

Comparison of English Language Teaching In Asia: Status, Policy and Curriculum

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini merupakan sebuah Penelitian Literatur atau Kajian Pustaka terhadap Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di beberapa negara utama di Benua Asia. Sejumlah aspek, seperti status, kebijakan dan kurikulum pengajaran bahasa Inggris di negara-negara tersebut akan diperbandingkan. Status bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua atau sebagai bahasa asing di negara-negara Asia ini memengaruhi penerapan kebijakan dan pelaksanaan kurikulum pengajaran bahasa Inggris. Demikian juga halnya dengan metode dan strategi pengajaran yang diterapkan di kelas.

Kata Kunci: bahasa asing, bahasa kedua, kurikulum Bahasa Inggris

Abstract

This paper presents a literature review regarding English language instruction in several major Asian countries. It compares various aspects—such as the status of English, relevant policies, and teaching curricula—across these nations. The status of English (whether as a second language or a foreign language) influences policy implementation and curriculum delivery, as well as the teaching methods and strategies employed in the classroom.

Keywords: *foreign language, second language, English language curriculum*

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is constantly changing in various aspects and stages. The emerging global economy is competitive and interdependent. This reflects the availability of modern communication and production technology in most parts of the world. so we should care about the future of English in the 21st century. According to *The Economist*, English continues to be the world's standard language and there are no major threats to English or to its global popularity.

The spread of English has been growing fast for more than 40 years with the increasing number of speakers, even up to 1.4 billion people in countries where English has official status. One in five people in the world speaks English with some levels of competence. And in 2000, one in five in one billion people also learns English. More than 70% of the world's scientists read English books. about 85% of the letters circulating in the world

are written in English. and 90% of all information on electronic systems are stored in English. In 2010, the number of people who speaks English as a second or foreign language outnumbered its native speakers. English is used for more purposes than ever before. David Crystal (1997) commented that no language has yet been so widespread and spoken by so many people as English. English is an international language taught in schools around the world. The increasing use of English has made it more rooted in every society.

In such countries as India, Singapore, Malaysia and Pakistan, English is used as a second language. These countries and many other countries in Africa and North America were once under the British rule. People in these countries have become accustomed to speaking English. They do not find any difficulties in making conversation in English even though the British government left the countries some decades ago. For countries that had never been the British colonies, the use of English is something new to them. Therefore, English is not considered as second language but as foreign language.

Method of teaching English as a second language and as a foreign language differs slightly. In a second language class, an English teacher does not have to use a lot of illustrations, pictures, or videos, whereas in a foreign language class, students are not familiar with English at all. Teachers must use a lot of illustrations, pictures, videos and sound recordings to help students to listen, speak, read, and write in English well.

The introduction of internet technology has made the English teaching and learning experience become easier. Teachers can communicate and share their experiences with other teachers, and download games, grammar exercises and lesson plans. Likewise, the availability of English learning software has helped many English learners around the world to master the language better and faster.

In the future, English will no longer be a foreign language. English will be a second or even a first language. More parents whose native language is not English prefer to speak to their children in English. This can be seen among migrants living in the United States, Canada and Australia. This phenomenon can also be seen in Singapore and Malaysia. Whether you like it or not, English has become a part of our daily lives.

2. METHOD OF RESEARCH

This article presents the findings of a literature review. Literature-based research involves a series of activities—such as gathering bibliographic data, reading, note-taking, and processing research materials—that do not require fieldwork. It entails an in-depth analysis of various sources, including books, scholarly journals, and official documents. By synthesizing these diverse sources, a robust conceptual framework and theoretical foundation are established for the topic under study.

3. THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Status of the English Language In Asian Countries

The status of English in Asia can be categorized as a second language (ESL) and as a foreign language (EFL). However, grouping them is not easy, because this is related to the problem of attitudes of English speakers and considerations of political, social, cultural and economic ideology (Greenbaum, 1996). The survey results illustrate that English is used as a second language (ESL) in Malaysia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, while English is used as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, Korea, China, Thailand and Israel. Meanwhile English is used as a second language as well as a foreign language in Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and the UAE. In the latter countries, the context of ESL is considered, but English is not fully used for intra-regional or intra-national communication, as shown in the survey that the majority of Hong Kong people, who are more than 95% Chinese ethnic tend to be reluctant to use English completely. for intraethnic communication (something that become characteristic of EFL).

All countries / regions where English is spoken as a second language are former British colonies where English is colonialist language (e.g., Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, India, and the UAE). Is this the impact of the colonial period? The answer could be "yes"; however, the effects of these countries' pragmatic needs cannot be ignored. On the other hand, all Asian countries where English is not used for daily communication outside of the classroom; only studied as a foreign language, are countries that are not colonies of Britain or America. This does not mean that in these countries English is not as important as it is in British or American colonies.

Currently, most countries give high priority to English proficiency and English language education for career development or prosperity as well as nation-building and globalization. English continues to spread throughout the world.

3.2. The Policy of English Teaching in Asian Schools

With the diversity of official languages and sociolinguistic profile of Asian nations, what makes communication possible among these countries is the use of English. Although in the beginning each country has its own specific reasons for teaching English, English is now spreading in the region for very pragmatic reasons. Therefore, there is a great deal of interest in learning English in the region and the percentage of speakers in some East Asian countries is estimated to be very high (Kachru, 1996). In China, its users reach 200 -300 millions.

The most relating to this topic is the status of English in each of the 15 countries or country system. English is considered as a second language in some countries and as a foreign language in others. ESL and EFL are simply terms for convenience and are often used in the English language teaching literature although not for an individual level. However, in the ESL setting, children start learning English as early as possible, at elementary level and even in early childhood education. Except for Malaysia, English is a medium of instruction in several subjects, apart from the language itself. The following will discuss a glimpse of several countries in Asia regarding the position and role of the English language, policies and systems of English education and their goals.

a. Brunei Darussalam

ESL in Brunei is studied from grade 1 to 3 of elementary school. From grade 4 to 6, English functions as language of instruction as Malaysian language. Since grade 4 of elementary school, Brunei has applied bilingual program. This policy strengthens the position of English in Brunei. In terms of practice, in the past 10 years Brunei has strengthened its English language teaching program through a large-scale project called RELA (Reading and Language Acquisition) which started in 1989 with the first grade students, the first batch of students taught by RELA, to grade 4 students in 1992. There was restlessness that the traditional English teaching method for the upper classes of elementary school should be able to take advantage of the benefits of the lower classes of elementary school, a continuation of the project into upper classes of elementary school which was upgraded in 1993, called upper RELA. The phasing of the project from lower class to upper classes of elementary school is an important factor in ensuring continuity. RELA at SD level is based on two main strategies; book-sharing techniques and language experience approaches. The book sharing technique uses large books to repeatedly teach the initial reading skills while the language experience approach tries to integrate the 4 language skills. These principles were incorporated into the 1996 English Syllabus for Elementary School and the 1998 primary English textbook series.

b. Cambodia

Currently, the teaching of English and French as a foreign language is provided in the secondary school curriculum, with English adapted to its official status as a recognized subject since September 1990. Between the two languages, English became more popular among Cambodians who attended school. However, according to Chamnan and Cornish (1997: 38) citing a 1992 report, there were more teachers who were trained in French than the ones trained in English for 468 secondary schools at that time. The use of teachers who were assigned from teaching French to teaching English is definitely a wise choice. The framework of English curriculum for secondary schools was developed in 1991 by the Ministry of Education with foreign assistance and textbooks were also prepared, guided and used in secondary schools in 1994. In the field of ELT, reconstructive efforts were involved, including the hard task of teacher training, design and curriculum formulation of English for secondary schools and universities and the production of teaching materials. In the teaching methodology, the Grammar Translation method is reportedly used which involves rote-reproduction and structural English learning.

The report adds that "the learning is teacher centered and the only language used in the classroom is structured and text/teacher controlled. In support of different approaches to teaching English in Cambodian secondary schools, the report looks at modern integrated communicative language learning technologies that support students to take more control over their own learning and use the language in real situations. According to Chamnan and Cornish (in Kam, 2002), in Cambodia there are

two models of providing English language development and classroom methods for teachers: long-term training and short-term retraining. To meet urgent needs, short-term retraining programs are essential. One long-term, 4-year English teacher training program, based at the University of Phnom Penh, aims to provide advanced and upper classes elementary school teachers.

c. China

Foreign languages continue to be taught in schools and since the implementation of the RRC's open door policy, the importance of learning foreign languages is now fully recognized. Today, English is the most important foreign language. The study of English is seen as very important for acquiring technological knowledge and increasing international trade. Although English is taught in urban elementary schools, then, English is nationally a compulsory subject from SMP to SMA. By the end of senior high school, the students are expected to master "basic phonetics and grammar", a number of vocabulary words, idioms and phrases and proficiency in four language skills. However, the real interest in learning English in junior high school, for example, only started in the modernization period under Deng Xiao Ping (1977 - 1993).

In teaching English, what is described as text-centered and audio-lingual grammar translation methods applied. As Ross (1992; 224) said, that the main goal of foreign language education in secondary schools in China is to cultivate students with two knowledge bases; basic linguistic and the ability to use that knowledge in a truly communicative context. In any case, in the 1993 English syllabus, content was separated from old political positions and became primarily focused on economic goals. The new guidelines made it clear that the English curriculum is meant to teach communication in English. The teachers were advised to use a variety of teaching techniques to use communicative competence.

The result is still a kind of eclecticism / choice. As Admason and Morris said (in Kam, 2002) "as long as the general focus is on communication, the four language skills will get attention; use of mother tongue is allowed; and also there are elements of audiolingualism in the exercises used. These elements refer to the encouragement of a series of Junior High School English Textbooks for China and Senior High School English Textbooks for China, which may, for the first time, be the product of collaborative efforts between Chinese authors, foreign experts and foreign bodies such as Longman International and UNDP. This book series has been used by most secondary schools in the country.

d. Hong Kong

English has always been considered the language of British colonialist in Hong Kong and although currently English has a strong colonial influence, there is still a "no social or cultural role for English ... among the Hong Kong Chinese" (Johnson, 1994: 182). For example, unlike Singapore, Chinese Hong Kong do not speak English among them unless some in the group do not speak Cantonese. The Hong Kong government's

position on the role of Chinese and English in the education system has been consistent and remains being subordinate to the Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region). Cantonese continues to be used as a medium of instruction in Chinese-language schools and English in other types of schools, although with the change in Hongkon's status in 1997, Mandarin Chinese (Putonghua) continues / is increasingly being used in intergroup education and communication among Chinese people itself.

Since September 1998, only 114 out of 400 secondary schools use English as a medium of instruction. But, in fact, even though the schools which claim to use English media, they also have teachers who code-mix in English and Cantonese. According to one study (Johnson, 1991), the proportion of classroom discussions in secondary schools that was done in English fell from 43% in 1981 to 15% in 1990. In 1995, the Target-Oriented Curriculum of Studies program for English was introduced to schools. The same framework has been applied to other major subjects that set directions for teaching, learning and assessment. In the case of English, these subject objectives establish the main direction for learning English, whereas three dimensional goals define English learning objectives for interpersonal communication, for developing and applying knowledge and for responding to and giving expression to experiences.

e. Indonesia

English is the first foreign language in Indonesia and has long been studied only in secondary school. However, in the 1994 revised curriculum, English was included as a subject in the elementary school curriculum, starting at grade 4. But only public elementary schools in cities and private schools which had English teachers, so that rural schools did not provide English in their teaching schedules because of lack of teachers who can teach it. English is taught two hours a week. What has become important in ELT in Indonesia in recent years is the re-orientation of ELT targets. In the past, English skills were developed in order of priority: reading, listening, writing and speaking. But in the 1994 curriculum English curriculum, which adopted the principle of communicative approach, more attention than before was focused on developing speaking and listening skills in elementary school and speaking and reading skills in secondary schools (Huda, 1993). Meanwhile, the current level of Indonesian literacy is reported to be more than 84% with the success of national language teaching, so that teaching English is considered less successful.

Dardjowidjojo observed that Indonesia must pay expensive price for the success of having a national language because this success was achieved with the expense of having a very low proficiency in English. Although this 'low ability' has been attributed to the lack of seriousness in English teaching methodology (from grammar-centered methodology to communicative teaching), Dardjowidjojo blamed the lack of student motivation, students' poor attitudes in learning English and the lack of teachers who are competent enough in English. As shown in the survey (Huda, 1994), this perception is probably changing. In private primary schools, the ELT situation is much different. Sadtono (1997) reported about a school in Surabaya that taught English since grade 1

"I find children can write rather good essays when they were at grade 5 and 6. The success is due to the teacher using an integrated approach, namely teaching elementary school science subject through hands-on experience using English, lots of audio-visual material as well as illustrated story books for reading ". "While ELT works very well in private schools, according to Abdul Hamid (2001), the introduction of ELT at the SD stage is still limited to a few selected primary schools in urban areas.

f. Japan

English is still the most important foreign language in Japanese schools and is studied in high schools and universities. Koike (in Kam, 2002) stated that "English has played a special role in Japan since the Meiji Restoration in 1867 as a means of facilitating the westernization and modernization of the country. However, the relationship with English has fluctuated between "waves of nationalism and westernization". In Japan, most students start learning English at grade 1 of junior high school and continue until 6 years later, when at senior high school. Because college entrance exams are so competitive, students usually work hard to keep their English good. Since many students say they learn English for intercultural communication, very few actually use English, according to Honna, which attaches a lack of confidence to speak flawlessly, the Japanese tendency to "hesitate to interact with English users until, as we hear, they can be really fluent in that language "(Japanese people don't want to use English if they are not fluent). Honna said that "the purpose of this native speaking should be accounted for for the backwardness of the nation (in English). There may not be as many communicative activities in English in the average classes in Japanese schools. LoCastro has characterized Japanese language class ELT methodology in public school systems as usually based on a Grammar Translation Approach - "there is endless repetition and aloud reading with little evidence that students understand the text. In some cases, Japanese may be used in this type of class. Things should change at the end of the lesson. In the new guide (1989/1990) for the Japanese senior high school and junior high school English program, goals are stated as (for junior high school) to develop basic skills to understand and express oneself in a foreign language (English) and a willingness to communicate in English and also influences the interest in that language and the country's culture, which ultimately lays the foundation for international understanding.

The same goal is stated for senior high school - namely communication to understand the information given and the intent shown by others to express the thoughts and opinions of the students themselves. Based on these guidelines, there is an increased emphasis on oral communication in English classrooms. Teachers are expected to use a communicative language teaching approach but according to Honna, the sociocultural variables of the Japanese situation must be taken into account if the new English curriculum is to be of any use at all, especially when many teachers themselves lack a high level of communicative competence in English. In a further development, teaching English might be introduced by 2003 into all public elementary schools in Japan, to be incorporated into subjects for international understanding. The aim is to

develop communicative skills using practical English without emphasizing language grammar. Meanwhile, many elementary schools have used teaching rubric *international undersanding* to teach English conversations to children with Japanese language teachers who teach alongside native English speakers as assistant language teachers (ALTs).

g. South Korea

Teaching English has a long history in the Republic of Korea, dating back to the early 1880s. According to Shim and Baik (in Kam, 2002), English has always been the first foreign language in South Korea. In terms of the teaching methodology used, the foreign language curriculum has undergone six revisions since the 1950s. Understandably, because of the country's very strong examination culture, the traditional Grammar Translation methodology was in effect until the 1970s. The fifth revision of foreign language curriculum in 1987 emphasized communicative competence. By the time of its 6th revision in 1995, the English curriculum began to place more emphasis on listening and speaking, on daily expressions and utterances than on specific grammar knowledge. Also, at that time, the influence of a notional-functional approach on language curriculum design was felt in the teaching of English in South Korea (Nier, 1994). Subsequent developments in 1994 recognized the need for teaching English at elementary school as well. Thus, extra-curricular English education is included for the upper grade level of elementary school (grades 4 to 6). Then in 1997, English became a compulsory subject for grade 3, according to a report, while those in grade 4 to 6 continued to receive English through extracurricular additions.

h. Laos

When Laos was founded in 1975, Russian language became popular. So that to date, there are four foreign languages for students to choose: English, French, German and Russian language. What is given in each school depends on the availability of teachers. Currently English is the most popular foreign language. As Laos moved from a centralized economy to a market economy, English became increasingly popular as a subject. This sudden change of direction has created predictable problems from a shortage of English teachers, a lack of teaching materials in English apart from materials taken from abroad and the absence of an English curriculum that is properly designed to meet the real needs of the system. To meet the shortage of teachers, local teachers trained to teach Russian and French language were deployed and retrained to teach English. English is taught in high schools and universities and its objectives are very specific. English is taught so that students can read English books, follow developments abroad, especially in the IT field, prepare them to study abroad if they have the opportunity to go to continue their studies and generally improve their chances of working in foreign companies/investments who enter Laos.

i. Malaysia

English for all intents and purposes is a second language in Malaysia although it is only taught as a subject in the school curriculum. The 1971 New Education Policy and the 1995 education law have reaffirmed English as the second most important language "a status originally agreed upon in the 1956 'Razak Report'. Although English was not language of instruction in schools for one time, it was already widely used in several city schools outside the classroom. English is a compulsory subject in all schools in Malaysia from elementary to senior high school level. The final statement that English as a subject studied at advanced level will be introduced into the sixth form or pre-university curriculum to fill the two-year gap until English is learned again at university. So, there will be a greater continuation in the English curriculum from elementary level to university. At the elementary level, the curriculum aims to "equip students with basic skills and knowledge of English in such a way as to enable them to communicate both orally and in writing, within and outside of school. Emphasis at the first year is on speech or speaking skills and in later years, on literacy skills.

All skills must be taught in context. Although there is no written methodology in elementary school teaching, what is important is that students are involved in various language activities so that language learning becomes active and experiential in nature. The 1993 English Syllabus revision for elementary school restated that ELT was aimed at to equip students with basic skills and knowledge of English to enable them to communicate orally in writing within and outside of school. Gaudart (in Kam, 2002) believed that "the major change in approach among TESL teachers in Malaysia over the past few years was the result of a growing trend in recognizing that the learning process is so important if not more important than the teaching process. The result is teaching methods and techniques that are more learner-centered. One of the results of this approach to English language learning in Malaysia is the provision of self-access centers since 1990, which spread to elementary schools. In these self-access centers, independent learning is encouraged and learning a language like English has become less daunting. Two developments in the ELT curriculum in recent years can be noted. One is the inclusion of literature in English language teaching; a plan that has been carried out several stages into various forms or grade levels for two last year (2001-2002). Another development was the development of a special ELT curriculum for the category of special schools called smart schools; a project launched in 2000. Smart schools have been identified as "one of the main ship / carrier guides of the Corridor Super Multimedia project" (Matnor 1997). The curriculum emphasizes critical and creative teaching, and learning and technology, and is self-stimulating, self-directed and self-access — which means that "a student at level 3 who succeeds very well in English will be able do a level 6 English test.

j. Myanmar

Although the history of ELT in Myanmar is an interesting one, there is little information published about its development in Myanmar after 1985. With independence from Britain in 1948, English gradually lost its position with respect to the national language, particularly its status in schools and higher education in that country. Since 1958 and

more effectively since 1965 when all schools nationwide were nationalized, English was only studied as a subject from grade 5 at elementary school. As a result, the level of English in schools has gradually decreased. Towards the end of the 1970s, the decline of the English language caused the government paid more attention and in an effort to find solutions to the problem, a series of seminars on ELT were held between 1978 and 1982. It seems that these two initiatives were taking place. According to Allott (1985), "the change that had the greatest national impact was the introduction of English since June 1981, teaching of English from grade 1 in all elementary schools" Furthermore, in the academic year 1986/1987, English was reintroduced as the language of instruction for majors of Science and Economics in middle and high schools (Kyu in Kam 2002). According to Kyu, "this created a great amount of pressure and concern for teachers and staff who felt that they themselves have advanced through an education system where English is not the language of instruction. Furthermore, the 1-year diploma in English was introduced "to achieve the Ministry of Education's goal of raising the standard of English for those who use it for teaching purposes both as school subject at secondary schools and as a language of instruction (Kyu 1993).

k. The Philippines

English is considered as second language in the Philippines. The Philippines adopts a bilingual education policy at all levels of schooling. The two languages are Filipino and English. English was maintained as the language of international communication and Filipino was disseminated as a language of literacy, a linguistic symbol of national identity and unity and a language of scientific discourse "(Nier in Kam, 2002). In a more specific term, English is the language of instruction for Science and Math subjects while Filipino is for all other subjects in schools. In the elementary school English curriculum, the development of skills in 4 skills is emphasized. As a subject, English is taught approximately five hours per week. Handbooks and manuals on teaching English at elementary school are provided but not a single written approach. However, there is generally a "departure from audiolingual principles and methods" and more creative teachers have used a variety of activities of communicative type. Castillo reported that the ideas of "whole language approach" and "interactive language teaching" have become popular, by adding that "in many elementary school class, as well as junior and senior school classes, language teachers are highly innovative, good at problem-solving and selective, and combine a variety of teaching methods and techniques of a language.

l. Singapore

Children in Singapore learn English from very early age even before attending elementary school. At elementary school age, children learn and use both English and their mother tongue. English is language of instruction for all subjects except mother tongues (Chinese, Malay, Tamil and other Indian languages) and moral education. Singapore introduced a revised English curriculum in 1991 which was slowly being introduced into the school system. The new curriculum represented a change from the traditional one which is described as structural because it is based primarily on the

learning of separated materials in English grammar. The 1991 curriculum provided teachers with flexibility in teaching language and supported a more holistic view of English learning, emphasizing the integration of four language skills. Most of the four skill teaching is theme-based. Then, at a broader level, the integration of language skills and a focus on meaning was achieved through contextualization.

After 10 years, the new English curriculum was introduced in schools since January 2001. While this new curriculum incorporated many features of the 1991 curriculum, the new curriculum emphasized the use of language, especially the use of language to acquire and disseminate information, for literary and expression responses and for social interaction. This curriculum was based on what is called in official documents as models/ examples of language use. There is also preparation for teaching text types (from printed learning resources to electronic ones) and grammar studies - "students must understand how English functions in discourse/ text, sentences, clauses, and words (Curriculum Planning and Development Division 2001). So in the end, the elementary and secondary school grade levels, as the document stated, "there will be plenty of opportunities for listening, reading, viewing, speaking and writing to help students become competent; critical and confident listeners-readers as well as good expressive and confident English speakers and writers "

m. Taiwan

Among the foreign languages taught in high schools and universities in Taiwan, English is the most popular. According to Chen (in Kam, 2002), although English played a dual function in Taiwan, the stated goal of English in the Taiwanese education system is limited to learning English for "further studies", for example in abroad. the latest, the reason for the existence of English is to enable students in high schools and universities get access to advances in science and technology in the west, a reason which is based on economics. Chen thought that "the lack of functional approach to English classes may be among main reasons why students who have studied English in school for years still find dysfunctional in English when communicating with non-Chinese people". Several years ago, Tsao (1998) thought that "in the near future" English might be included as a subject in the upper-classes elementary school curriculum which would be consistent with what is being debated or what has happened to other education systems in the region. Towards that time, English learning in elementary school activities in Taiwan had been lasting but not long yet before it was functioning as an alternative extracurricular activity. As predicted, since September 2001, English has become a compulsory subject since grade 5 with duration of two hours per week. This is a major challenge in foreign language policy.

n. Thailand

In Thailand, English is the foreign language and the most popular language taught in schools. Significantly, English is now considered more than just a means of gaining access to modern technology; English is "the key to professional advancement too" (Kam, 2002). So, getting more presently, in the 1996 school curriculum, ELT has been

introduced to grade 1 of elementary school. However, the fact is that only urban and private elementary schools which can implement this policy fully. At elementary level, the goal of ELT is to enable students to develop four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing which are essential for communication. In addition, a 'positive attitude towards English as an international language is also encouraged (NIER 1994). At the practical level of the curriculum, the emphasis is on the use of English in the spoken field and on "understanding of simple English for everyday use". However, in English subjects, "the teaching medium is mainly Thai".

o. Vietnam

In today's Vietnamese schools, the foreign languages taught at upper classes of junior high school are Russian, French and English language. Among these, English is the most popular. Understandably, the traditional method of Grammar Translation has long been used in ELT and the focus of teaching English in Vietnam is reading skill. However, recent developments provide a different perspective on ELT in Vietnam. As stated by As Xuan Thao (in Kam, 2002) that "to learn a foreign language for communicative purposes, as stated by the current Vietnamese education authorities, the learner must develop not only linguistic competence but also social and communicative competence in language" Then, Xuan Thao added, "New textbooks, up-to-date resources on the TEFL methodology and on new sociolinguistics were introduced in Vietnam. With this introduction, some teachers have started to realize the importance of sociolinguistic features in their introduction of new language to their learners. These teachers have realized the importance of developing the students' social competence in using language. "However, the problems remain. According to Xuan Thao, textbooks written by native English speakers tend to assume that Vietnamese learners can understand the basic culture of English, while the text books written by Vietnamese material writers tended to misinterpret the cultural context of English texts and expressions. The main point is that, the reality of large classes (50 to 70 classmates) has made methodological innovations difficult to implement. Moreover, the availability of English teachers is still very limited; partly because English graduates from local colleges have always avoided a career as a teacher. The problems with the availability of teachers and the lack of textbooks and teaching materials, especially in the remote regions of Vietnam make any effort to improve ELT in Vietnam a special challenge for education authorities.

3.3. Curriculum of English Teaching in Asia

3.3.1. Beginning Class of Teaching English

The countries or regions where English is taught since first grade are all countries with ESL status except Taipei. Although the survey results show that in Japan and Indonesia English is officially taught in seventh grade, but it is only taught in private elementary schools. In Korea, basic English education began two levels earlier since 2009, which illustrates the government's efforts to strengthen English education for national competition in the globalization era. For more details, consider the table 1.

Table 1. The Starting Class of Learning English

ENGLISH STARTED	COUNTRY
Class 1	Hong Kong (including kindergarten dan preschool education), Taipei in Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the UAE
Class 3	Korea, China, 9 cities in Taiwan
Class 4	Israel
Class 6	Iran, Vietnam
Class 7	Jepang, Indonesia

Source: Choi and Lie (2008)

The survey results show that most Asian countries start teaching English since first grade, which is earlier than most European countries. This can be explained by the evidence that these Asian countries were British or American colonies, except for the cases of Thailand and Taipei.

b. Number of English Subject Hours

Teaching English in basic education in Asian countries in the context of ESL is typically 4 to 10 hours per week (Hong Kong, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Pakistan). In Thailand, which is the context of EFL, English is taught since the first grade, as shown in the previous table and the hours of English lesson (about 3 to 4 hours per week) are more than any other Asian countries in EFL context which is only 1 to 4 hours per week. The difference in the number of hours of English lessons per week between countries in the context of ESL and that of EFL get reduced in secondary schools, although still more for the context of ESL.

Table 2. The Duration of Learning English per week

COUNTRY	DURATION OF ENGLISH SUBJECT PER WEEK
Korea	2 - 4 hours
Cina	3 - 5 hours
Hong Kong	4 - 10 hours
Taiwan	2 - 5 hours
Jepang	3 - 5 hours
Indonesia	2 - 5 hours
Malaysia	5 hours
Philipina	4 - 10 hours
Singapura	4 - 6 hours
Thailand	3 - 4 j hours
Vietnam	3 hours
Bangladesh	6 j hours
India	3 - 5 hours
Pakistan	6 hours

Srilanka	5 hours
Israel	2 – 5 hours
UAE	4 – 6 hours
Iran	2- 3 hours

Source: Choi and Lie (2008)

What can be observed from the table above is that the teaching hours of English for secondary schools in Vietnam and Iran are relatively small compared to other Asian countries (2-3 hours). This is probably due to political factors. For example, Vietnam was a France colony until 1954, when French language was used as language of instruction in schools. And then had strong bond with the Soviet Union until the mid-1980s which meant the obligation of learning Russian language in the country. Since then, the need for English had emerged, especially for the assurance of individual jobs as well as nation-building as part of the impact of the implementation of free market reform 'Doi Moi' (Renovation Policy) in 1986.

Compared to other Asian countries in the context of EFL (maximum 912 hours from grade 7 to 12 in Indonesia), but in Vietnam it is still small (700 hours from grade 6 to 12). In contrast to the teaching hours of English at elementary and secondary schools, then at the higher level, the number of English lesson hours also varies.

c. National English Curriculum

The national curriculum serves as the basic principles and guidelines of what and how to teach or study, and what to assess, for example by detailing learning content, standards of achievement and methods of teaching and testing. The national curriculum is usually considered as an effective and efficient way to achieve national education goals. The survey results show that all Asian countries have national curriculum for elementary school English, junior high school English and senior high school English, as shown in the table 3.

Table 3. The Implementation of English Curriculum

COUNTRY	THE AVAILABLE CURRICULUM
Philippines	Grade 1 to grade 10
Taiwan (Taipei and 9 other cities), Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, UAE	Grade 1 to grade 12
Hong Kong	Class 1 to Class 13
Pakistan	Class 1 through college
Korean	Grade 3 to Grade 12
Chinese	Class 3 through college
Israel	Grade 4 through Grade 12
Vietnam and Iran	Grade 6 to Grade 12
Japan, Indonesia and Taiwan	Class 7 to grade 12

Source: Choi and Lie (2008)

The national curriculum covers English from first grade to the highest grade of high school (grade 10, 12 or 13) in countries where English was introduced since first grade (such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Pakistan). Interestingly, in Pakistan, the National English curriculum is available up to undergraduate level. In Korea, China, Israel, Vietnam, Iran, Japan, Indonesia and Taiwan (areas other than Taipei and 9 cities), the English curriculum is available from the level at which English is introduced to the end of secondary education, except for China. The Chinese national curriculum is available up to tertiary institutions. This shows the central control of Chinese government over higher education, which is illustrated by the fact that China has a professional committee which is responsible for it.

Elementary and secondary English classes are essentially based on the national English curriculum in all Asian countries except India, where the curriculum can be revised depending on the available natural resources and local culture. This curriculum can also be revised in Taiwan (Taipei and 9 other cities) and Indonesian teachers can develop their own syllabus. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, the national curriculum is primarily for public schools.

d. College and School Text Book

Textbooks are a fundamental vehicle for achieving educational goals, because their benefits have been proven in language learning and education (Lamie in Choi & Lee, 2008). Textbooks provide basic learning content and class activities. The survey results on English textbooks show that English textbooks for elementary school, junior high school and senior high school levels are issued by the government nationally, especially for public schools in 12 Asian countries: Korea, China, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Israel. This means central government control toward the teaching of English, as in Korean context. However, in six other countries (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and the UAE), English textbooks appear to be open to free competition for commercial books. Textbooks were also compiled by the teachers in Singapore.

Compared to English textbooks for elementary school, junior high school and senior high school levels, no Asian countries use national textbooks at university level, except Sri Lanka. Each university selects a commercial textbook or develops its own textbook (e.g. Korea, India and UAE); or also teachers or English majors which develop their own teaching materials (Korea, China, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh and Israel). These findings suggest a lack of strict government control over the teaching of English, as illustrated in the quality control of advanced English teachers in Asia (Choi & Lee, 2007). English textbooks for elementary school, junior high school and senior high school levels are selected by regional or national government bodies (e.g. the National Institute of Education in Sri Lanka) in seven countries that use national textbooks: China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Iran.

In other Asian countries where textbooks are commercial goods (commercialized) including books issued by the government, then the English teachers for elementary school, junior high school and senior high school levels have the right to textbook selection (e.g Korea, Taiwan and Japan); school bodies/ agents with or without teachers (e.g in Indonesia), school principals (e.g Philippines) heads of study program (e.g in Singapore) or designated book selection committees (such as in Thailand) are also the main textbook selectors. At universities, English textbooks are mostly selected by universities, university lecturers or campus councils (e.g in Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) by heads of study program with or without faculty members (e.g. China, Philippines, Singapore, and Israel); by supervisors of English Teaching program (e.g in Korea and UAE); by an appointed bukuteks selection committee (e.g Thailand); or by faculty members or teachers (e.g Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, India and Iran).

National publishers, the government or government agencies are the main authors of elementary, junior high and high school English text books in China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the UAE. In Pakistan it is generally implemented by the publishers. In Bangladesh, textbook authors are usually English language professors and teachers, while in India it is generally done only by English teachers. On the other hand, elementary school, junior high school and senior high school textbooks are written by English language professors (including English, literature or linguistics education books) and by English teachers in six Asian countries: Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia. and Singapore. In Indonesia, however, English teachers usually only compile textbooks for secondary schools, while in Singapore, apart from professors and English teachers, the native speakers are also involved in composing textbooks. English textbooks in Thailand are usually compiled by professors or publishers. In Hong Kong, the Philippines and Israel, the compilers of textbooks are English teachers, especially experienced teachers.

For English language textbooks at universities, they are generally compiled by professors, as done in 3 main countries of East Asia, some ASEAN countries including Indonesia and 3 main countries of South Asia, and Israel. However, international publishers are also sometimes involved, as happened in Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia. Meanwhile in China, the professors usually cooperate with national publishers. For Taiwan and Iran, most of the authors of university's English textbooks are native speakers. Meanwhile, for Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the UAE, the compilation of college textbooks is fully done by publishers. These findings indicate that in Asian countries, the compilation of English textbooks is generally under direct government control and there is a lack of autonomy for teachers in the compilation of their own teaching materials for primary and secondary school textbooks. In contrast, a more bottom-up approach is used in the compilation and selection of university level English textbooks.

e. Teaching English with English

English is taught in English (referred to as TETE) at all school levels in five Asian countries in the context of ESL: Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the UAE. Interestingly, English is also taught in English in Israel at all levels, although English is not a second official language. Apart from these six countries, TETE is also compulsory in Taiwan even though it is only for elementary schools and does not prevail in distant Taiwan areas. For more details, it is illustrated in the table 4.

Table 4. The Use of English in Teaching English

TETE	THE CONDUCTING COUNTRIES
At elementary schools	Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the UAE, Israel, Korea (recommended, but mostly not), Taiwan (required, but not in remote areas)
At junior high schools	Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the UAE, Israel, Korea (recommended, but mostly not), Indonesia (varies with schools), Hong Kong (30%), India
At senior high schools	Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the UAE, Israel, Korea (recommended, but mostly not), Indonesia, Hong Kong (varies with schools), India, Bangladesh (mixed)
At universities	Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the UAE, Israel, Korea (varies with schools/courses), Taiwan (mixed), Indonesia, Hong Kong, India, Bangladesh (mixed), China (mostly), Thailand (mostly)

Source: Choi and Lie (2008)

f. English Teacher

The survey was conducted in 18 Asian countries to find out who teaches English from elementary school to college. The results show that basic English is taught by teachers who specialize in English (such as in China, Malaysia, and Israel), while in five countries (for example the Philippines and Sri Lanka) the English teachers are general teachers or teachers of general subjects and English. (as in Korea, Indonesia and Singapore), as shown 5.

Table 5. The Classification of English Teachers

TEACHERS WHO TEACH ENGLISH SUBJECT	COUNTRIES
General teacher	the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
English specialized teacher	China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Vietnam, India, Iran, Israel
Combination of general teacher and English specialized teacher	Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, the UAE

Source: Choi and Lie (2008)

In most Asian countries, elementary school teachers teach all subjects including English. Interestingly, elementary school English teachers are English specialized teachers in Vietnam and Iran, where teaching elementary school English is neither official nor compulsory. This may be related to the education/ teaching of teachers in elementary school who are less trained in teaching English. On the other hand, some ESL countries (for example, Sri Lanka, Singapore and the UAE) do not prefer English specialized teachers because their elementary school teachers seem sufficiently adequate to teach English, whereas some ESL countries (such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, and India) prefer English specialized teachers.

g. Teaching English at Universities

All Asian countries surveyed have General English courses (hereinafter referred to as EGP) at universities, except Israel, which provides EAP course (English for Academic Purpose, hereinafter referred to as EAP). As mentioned earlier, EGP or EAP courses are taught in English in Asian countries in the context of ESL except Bangladesh (mixed with native languages), Israel, Indonesia and China, also Thailand (mostly EGP), in Korea (varies according to school) and Taiwan (EGP and EAP).

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion of English Language Teaching in Asia are:

1. The teaching of English has been surveyed in a number of countries/ regions in Asia. The similarities and diversity among Asian nations have been revealed. The teaching of English in every Asian country appears to be the result of a variety of factors including the political environment, individual and social needs and resources. The findings of this study have provided a general overview of the teaching of English in Asia in a number of the topics surveyed
2. Students studying English at the 'Expanding Circle' are often described as learning English for no reason. In the context of some countries with EFL status, English has no direct benefit or official role. A number of dichotomies also often accompany the role of English in a country regarding English language teaching (ELT), such as: competence vs performance, meaning vs form, individualism vs collectivism, learner-centredness vs teacher-centredness, the Center vs the Periphery, social (integrative) vs financial (instrumental) and so on.
3. Because language, in essence, cannot be taught apart from its culture, the use of a communicative approach in EFL answers to bridge the gap between the threat that English will dominate the status quo and the preservation of cultural identities that are unique in a number of Asian countries. Hence, English remains a foreign language and will forever be foreign to most Asian countries.
4. Findings in the survey presented in this paper show a number of major problems in teaching English in Asia. One of these problems is the amount of time allocated for

teaching English, especially in primary and secondary schools. This problem is closely related to exposure to English. so that the effectiveness of teaching English can be achieved.

5. The problem of TETE (teaching English with English) or EMI aims to increase the effectiveness of teaching English, improve students' English skills and develop language fluency.
6. Centralization and decentralization of teaching English are also obstacle, because they are related to the national curriculum and English textbooks. The English curriculum should refer to a school-based curriculum and a bottom-up approach. English instruction should be adapted for regional needs allowing innovation and diversity in the English language. The problem of decentralization is also closely related to problems caused by differences in students' English proficiency.
7. Language policies for education in most countries that call themselves EFL have made English into compulsory learning and although these policies in these countries have supported the teaching of English from the early grades of elementary school, this policy has not been fully implemented due to insufficient English teachers supply for elementary school in numbers and skill levels. At least, conditions for learning English in some developing countries are less than expected due to lack of funds, too large classes, lack of textbooks and poorly equipped teaching fields.

The findings of this study have provided a general overview of the teaching of English in Asia in a number of the topics surveyed. Further research is needed to present a deeper picture, such as teaching techniques and methods, teacher-student interactions, etc.

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