). There were three primary reasons why NNEST foreign teachers go abroad; first extrinsic reason such as lower pay of salary in previous work, teachers status in their workplace, and perceived job dissatisfaction (Clark & Paran, 2007; DeVillar &

Jiang, 2012; Thornton & Reid, 2001; Evans, 2001; Khaopa, 2011; Thornton, Bricheno, & Reid, 2002); Second, intrinsic reason refers to personal development or exposure, career path, and international minded teachers (Moran, Kilpatrick, Dallat, & McClune, 2001; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008; Alpaugh, 2016; Nunan, 2012; Cushner, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2006a); and third, altruistic reasons like as seeing teaching as a globally worthwhile and desire to help society improves (Moran et al., 2001; (Smithers & Robinson, 2001a). Similarly, Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) reported basic factors why teachers left their teaching position such as compensation, preparation, and teaching condition. With that, becoming teacher in a foreign classroom was not that easy, as teachers need to have at least strong educational background, trainings, and workshops related to teaching field (Frederiksen, 2014; Halicioglu, 2015; Novio, 2014) before getting a teaching job.

Halicioglu (2015) outlined reasons on becoming teachers abroad. First, finding the optimal position and the type of school in which they wanted to work or according to their preferences which include workplace geographical location, language used of the learners, the school settings, and premises. Second, checking the employment contract specifically the information stipulated on it. Third, understanding foreign culture as it resulted to misunderstanding and the inability to communicate with other people in a working place. Lastly, knowing the curriculum of foreign school as pedagogical knowledge was necessary. Likewise, Garson (2005) reported that culture shock in teaching abroad might result to cultural bereavement, culture fatigue, cross-cultural adjustment, and stress. While Graves (2000) suggested that teachers should know foreign curriculum as it one of the primary guide in teaching abroad.

Given the fact that there was an increase demand for foreign English teachers, expectations for qualifications and professional credentials have risen too. It's no longer enough to be a foreign English speaker to be a truly effective foreign teacher, rather an indispensable qualification (Holopainen & Bjorkman, 2005; Hayden, 2002; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009) if non-native teacher applicant wanted to succeed in the process. While during the application process, educational attainments and professional trainings (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2006a), personal skills and resiliency (Suri, 2016), and intercultural communication skill (Mahon & Cushner, 2002) were evaluated. NNEST foreign teacher's applicant, English proficiency test is required as a part of the requirements (Novio, 2014). Nevertheless, teachers considering becoming English teacher in a foreign classroom to research carefully and prepare themselves, since the change of location and culture, the change in working environment and peers, and teaching context.

2. NNEST in a foreign classroom

In Teacher Education research, most study so far was concerning to the NNEST foreign-teachers' attitudes, employability abroad, linguistics competent, adaptability, and cultural competence, relatively little to NNEST foreign teachers particularly on their challenges and benefits in teaching abroad. For example, Frederiksen (2014) investigated four foreign - teachers working as EFL educators and their attitudes towards teaching as well as their roles in teaching the English language. The study revealed the reasons why these four teachers have chosen to work abroad are higher salary rates, better working conditions and for personal development. Similarly, Novio (2014) explored experiences of Filipino workers in Thailand, where she found out that compensation is the main factor why Filipinos are continuously finding work from being a tourist to teacher. This suggests that economic factor (Ubalde, 2007; Thornton & Reid, 2001) and self-perceived reason (Clark & Paran, 2007; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008; Evans, 2001) were the primary reasons why teachers were seeking employment abroad.

A study conducted by Halicioglu (2015) in Turkey affirmed that there were challenges facing NNEST teachers in teaching abroad, both professional challenges in their school workplace and personal challenges in their personal life. It suggests that such teachers embarking on a professional adventure overseas would benefit from careful consideration of the kind of school they will thrive in, mindful preparation for the move to a foreign country, and awareness that they will experience some form of culture shock. Further, different cultural setting enables NNEST foreign-teachers to develop instructional strategies (McKay, 2000) and classroom management that blend to the diverse classroom context and culturally responsive pedagogy

(Gay, 2002; Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2005). In addition to their professional challenges, the teachers often felt they were treated as second class, because of their accent. This study draws three challenges in teaching abroad such as professional challenges (Moussu & Lhurda, 2008; Medges, 2001; Novio, 2014; Pennycook, 2004), personal challenges (Briane, 2004; Clark & Paran, 2007 ; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Frederiksen, 2014; Lhurda, 2005a) , cultural challenges (Baker, 2008; Garson, 2005; Gay, 2002; Sherman, 2018). Likewise, more recent of NNES foreign-teachers while teaching abroad were conducted by Clark & Paran (2007) in Hongkong; and Alpaugh (2016) in South Korea. Both studies claim that there are challenges in teaching abroad in terms of employability and motivations; however, they do not report the challenges and benefits of teaching foreign classroom. Benefits while teaching abroad, on the other hand, were highlighted such as internationally minded teacher, teaching experience , professional development, and cultural awareness (Cushner, 2007; Frederiksen, 2014; Garson , 2005; Halicioglu , 2015; Medgyes , 2001; Merryfield, 2000; Novio, 2014).

Generally, most research so far concerning the NNES foreign- teachers' attitudes, employability abroad, linguistics competent, adaptability, and cultural competence, relatively little to NNES foreign teachers teaching particularly on their challenges and benefits in teaching abroad. This article will address the challenges facing to non-native English speaking teachers moving abroad for the first time, regardless of the type of school in which they work. The article does not totally investigate NEST/ NNEST dichotomy in foreign classroom; this is another area requiring research due to the ease with which sensitive issues.

To specify the context of this study, the following questions are given:

- a) What are the challenges and benefits that Non-native English Speaking Teachers encountered in teaching in a foreign classroom?
- b) How do they perceive themselves as a non-native English foreign teacher in a foreign classroom?

Knowing and understanding the experiences of non-native English speaking teachers abroad, it was then a vital blue print to guide international law makers, manpower agencies around the world, and policy maker in their policy making and decision making towards internalization. Additionally, the findings contributed to the research literature regarding the relationship between non-native English foreign teacher's experiences and their transference, adaptation, and integration into the classroom practice of beginning teachers in foreign classroom —an area in which research remains sparse.

It should be acknowledged in this present paper, however, that the terms – Native English Speaking Foreign Teacher 'NESFT' and Non-native English Speaking Foreign teacher 'NNEST' – are not unproblematic in this case, since they are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories, and neither can these two groups of teachers be neatly defined. It is therefore essential to acknowledge the problematic and essentialist nature of the native/non-native dichotomy (Medger, 2000). For the purpose of this study, however, the terms – 'NEFT' and 'NNEFT'- were still used in the study because these terms were widely used by the participants themselves and could serve as tools for investigation.

C. Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employs qualitative enquiry with content analysis as the main method in analysing the interview data. It was qualitative enquiry as it draws rich data, analyses the lived experiences, interests, and challenges (Silverman, 2000) of fifteen NNES foreign teachers in teaching abroad. The interview data obtained from online semi-structured interviews, reflective essay, and video/audio-recorded class observation were subjected to in depth content analysis (Mayring, 2000a) in order to answer the query of the paper. All the responses and answers were transcribed and were read many times in order to understand the content and the message,, the it was revisited and revised to add more detail. Data were categorized into themes and their codes were then transformed into sub-codes for more differentiation.

2. Participants

This study was conducted in three countries in Southeast Asian regions, namely, Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam, where fifteen NNEST from private and public educational institutes

participated in the research. The reason of choosing these countries was based on UNESCO (2015) report wherein these countries were the leading recruiter for teachers in Southeast Asia region. Hence, the researcher employed purposive sampling of the NNESFT based on the following criteria: has been teaching in those three countries for at least 2 years below in any levels of education (e. g. primary, secondary, and tertiary); holding a working permit to teach; holding a working visa; and holding a teachers' license from Professional Regulations Board (PRC) or any teachers accrediting organisations (e.g. TEFL, TESOL, or CELTA).

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender (M=Male; F=Female)	Qualification	Yrs. of teaching experience	Country of current position/Years	Sector
ET1	35	F	BSE-ENGLISH	13	Vietnam	Secondary
ET2	30	M	BSE-ENGLISH	9	Thailand	Secondary
ET3	32	F	BA-ENGLISH	10	Thailand	Secondary
ET4	27	F	MA-ELT	5	Indonesia	Secondary
ET5	29	M	BSE-ENGLISH	4	Indonesia	Secondary
ET6	29	F	MA-ELT	5	Vietnam	Secondary
ET7	30	F	BSE-ENGLISH	6	Thailand	Primary
ET8	23	M	BSE-ENGLISH	2	Thailand	Secondary
ET9	33	M	MA-ELT	8	Vietnam	Secondary
ET10	34	M	BSE-ENGLISH	13	Indonesia	Secondary
ET11	28	M	BSE-ENGLISH	6	Thailand	Secondary
ET12	27	M	BSE-ENGLISH	6	Indonesia	Secondary
ET13	24	F	MA-TESOL	2	Thailand	Secondary
ET14	33	F	PhD (ongoing)	7	Vietnam	Secondary
ET15	32	F	MA-Public Add	8	Thailand	Secondary

Note: ET refers to English Teacher
1 to 15 pertains to ET's code

3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Before conducting this study, the researcher identified the NNESFT participants through conferences (e. g. national and international), co-members in OFW (Overseas Filipino Workers) Facebook group page, co-lecturer, and colleagues referrals. After sorting the names and their teaching workplace, they were then contacted through their email-addresses and Facebook chat to confirm their participation in the study; and whether or they meet the said criteria. It was worth mentioning that NNESFT identified participants were all Filipinos. For ethical consideration, the researcher presented about the study and its purpose - where NNESFT participants agreed. It was worth mentioning that their participation was voluntarily, therefore, all data were taken from the foreign teacher-participants threatened confidentiality. The original NNESFT were 19; however, during the process of collecting the data, only 15 of them submitted and cooperated in the study.

Due to practicality, semi-structured individual interviews through Facebook chat (as face-to-face interviews were not possible) was conducted based on their convenient time. Semi-structured interviews were useful and appropriate for the study, as it provides a clear set of instructions for interviewers and can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data (Neuman, 2006; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). NNESFT participants answered preset open-ended questions related to teaching abroad (e.g. challenges, benefits, experiences, and reasons of teaching abroad). The questions were given to the participants before the actual interview for their perusal. Audio-phone record (APR) was utilized to record the interview, this means before transcription, the researchers listened the APR twice for clarification purposes. Hence, the participants were requested to either use English or their mother language in narrating their

responses. Fortunately, 90 % of the interview was done in English and the remaining percentage was translated.

D. Findings

The results of this study are presented and discussed under three themes and subthemes as reflected from the research questions, challenges, perceived benefits, experiences, and directly quoted interview excerpts were given below. Thus, pseudonyms are used for the NNEs foreign teachers' participants.

1. THEME 1: Reasons of teaching abroad

a. Extrinsic reason

In the interview, most of the NNEs foreign-teachers revealed that their situation in their country deems them to teach abroad. Thus, their salary abroad helped their family in their home country.

*My first aim why I moved abroad, it's because of salary. I was a government teacher in my country with the salary of 25,*** pesos. However, this money cannot help me to sustain the needs of my children, so since, I heard that if I go abroad I could earn more I then tried. [ET1]*

I was a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) assistant manager in the Philippines where I received good salary compared to other employees in the industry, but it's not enough to my family and even to me, so I decided to apply abroad. [ET2]

My salary in the Philippines is not enough to pay the tuition fees of my children so I decided to work here hoping to earn good money. [ET3]

From the responses of the foreign-teachers when asked about their reasons in teaching abroad, it is clear that their current situations deem them to apply for teaching job abroad.

b. Intrinsic and Altruistic Reason

Another subtheme that was formed from the data interview was self-perceived reason. Most of the NNEs foreign teacher participants stated that teaching abroad was a way to develop and widen their horizon in the field of teaching.

The reason why I moved here, it is because I want to see myself teaching outside of my comfort zone, I think it's a good opportunity to emerge myself in other learning environments. [ET4]

Actually, my primary reason why I considered teaching abroad was because I want to learn new skills. Not only will I get new skills at my new job abroad, but I think I will also learn new soft skills, from international communication skills to networking. [ET5]

I want to expand my horizon in my field, because I believe that teaching abroad is not about earning money but it's all about creating myself for better me. I believe also in the concept of internalisations, so I applied here. [ET6]

The interview findings also revealed that in addition to developing and widening their horizon in the field. Some NNEs foreign teacher participants believed about internalization and by teaching abroad they would enhance their communication skill.

2. THEME 2: Challenges

a. Teaching English Language Abroad as Non-Native Speaker

In the interview, most of the Non-native-English-speaking foreign teacher participants revealed that teaching English language abroad as Non-native speaker was a challenging, as "NNEs/NNEs dichotomy" concept deems them to get lower salary and discriminative.

I am not comparing myself with that of "farangs", but being NNEs teachers in my school was really challenging, because if you are NNEs it is expected that you can get lower salary and if you are "white" you can get more, even though I have strong teaching qualification. In this case, it discriminates my profession and even as a NNEs in a foreign classroom. [ET4]

Working in a foreign classroom as NNES teacher would be extremely rarity. I am always facing an uphill battle in terms of perception of my students' parents. I feel that their parents have a general disliking toward NNES foreign-teachers teaching their kids. [ET2]

I am always struggling because of my status as NNES teacher, my director was always telling me to have more teaching loads because NNES and they are afraid to lose the NES teachers in our school. [ET7]

From the responses of the NNESFT participants when asked about their challenges in teaching abroad, it was clear that "NNESFT or NESFT dichotomy" concept was still rampant in the field as it affects the teacher's motivation and discriminative in their profession.

b. Cultural shock

Another subtheme that was formed from the data interview was culture shock. Most of the NNESFT participants mentioned that culture shock that leads to miscommunication, lack of cultural awareness, and cultural sensitivity issues.

The non-confrontational trait in my workplace sometime leads to miscommunication. I believe it was part of their culture, but it's quite difficult to handle resulting to unconsciousness whether I am doing the right teaching or not. [ET8]

In my first day of teaching in my workplace, I was assigned to stay in the gate before 7: 30 am to greet the students and check their uniform whether it is well-presented or not; and also their sacks and hair style were checked. It really takes time for me to embrace the culture. It is really opposite in my previous workplace in my country wherein we do checking inside of the classroom and the monitoring of hair style and others will be checked inside the classroom. [ET9]

I had a culture shocked when I first entered in Indonesia and teach. First, I always like to shake hands with new people I meet. All of which often causes debate and comfortableness especially Muslim female. [ET10]

In my first day of teaching, I am so eager to teach and engage them in learning process, however, I found out that my students are culturally passive, silent and shy in the class. Sometime, they do not participate in the class activities even I tried my best to engage them in the learning process. [ET14]

These challenges may also be the reasons of miscommunication and cultural understanding breakdown. Their answers may draw a frame about cultural awareness in teaching abroad and prepare TESOL teachers/designer on this matter.

c. Curriculum and Textbooks

Another subtheme that was formed from the data interview was Curriculum and Textbooks. Most of the NNESFT participants revealed that Curriculum and Textbooks were one of the most challenging in a foreign classroom.

Particularly, I was shocked to know that at year 5 still do not know about consonant and vowels. Personally, I haven't explored that much of their curriculum, but this encounter needs to be addressed. [ET13]

Based on my experienced, I have been always struggling on modifying my lesson, because some topics in the textbook are not inclined to the competencies that are needed to be developed. And the textbooks provided to my students are not all inclined to the competencies. [ET12]

I feel challenging about the curriculum, because sometime I do not know exactly the skills that I need to teach. Though there are much freedom in us, but am always afraid because my students have a national exam, and am not sure whether am teaching the right track that is within the scope of their exam or not. [ET11]

The Textbooks used for teaching English in my class are written by English authors and targeted for English children. The covers and first page of have been translated into their mother language but there isn't a single word of their mother language in the entire rest of the book. One thing, are the examples in their textbook, for instance, the vegetables, fruits, and animals mentioned in these books do not occur naturally in Thailand. [ET9]

However, one participant drew attention on the communicative language teaching (CLT), [ET10] said,

I think I don't have any problem in terms of employing the curriculum as I was able to use the communicative language teaching in my classroom, the only problem that I have been experiencing is the text book as it seems not aligned to the competencies of my students. It is , in other words, too demanding.

From the interview data above, it was noticeable that NNESFT participants had a problem in implementing the curriculum in a foreign classroom resulting to misconception about the target objectives, not suitable to the learners need, and competencies were not inclined to the textbook that being implemented in the classroom.

3. THEME 3: Perceived Benefits

Three subthemes were found to be recurring in the interview data, namely; teaching abroad for financial aspects, self-development, and building cultural awareness.

a. Financial aspects

The interview data revealed that financial aspect was considered the primary benefits in working abroad. These benefits have drawn into two ways; financial assistance to a family member; and shifting a living status.

There are many benefits I have earned now particularly allowing my sister and brother to finish their studies and now she's in Bangkok also teaching kindergarten student and the other one soon to fly to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Then, I was able to renovate the house in the Philippines and buy new things and be able to set some earned money to an investment to which I was assisted by my financial advisor. [ET4]

Teaching abroad helps me a lot, especially on helping to uplift my family from poverty. Now, I have a small bangus farm and sugarcane lot in the Philippines managed by my father. [ET8]

Actually working abroad helps me to build my own house and I bought some properties such as, small farm and a fish pond.[ET12]

I went here abroad to get higher salary so that I could help my family and also to send my younger siblings to school. [ET14]

b. Personal development

The interview findings revealed that teaching abroad was sort of personal growth, particularly on self-preparedness for future goal, employability, improving potential, improving self-knowledge and their outlook towards internalization.

I am novice teachers here; I feel that teaching abroad is not just about money, but it's all about preparing me for a big future. It is a big future for me, because I can see now that most of the countries around the world are aiming for internalization and I want to be part of it. So, this is a good chance for me to develop and equip myself. [ET9]

Actually, teaching abroad helps me to improve my knowledge and even my potentials in terms of handling different curriculum. I think it's a good opportunity to try new concept and would help soon for my future endeavours. [ET12]

I became fluent in speaking English and learnt to deal with people of different cultural backgrounds harmoniously and also employability. [ET7]

In terms of communication skills, I have learned not to insist what i though and believe is right, learned to accept things are different and people are not all nice and we cannot expect them to be so. Still we have to be nice as much as we can. [ET2]

c. Building Cultural Awareness

Another subtheme that was formed from the data interview was building cultural awareness. Most of the foreign teacher-participants revealed that building cultural awareness was also a benefit in teaching abroad. They perceived that building cultural awareness could help them to handle diverse class in the future, thus get them prepared towards internalization.

I come across people with different cultures, languages, ideas, their beliefs, and also methods of working. This way meeting different people from different countries, I have got to learn how to tackle people of heterogeneous nature. This would add to my skill of handling a large scale of international schools with many diverse teachers in the future.[ET11]

I am working in an International school, so my students are diverse in nature (e.g. their L1 is English, some are British, and some are French, among others). In this case, I learned how to build my awareness on different cultures of my students so I easily address their needs. [ET3]

I am working in an International program of one government schools and most of my learners are Thai and few are foreigners. Hence, I have learned how to emerge multilingual learners, by doing that, it builds my awareness on different cultural identities and how they formed themselves in the classroom. [ET5]

Giving the challenges that these foreign-teachers encountered in teaching abroad, number of them affirmed that teaching abroad can have a positive effect and impact on their employability and financial aspect.

E. Discussion

This study explored the lived experiences, reasons of teaching abroad, challenges, and perceive benefits of 15 NNESFT in three countries in Southeast Asian regions, namely, Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Among the reasons that foreign-teachers had in teaching abroad were extrinsic reason where their current situation in their country deems them to apply abroad and intrinsic reason which foreign-teachers perceived that teaching abroad could help them to develop and widen themselves in the field. These reasons were frequently noticeable to most migrant workers around world that working in a foreign country enables them to have international experiences which had brought about tangible impact whether financial aspect or personal development aspect (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Frederiksen, 2014; Nunan, 2012; Alpaugh, 2016), NNES foreign teacher participants mentioned that their earnings in their country was lower than to their earnings abroad. This implies that extrinsic reason intervened into their decision making in seeking employment abroad (Clark&Paran, 2007; Frederiksen, 2014; Ubalde, 2007).

Consequently, teaching abroad studies also means facing some challenges. The studies by Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop (2004); Briane (2004); Clark & Paran (2007); DeVillar & Jiang (2008); Frederiksen (2014); Halicioglu (2015); Lhurda (2005), Moussu & Lhurda (2008), Medgyes (2001), Novio (2014), Pennycook (2004) exposed a number of common problems that a foreign-teacher has to deal with when teaching in a foreign classroom. The findings of this also disclosed some challenges that these foreign-teachers faced namely, teaching English language abroad as NNESFT, cultural differences, and curriculum and textbooks. NNESFT participants stated that “NNESFT / NESFT dichotomy “concept was noticeable in their workplace resulting for them to get lower salary. This concept affected NNESFTs’ self-confidence, feel discriminated, and they could feel demotivated to fully exercise their duties as an English teacher as this concept gives boundaries among teachers in the field (Khaopa, 2011; Lhurda, 2005; Medges, 2001; Moussu&Lhurda, 2008). In this way, the anti-NNES bias became roller phenomena in the teaching field resulting a negative impact to both learners’ attitudes and perception in language learning and thus to NNES teachers’ self-belief as professional (Beijaard et al., 2004; Clark &Paran, 2007). Conversely, Medgyes (2001) and Pennycook (2004) suggested that there was no need to reject or ignore the dichotomy, but rather it should be scrutinized carefully. Further, It

should be noted that when NNESFTs have felt the equal treatment and no discrimination within their profession, they will be able to help the global shortage of teachers (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Halicioglu, 2015) and feel motivated to teach as their role is highlighted in the context of English as an international language (Novio, 2014). Likewise, recruiting foreign teachers without looking to NES/NNES criteria and be hired according to their qualifications could create a good environment in the teaching field (Khaopa, 2010; Thornton & Reid, 2001; Yoon, 2014). In this study, NNES foreign-teachers admitted that native/non-native dichotomy affects their profession as teachers abroad. Medgyes (2001) emphasized that this situation should be scrutinized carefully. Thus, policy makers, international organizations for teachers, and even researchers need to study and see how this problem affects globalization and in language learning process. NNES foreign teacher participants reported their experiences in different working cultures compared to their home country including schools, students and teaching/learning approaches. Although some studies in the literature affirmed that teaching in different cultures enables NNES foreign-teachers to develop strategies in instruction and classroom management that blend to the diverse classroom setting and culturally responsive pedagogy; thereby, opening the door to mutually constructive educational experiences (Gay, 2002; McKay, 2000; Wang, et al., 2015).

Meanwhile, NNESFT as participants of the study mentioned that culture shock was one of their challenges in working abroad. This implies that these NNES foreign-teachers did not search or learn cultural awareness before applying abroad, particularly in knowing their learners' cultural backgrounds. This situation is common, however, this may bring two introspections; it might bring about greater opportunities for learning by creating more opportunities for students to bring their own cultural background and experiences into the learning process; or, it may bring harmful effect in teaching process as cultural sensitivity is important particularly to those preserved country and those country who has strong culture (Sherman, 2018). Nevertheless, cultural awareness should be still taken into account as part of the process in seeking employment abroad because it gives NNESFT applicants a broader idea about one's culture.

The following findings in the study revealed that NNESFT participants had difficulties in handling and implementing curriculum and textbooks because of its complexity, not aligned to the competencies and needs of the learners, and not suitable to the context. Textbooks and curriculum were the most important blue print in learning process, as it represented a useful resource for both teachers as a course designers and learners as persons who are acquiring the English language (Graves 2000; McKay, 2000). However, textbooks and curriculum were designed by the authorities which need to be followed (Coulter & Abney, 2009). It was then the responsibility of NNES foreign teacher to adapt and be flexible with the curriculum (Cushner, 2007; Cushner & Mahon, 2002). There was, however, one participant who mentioned that he is aware about communicative language teaching (CLT) method, but the problem was how he utilized the method, as it was not aligned to the textbook, as well as the competencies of the students.

Despite the reported reasons and challenges encountered by a number of NNESFT teacher, they still drawn a positive impact of teaching and working abroad. Most of them admitted that teaching abroad can benefit them personally and professionally. Some of these benefits include: financial aspects (financial assistance for their families in their home country); personal development (extrinsic and intrinsic personal development); and building their cultural awareness. These perceived benefits as found in this study are consistent with the findings of Cushner (2007); Frederiksen (2014); Garson (2005); Halicioglu (2015); Medgyes (2001); Merryfield (2000); and Novio (2014). Indeed, teaching abroad was a great opportunity for NNES foreign-teachers to experience diverse classroom, experience of different people, enhance to gain experience of other cultures and working styles, which is very important in a global community of teaching English language. Gaining experience on international exposure early in their career can give them a competitive edge, as well as being very personally rewarding. More specially, of NNESFT who are teaching in international contexts would have the edge in addressing needs of learners particularly in multicultural contexts that are essentials for improving students learning in a diverse classroom and also in global community (Cushner 2007).

Although this study claimed strengths in the presentation of NNESFTs' experiences, reasons, challenges, and perceived benefits in teaching in a foreign classroom, there were limitations with regards to participants and focus. As this study has only 15 NNESFT participants, the data and findings may not provide as sound representation of all NNESFT abroad. Studies of NNESFT with different focus, with greater number of NNES foreign teacher and with different methodologies are highly recommended. Future studies may compare the experiences of NNESFT with other teachers in the ASEAN region and also to the global community where NNESFT teacher are present in the community. Implications for ASEAN policy for immigrant workers may arise.

F. Conclusion

Understanding and knowing the benefits and challenges of NNESFT in a foreign classroom does not only improve the educational system in international context and migration policy for foreign teachers, it also allows curriculum designers of TESOL and educationalist to see if the curriculum that were being taught inside the classroom are in lined with what is really happening in the field, thus it prepares teachers. This study attempted to identify the experiences, reasons, challenges, and perceived benefits of 15 NNESFT foreign teachers teaching in Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The findings indicated that although the NNESFT foreign teachers as participants of the study held an extrinsic and intrinsic reasons in teaching abroad, most of them were motivated to teach abroad because of their situation deems them to do so and number of them stated that teaching abroad is way to develop and widen their horizon in the field. Some challenges that were reported include teaching English language abroad as Non-native speaker, cultural differences, and in curriculum and textbooks.

The findings of this study are not only relevant in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand context; but for all countries in ASEAN region and elsewhere in the world. It is therefore important to consider the following key points. First, when NNESFT teachers considering in becoming teacher abroad, NNESFT teachers should know the educational system where they want to teach. So, they could build an idea on what the curriculum and textbook look like (Halicioglu, 2015). Hence, trainings, workshops, and orientation on how to handle these stuffs are needed before seeking employment abroad. It is also noted that curriculum designers should revisit their curriculum, if their current curriculum is in lined with transnational setting. This would help future teacher graduates who are planning to teach abroad and also for preparing student-teachers to be globally competitive teachers. Second, to develop teachers' cultural understanding within the classroom context both national and international setting as it is one important way to close the achievement gap is to ensure that teachers are culturally competent so that they can provide their students with the educational experience they deserve. Third, for schools administrators in foreign country should give the deserve salary of NNESFT according to their qualification, not by their status. This will eliminate the discrimination on their profession NNESFT will be able to full fill their professions that is why, they could fully exercise their duties as teachers without feeling discriminative. By considering these key points, NNESFT could help more the globally competitive teachers and would help the contiguous transformation towards global community.

G. References

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