



A Research Review on Curriculum for English Language Teacher Education: A Bibliometric Analysis from Scopus Database

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ABSTRACT

The widespread influence of English as an international language in the age of globalization has brought about substantial transformations in English language teacher education (ELTE) curricula and spurred increased research on this subject. However, a comprehensive analysis of the research status of ELTE curricula is still absent. To address this gap, the current study employs bibliometric analysis, a method for exploring and analyzing large volumes of scientific data, to construct an intellectual structure of research on the topic. Using data retrieved from the Scopus Database, comprising 267 publications, the study involves bibliometric analyses such as citation, co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence. The results indicate a noteworthy increase in research volume over the last five years, with a predominant presence of publications from the Global North in terms of geographical distribution. Additionally, the most cited works primarily focus on innovative pedagogical methods in ELTE. Notably, the study identifies 10 clusters of topics representing newly emerged themes in ELTE curricula research. The findings underscore the significance of investigating ELTE curricula, positioning it as a promising research area. Therefore, this study is recommended as a foundational resource for future researchers exploring related subjects.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid globalization of English language teaching and learning together with the limited availability of teacher-education curricula has intensified the need for a comprehensive re-evaluation of English language teacher education curricula worldwide (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Marlina, 2021; Selvi & Yazan, 2021). This urgency, particularly, is fueled by the increasing role of English as a global lingua franca, necessitating curricula that are not only linguistically robust but also culturally sensitive and adaptable to diverse educational contexts. Additionally, as teacher educators' role in the process of innovation has long been confirmed (Blair, 2015; Dewey, 2015; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017; Rose & Galloway, 2021) and as English penetrates deeper into various socio-cultural fabrics, it becomes imperative for teacher training programs to evolve, ensuring that educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge to navigate and address the complexities of teaching English in a globally connected world. This re-evaluation is vital for aligning curricula with the dynamic demands of global communication and multicultural classrooms.

So far, there have been several studies which applied bibliometrics methods to explore intellectual maps for related topics such as teacher education and sustainability (Gavinolla et al., 2023), trends and issues in English language teaching (Aziz et al., 2024; Emock Bakelak & Reyes Rodríguez, 2022; Seraj et al., 2024). However, to the best of our knowledge, there has not been a bibliometric study about the curriculum for English language teacher education. Recognizing this imperative, this study embarks on a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to map the

landscape of scholarly discourse in this domain. It leverages the extensive Scopus Database to identify trends, patterns, and focal areas in the curriculum development of English language teacher education. It aims to provide a detailed overview of the evolution, scope, and direction of academic research in this field. By systematically analyzing the existing literature, this study seeks to uncover the pivotal themes, influential authors, and key developments that have shaped the trajectory of English language teacher education over recent decades.

Specifically, our research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the quantity, growth model, and geographical distribution of publications on the curriculum of English language teacher training programs?
2. Who are the notable authors and works in the field of the curriculum of English language teacher training programs?
3. What are the key themes found in the existing literature and works on the curriculum of English language teacher training programs?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *The concept of curriculum*

The curriculum is viewed as the fundamental factor that shapes the presence and growth of a school, consequently influencing the educational system and society as a whole. With a long history of investigation, the concept of a curriculum takes on different definitions based on the chosen perspective. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2018), a popular characterization of a curriculum is either an action plan or a written document outlining strategies to attain specific objectives. Additionally, a curriculum is seen as a developmental process involving (1) the delineation of educational philosophy, (2) assessment of learners' abilities, (3) determination of teaching methods, (4) execution of plans and strategies, (5) selection of assessment tools, and (6) continuous adjustment (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Moreover, a curriculum is perceived either as an experiential journey that learners must undergo with the guidance of teachers (Caswell and Campbell, 1935) or as a field of study encompassing foundational knowledge areas with research, theories, rules, and experts to interpret that knowledge (Reid, 1990; Tanner & Tanner, 1980).

2.2. *The concepts of English language teaching*

The primary objective of the English language teacher education program is to educate students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become English language teachers in various educational levels and environments. Therefore, in terms of concept, the bachelor's degree program in English language teacher education can be understood as a "comprehensive, systematic plan encompassing all teaching and educational activities taking place within a school over a specified period. The curriculum includes the purpose, objectives, program outcomes, program content, forms of instructional organization, and forms of assessment to train a team of English language teachers with sufficient knowledge, skills, and attitudes to carry out English teaching at different educational levels and diverse environments." (Nguyen & Tran, 2020).

2.3. *Knowledge base, approaches and current trends of English language teacher education*

Knowledge base

Examining the knowledge foundation of teachers in general, Shuman (as cited in Wright, 2010) suggests the inclusion of subject matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational context, and knowledge of the meaning, purpose, and values of education.

In the field of English language teacher education, although earlier proposals on the knowledge base for English language teacher education included perspectives on contextual factors, most still relied on the apprenticeship model, arguing that for effective teaching, teachers need a specific body of knowledge acquired from theoretical systems and general methods that can be applied in any situation. However, since the 1990s, numerous studies have emphasized the need to construct a clearer theoretical framework for English language teacher education based on the application of new theoretical systems, such as sociocultural theory or constructivist theory. Exemplifying this are works by Lafayette (1993), Day (1991), Roberts (1998), Richards (1998) with specific proposals on the knowledge system required for English language teachers. Table 1 summarizes the knowledge systems proposed by some prominent authors in English language teacher education programs.

Table 1. Perspectives on the knowledge of the English language teacher education curriculum

Lafayette (1993)	Day (1991)	Roberts (1998)	Richards (1998)
Language Proficiency	Content Knowledge	Content Knowledge	Teaching Theory
Civilization and Culture	Pedagogical Knowledge	Pedagogical Content Knowledge	Pedagogical Skills
Language Analysis	Pedagogical Content Knowledge	General Content Knowledge	Communication Skills
	Supplementary Knowledge	Program Knowledge	Subject Matter Expertise
		Contextual Knowledge	Pedagogical Reasoning and Decision Making
		Process Knowledge	Contextual Knowledge

Approaches in English language teacher education

According to the synthesis by authors Ranjbari et al. (2020), teacher training methods have evolved since the 1980s, transitioning from knowledge transmission to knowledge construction. This shift emphasizes the need for learners to integrate theory and research with experiential learning and reflection from practical classroom experience. The focus of this teacher education has shifted from content to the learner (teacher education students) and the learning process. Therefore, the training model needs to move from apprenticeship to a new model that allows teachers to examine the context and needs with a dialectical perspective and create appropriate pedagogical methods.

The study by Hadi (2019) on language proficiency and pedagogical competence training for English teachers summarizes the essence of various approaches in English teacher training, as manifested through training methods, as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Approaches in English Teacher Training and the Nature of Curricula Aimed at Developing Pedagogical and Language Skills

Approaches	The essence of the approach observed in the training of pedagogical and language skills for student teachers can be summarized as follows:
Behavioral/ Training Approach	Rigid/Lacking flexibility ⇒ in the process of learning teaching methods Guided/Theory-based ⇒ in presentation or teaching Top-down ⇒ in the relationship between teachers and students Predetermined ⇒ in program orientation
Humanistic/ Developmental Approach	Reflective and collaborative ⇒ in the process of learning teaching methods Exploratory/Learning-based ⇒ in presentation or teaching Bottom-up ⇒ in the relationship between teachers and students Permissive/Empowering ⇒ in program orientation

Up to now English teacher training has shifted paradigm from positivism to constructivism. This led to important changes in the design and development of English teacher training programs including an emphasis on student learning and helping them become thinking teachers. Many contemplative activities are programmed into learning experiences, often recorded in writing in the form of a diary or journal. It also requires a commitment to students' inquiry into their own beliefs and stories, as well as into their own teaching and learning contexts. This led to the adaptation of pedagogical approaches from adult education to the central idea of learning.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Bibliometric analysis method

Bibliometric analysis is a commonly utilized research approach for assessing and evaluating scientific publications within a specific field or based on certain characteristics (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019). This method involves using statistical measures, analysis, and overall assessment of authors, journals, universities, countries, and keywords networks through citation data and frequency analysis techniques (Munim et al., 2020). In this study, the authors employ citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, and co-occurrence analysis of research keywords. Citation analysis helps estimate the impact of documents, authors, or journals by examining citation rates in published studies on the topic. Co-authorship analysis provides evidence of collaboration and reveals the social structure within the field (Zupic & Čater, 2013). Co-occurrence analysis of keywords assesses the significance of a topic or content if two scientific documents share the occurrence of the same keyword (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019).

3.2. Data

Our study utilizes information extracted from scientific publications cataloged on Scopus, a highly regarded scientific database extensively employed by researchers (Do et al., 2021; Pham et al., 2021). Scopus is recognized as a prominent scientific database known for employing consistent criteria in the selection of documents for inclusion in its index (Hallinger and Nguyen, 2020). Furthermore, to uphold the quality of the resource searching process, we implemented the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) system, following its four-step procedure (Moher et al., 2009).

The primary focus of this study is the English language teacher education curriculum. Due to the nuances of the English language, the research team extended its scope to encompass various spellings, parts of speech, conjugations, and synonyms associated with the topic. Additionally, keywords with similar or related meanings were incorporated. In summary, the research team utilized the following search query to retrieve data from Scopus.

TITLE-ABS-KEY (("English language teacher education" OR "Pre-service English language teacher education" OR "EFL Pre-service Teacher education" OR "TESOL Pre-service Teacher education" OR "TEFL Pre-service Teacher education" OR "ELT Pre-service Teacher education" OR "ESL Pre-service Teacher education" OR "TESL Pre-service Teacher education" OR "English teacher education" OR "TESOL teacher education" OR "TEFL teacher education" OR "ELT teacher education" OR "ESL teacher education" OR "TESL teacher education" OR "TESOL teacher preparation" OR "TEFL teacher preparation" OR "ELT teacher preparation" OR "ESL teacher preparation" OR "TESL teacher preparation" OR "teachers of English education" OR "ESL educators" OR "ELT educators" OR "TEFL educators" OR "TESOL educators" OR "TESL educators") AND ("curriculum" OR "curricula" OR "program" OR "programs" OR "programme" OR "programmes" OR "course" OR "courses"))

With the above search syntax, the search yielded 315 publications related to the topic of English language teacher education curriculum. Following the application of screening steps and data cleaning according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) system, which consists of four steps, the total number of remaining scientific works for quantitative directory analysis is 267. VOS viewer was then employed to analyse the filtered data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantity, growth pattern, and geographical distribution

According to the analysis of the research publication volume, it can be observed that the first publication on the topic of English language teacher education curriculum appeared in 1986 with the title "Teacher preparation needs in TESOL: The results of an international survey" by Henrichsen (1986). Considering the growth rate, based on the results in Figure 1, knowledge development on English language teacher education curriculum can be divided into two phases.

(1) 1983 - 2007: *A period of low interest*, during which the topic of English language teacher education curriculum was relatively neglected by scholars. Although there were some points in time, such as 1998, 2000, or 2006, when the number of publications increased compared to preceding and subsequent years, it was not significantly noteworthy. During this 24-year period, only 23 works were published, constituting approximately 8.6% of the total from 1983 to 2022.

(2) 2008 - 2022: *A period of development*, during which the topic of English language teacher education curriculum increasingly attracted the attention of scholars and exhibited relatively stable growth over the years.

Particularly, the number of publications has experienced a notable surge in the last four years, averaging about 35 works per year. In total, within this 14-year span, 244 works were published, constituting approximately 81.4% of the total from 1983 to 2022.

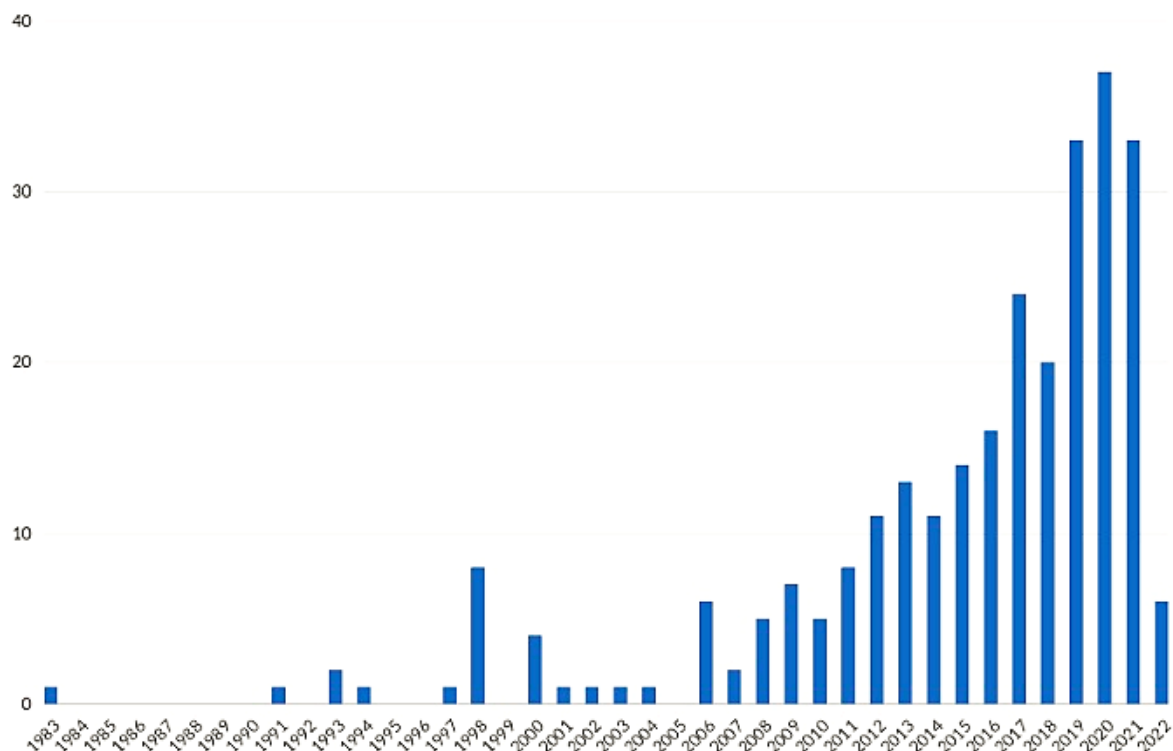


Figure 1. Growth of scientific publications on English teacher training curriculum

Table 3 illustrates the geographical distribution of countries with scientific publications related to the English language teacher education curriculum. Regarding research productivity, it can be observed that the countries with the highest number of publications on this topic are developed nations such as the United States, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Meanwhile, notable publishing representatives in the Americas include Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia. In Asia, Indonesia, Vietnam, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Malaysia stand out as prominent research contributors although their publication volume is still considerably lower than the top four countries.

Table 3. Countries with the Highest Number of publications and total citations on English language teacher education between 1983-2022

Ranks	Countries	NP	TC
1	United States	50	288
2	Turkey	19	65
3	United Kingdom	18	57
4	Australia	15	61
5	Indonesia	11	93
6	Chile	10	26
7	Argentina	8	14
8	Iran	7	30

9	Vietnam	6	15
10	South Korea	5	14
11	HongKong	5	11
12	Malaysia	5	7
13	Brazil	5	4
14	Spain	4	36
15	Colombia	4	7

(Note: NP: Number of publication; TC: Total citation)

The most influential papers

Table 4. List of the most-cited 10 studies on English language teacher education curriculum in the period 1983-2022

Rank	Title	Author(s)	Source	YP	TC
1	Building an online community: Student teachers' perceptions on the advantages of using social networking services in a teacher education program	Habibi A., Mukminin A., Riyanto Y., Prasajo L.D., Sulistiyo U., Sofwan M., & Saudagar F.	Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education	2017	48
2	Implementing the flipped classroom in teacher education: Evidence from Turkey	Kurt G.	Educational Technology and Society	2019	43
3	Toward identity-oriented teacher education: Critical autoethnographic narrative	Yazan B.	TESOL Journal	2019	41
4	Flipped learning in TESOL: definitions, approaches, and implementation	Bauer-Ramazani C., Graney J.M., Marshall H.W., & Sabieh C.	TESOL Journal	2016	39
5	Teachers' integration of multimodality into classroom practices for English language learners	Choi J., & Yi Y.	TESOL Journal	2016	33
6	Multimodal pedagogies for teacher education in TESOL	Yi Y., Angay-Crowder T.	TESOL Quarterly	2016	27
7	"Why need hiding?" Translingual (Re) orientations in TESOL teacher education	Flores N., & Aneja G.	Research in the Teaching of English	2017	21
8	Factors affecting the professional development of elementary English teachers	Zein S.	Professional Development in Education	2016	18
9	The role of pedagogical mentoring in virtual exchange	O'Dowd R., Sauro S., & Spector-Cohen E.	TESOL Quarterly	2019	14

10	Local thoughts on global ideas: pre- and in-service TESOL practitioners' attitudes to the pedagogical implications of the globalization of English	Cameron A., & Galloway N.	RELC Journal	2019	14
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Regarding the most influential works on the topic of the English language teacher education curriculum, Table 4 presents the top 10 most cited research studies from 1983 to 2022. As indicated, all of these studies were published from 2016 onwards, with 2016 and 2019 being the two years with the highest citations (each with 4 publications). Among them, the paper "Building an online community: Student teachers' perceptions on the advantages of using social networking services in a teacher education program" by Habibi and colleagues (Habibi et al., 2018) is the most cited publication. The remaining notable research works cover various aspects of the English language teacher education curriculum, such as teaching methods, instructional tools, the construction of the teacher's identity, the pedagogical significance of the global nature of English, and factors influencing the professional development of English language teachers.

Main topics in current research on English language teacher education curriculum

Exploring popular topics and trends in research on the English language teacher education curriculum, the analysis of keyword co-occurrence using VOSviewer software reveals the most frequently appearing keywords, as shown in the table 5.

Table 5. List of top 10 most popular keywords in research on English language teacher education curriculum from 1983-2022

Rank	Key words	Frequency	Link strength
1	Teacher education	32	52
2	English language teacher education	17	19
3	English teaching	11	19
4	Teacher identity	7	17
5	Professional development	6	17
6	Teaching English for speakers of other languages	6	12
7	Teacher	6	9
8	Reflective practice	5	10
9	Student teachers	5	7
10	English as second language	4	10

In addition, the concentration of keywords into specific clusters reflects research interests in the English language teacher education curriculum across 10 thematic groups as shown in Figure 2, including: (1) Training forms and content in teacher education, such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, academic English, and academic writing; (2) internationalization and bilingual phenomena, translanguaging in teacher education; (3) training methods and professional development for teachers, such as action research, experiential practice, and feedback; (4) integration of technology in teacher education, online learning, and the impact of pandemics; (5) implementing internship programs and building trust, identity in English teacher education; (6) narrative constructivist training programs, internship programs, teacher identity; (7) evaluating the effectiveness of English teacher education programs, language proficiency; (8) teacher knowledge, critical thinking in teacher education; (9) teaching English and experiential learning; and (10) content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge.

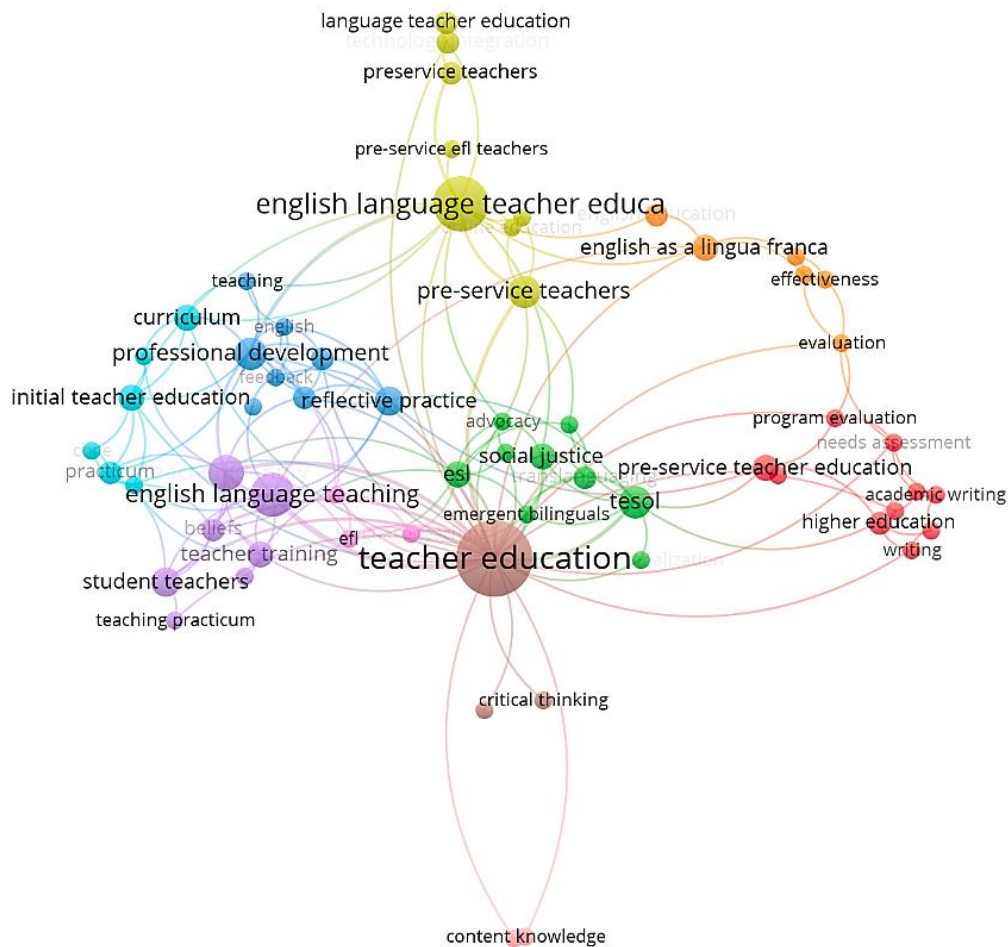


Figure 2. Map of keywords by co-occurrence analysis for the period 1983-2022

4.4. Discussion

The results show a clear two-phase development in the field of English language teacher education curriculum. Initially, there was minimal interest (1983-2007), followed by a period of substantial growth (2008-2022). This trend could be seen as the evolving educational needs and the globalization of English language teaching. The figures are the explanation for the shift in the roles of English from a foreign language to an international language.

Regarding geographical distribution, the global North countries: The United States, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Australia led in publication volumes, indicating a concentration of research in developed countries with a rich history of studies in the field. However, it can not be denied that Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam, South Korea, HongKong and Malaysia can be seen as “emerging research centers”, suggesting the need for more inclusive research that incorporates perspectives from a broader range of countries, especially those where English is not the first language.

The predominance of developed countries in this research area might reflect their advanced economic and technological resources, this correlation between resources and research output clarify the focus on application of technologies in teaching. Moreover, the dramatic increase in publications, especially in recent years, indicates a growing academic interest in curriculum development for English language teacher education. This trend might reflect broader shifts in educational policies and practices in response to global demands for English proficiency.

The high citation counts of surveyed studies, especially from 2016 and 2019, suggest a growing academic interest in areas like online community building, teaching methods, instructional tools, teacher identity construction, the global nature of English, and professional development of English teachers. This trend underscores the dynamic changes in curriculum design and the increasing relevance of technology and global perspectives in English language teacher education.

The key topics identified reflect a strong focus on both the professional development and personal identity formation of English teachers. The emphasis on “Reflective Practice” and “Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages” indicates a shift towards more self-aware, culturally sensitive teaching approaches. These themes, especially when coupled with technological integration and internationalization, suggest a dynamic and evolving field that is responding to the global demands and challenges in English language teaching which collectively shape the direction of curriculum development and teacher training in a globalized educational landscape.

5. CONCLUSION

In this research, we provide a systematic scientific overview of research related to the English language teacher education curriculum. The results derived from the analysis of 267 studies extracted from the Scopus database showed a significant increase in the number of publications over the last five years of the research period, indicating a growing interest in the topic of curriculum for English language teacher education. The geographical distribution of studies on this subject presented the prominence of Global North countries but also depicted the emergence of those in Asia. For the most cited papers, most were published from 2016 onward with topics focusing on innovative pedagogical methods in educating English language teachers and the application of technology in ELTE curricula. Trending themes in recent studies derived from co-occurrence analysis of keywords portrayed a colorful picture of topics.

The findings from this bibliometric analysis provide insights into research trends, influential publications, and emerging themes within the field under study. These insights can guide researchers in aligning their work with evolving trends, inform funding agencies about critical areas for investment, and assist journal editors in curating content that aligns with the field’s trajectory. Furthermore, the analysis offers a robust framework for evaluating the development and dissemination of knowledge, contributing to strategic decision-making in academic and institutional planning.

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