REVIEW OF RESEARCH TOPICS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
(2000-2010)

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Abstract

This paper proposes the issues that are raised as research topics in various countries such as Asia and Europe in the last few years. Research reviews in Europe are represented by New Zealand, Poland, Austria, while research review in Asia are represented by Singapore, Israel, Taiwan, Philippine, and Indonesia. Every country has its own trend based on issues that arises in its domain. During time span in 2000-2010, there are five topics that become research trends in English Language Teaching, they are: The Curriculum of English language, Teaching English as Foreign Language, Language Teacher Training, the Teaching of Language Skills, and Methods in English language Teaching.

A. Background

In the early 21st century, English in the world can be said un-equal. Rubdy, Tupas, Villareal, David, and Dumaning (2012:64) mentioned that the use of English has been dominant part in local ecology linguistics. Most English speakers in the world today are commonly found in countries where English is used as foreign language. English has been used in formal education in various countries. This situation arises from government policy that notices the language purpose.

Case study done by a number of researcher in various countries can describe the inequality mentioned previously. In Taiwan, English categorized as foreign language. Beside of that, English is used about 2-4% of total population in their daily life (Chen and Tsai, 2012: 182). Nevertheless, this language is used as foreign language mandatory subject that is taught since early junior high; even get higher status after it turns into mandatory subject. More situations can be seen in Namibia. In Namibia's education system, English plays vital role in the curriculum and has been introduced since the fourth grade of elementary. English which is a foreign language in the country treated as first language by obliging the use of English in all subjects at Namibia schools. Students who wants to pass 10th grade need to get score at least 23 in six subjects, including English (Krishnamurty and Aston, 2015:195).

The same issue faced by speakers in Tanzania. Viewed from the speaker, 90 percent Tanzanians speak using Kiswahili and at least one native language, while English is only used by 15% Tanzanians (Ngoyani, 1997:413). The problem is on the rules of Kiswahili and English use. Since 1968, recommended language instruction used for elementary in Namibia is Kiswahili, and English is introduced in the first grade. In junior high, both languages are taught as mandatory subject for four years. The education in the

country seems ignorant to the situation in which the people are actually having trouble to decide which native language appropriate to be the language instruction.

In Indonesia, the teaching of English does not cause problems as the previous countries have. The scheming of language in this country has emerged indirectly before the independence. This country has politically set three languages, national language, native language, and foreign language. Indonesia language is set based on its function as the national language, native language functions as regionalism coat and intertribal communication tool, and while foreign language is used as international communication tool and as tool to increase the knowledge (Chaer and Agustina, 2004:178). Foreign language that highly influences language teaching is English. This language has been part of curriculum since elementary for years. Even though this condition has changed since Indonesian government created new curriculum, that is 2013 curriculum, the government starts to erase English in elementary.

English has reached the true global dimension. The consequence that arises is that this language is being used internationally. This process accelerated by the use of internet based communication so that the social footing becomes higher. This issue, based on Seidlhofer (2004:224) had grown the global role notion of English that slowly run toward today linguistics situation. The situation which finally makes the teaching of English is needed.

English teaching requests keep increasing for academic, communicative, or business purposes. Different sociocultural conditions in every country make the teaching of English become complicated. Research has important role in describing the issues that arises, analyze them, and find the solution to solve the problems. Researches on English in several countries keep on coming out and focused on different issues. Main topics in the teaching of English that arise need to be reviewed to see the major global issues which need to be solved together.

B. English Language Learning Research Topics

During the last few years there are five research topics on English teaching that frequently arise in a number of Europe and Asia countries. This formulation is taken from the review by several researcher who have published their findings in international journal. They based their discussions on journals, conferences, proceedings, reports, books, websites, dissertations, and other sources. The topics that come up are curriculum and language policy in the teaching of English, Teaching English as Foreign language, language teacher training, the teaching of language skills, and methods in teaching English.

These topics emerge based on the nation's issue that arise in each countries. As in New Zealand, the publicized research dealt with curriculum development, pedagogy, teacher development and evaluation (Ker, Adams, and Skyme, 2013: 234).

The issues faced by the nation are quite complicated. Based on the data in 2000, English is used by 95.5% population in New Zealand, while 4.1% used native language, Maori (te reo Maori). And New Zealand body language is used by 24.000 people or approximately 0.58% of total population. However, this language become official language in 1987 and 2006 (Ker, Adams, and Skyme, 2013:226) Government, through the ministry

of education created a strategy to assimilate the language to the community by creating new curriculum in 2007 about literacy and in 2008 on Maori media. The government tried to make the language as official language. Ministry of education created curriculum sources for language instructors to children in elementary level as the basic item. Therefore, the research that have been published are mostly concerned on curriculum.

Social, politic, and economic condition also become the cause of research appearance, as the one happened in Singapore. Teaching publication and language learning in Singapore are dealing with the country control toward education, relation between education and globalization, education role in social management, and the superiority of English in bilingual education that surpass official language of the country, such as china, Malay, and Tamil. Research in these countries respond the issues and local needs while theoretical issue is on the second priority (Rubdy and Tupas, 2009:353). Applied linguistics research in Singapore appear collectively in Centre for Research in pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) and Learning Sciences Labolatory in National Education Institution, CRPP built in 2002, and changed new deployment areas through research program that emphasized on classroom practices in Singapore schools in the field of language and literacy.

The issue about local needs also seen in the studies that published by Taiwan researcher, Chen and Tsai (2012:180), stated that research in Taiwan do not only follow international trends but also specific needs in local sociolinguistics context. The topics arise from Taiwan's multilingual condition. This country placed Chinese as its official language, while the southern used Ming, Hakka, and various aborigines, Austro-Polynesian that strongly related on Mandarin. Those languages become daily language by most of the community. English categorized as foreign language in Taiwan, Even though English is used by 2-4% of total community as communication language, this language surprisingly widely known very useful for education and career step stone. The government responds these benefits seriously through language policy. English is placed as mandatory subject in middle school. This condition enhanced many researcher in Taiwan to study the language condition in their countries.

As for Majority research in Poland that oriented on practicality in terms that they try to overcome the issue related on daily teaching (Dro'zdzia; Adam; Pawlak, 2012:384). Doctoral research about English teaching is very popular in Poland universities. Drod'dzia; Adam; powlak (2012: 347) divide the research that arises in Poland into six groups: learner Autonomy, individual differences, skills and language sub-system, culture, assessment and other varieties. The research major tendency on doctoral dissertation that they reviews also presented issues on second language acquisition.

The review done by Rudby, Tupas, Villareal, David, and Dumanig (2012:64) in a number of research in Malaysia and Philippine showed that Postcolonial identity and unique socio-historical location become the supporting factor in the unity of English education. Both countries have built English education sturdily because the use of English has become dominant part in local linguistic ecology. Research in both countries also strengthens western intellectual domination as knowledge producer. Therefore, academic

researcher in the country are highly influenced by theoretical approaches of the west. Malaysia is influenced by England and Philippine is influenced by North America.

As for the language condition in Indonesia, is not as complicated as the previous countries mentioned above. Indonesia which has hundreds of languages and different tribes is lucky enough for the language issue can be solved since old times. The choosing of Indonesia as official language during the youth Pledge event until settled in 1945 regulation, has never inflict protest and negative reaction from the community. This circumstance does not happen for any reason. Malay as the root of Indonesia was used as the lingua franca in the archipelago. Malay is placed as Indonesia language for some factors (Arifin and Tasai, 2008:8), they are: simple language system, this language can be used as cultural language in wide definition, and the other tribes are willingly to accept Malay as their national language.

This language condition in Indonesia is various so that it is difficult to decide research trends that arise. Beside of that, the researcher specifically reviews topics that are emerged in Indonesia that the researcher have not been found before. Which resulted in the effort to find the tendency of research on English language teaching in Indonesia needs its own discussion that is more specific that can never be found in this writing.

1. **English Language Curriculum in Schools**

Research on curriculum has been assessed from various view-points such as history, government policy, and English as medium instruction at schools. Countries that take regard on this issue are Singapore and Taiwan. The topics are discussed by Rubdy and Tupas from Singapore and Chen and Tsai from Taiwan.

The research on curriculum that is discussed from historical point of view is done by Ang, S.C, Lim, and Cheah (in Rubdy and Tupas, 2009:322). They created important historical description of syllabus changes since 1950 up to now. They indicated that English learning in Singapore still looks similar to England colonial policy that is influenced by classic tradition which stresses on text writing, grammar translation, a set of canonical text and instructional procedure.

As for curriculum study in Taiwan, can be examined into three parts, they are: English education in elementary, English solution policy, and English as medium instruction in high school (Chen, & Tsai, 2012: 183). Review on English education in elementary in Taiwan done by Tsao in 2004, Zapparoli & Su in 2007, Chang in 2007, and Juan & Cheng in 2008 (Chen and Tsai, 2012:183). Tsao focused on language design theory accentuated on English as Foreign Language (EFL) issue. Zapparoli & Su observed curriculum which implemented for first grade elementary in Hsinchu. They found that alphabet and casual vocabulary that are learned through traditional pedagogy does not match. The other researcher, Chang, used the education policy to identify problems and difficulties faced by the school teachers, administration, and students of all grades. Another study on curriculum worked by Juan and Cheng, they explored the effectiveness of extensive reading in remedial program for elementary students. The result showed that there is improvement in students' vocabulary even though their skills are still below the standard.

Among research that were published as the implementation of English language policy done by Chen and Liu in 2007. They compared students' motivation in learning English. Even though the students complained that they have hard time comprehending their English teacher and their textbook, they feel the use of English as medium accommodated them in improving their English skill.

English teaching target in Indonesia has been seen since 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, and 2006. Although the curriculum are different, Muth'im (2010:73) stated that basically, the goal is still the same, about mastering the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The approach being used also still the same, communicative approach. The application of communicative approach which started in the mid of 1980 up which last up to now, 2013 curriculum with development reinforcement on communicative competence and contextual critical thinking (Mayda, 2013:221)

2. Teaching English as Foreign Language

In most domains, English is used as foreign language. Therefore the approaches that are used to teach the language need special techniques. Several researcher tried to study about the issue in the research that they publish. The research in New Zealand emphasized on implicit and explicit learning, sociocultural theory, motivation role and emotion in language acquisition, intercultural learning and culture identity. Social factor has huge impact on language acquisition, although it does not directly influence the acquisition. Social factor helps in shaping learners attitude of which influence the learning result (Ellis, 1995:197). These topics were mostly presented in case study design, while quantitative research design is less used (Ker. Adams, and Skyme, 2013:232).

Second language acquisition research in Poland involved empirical investigation about different individual learning role in foreign language teaching and learning process (Dro'zdzia; Adam; Pawlak. 2012:348) every researcher view s this issue differently. It can be seen in six doctoral research written by Da Browska in 2008, Lesiak Bielawska in 2007, Banasiak Ryba n 2010, Kobylecka in 206, Klimas in 2009, and Pospieszy'nska-Wojtkowiak in 2010.

Da Browska, in his research, tried to study the training strategies in teaching English. He studied the relationship between individual differences, the pattern of the strategy that is being used, and the switching of the strategy used. This research pointed on the relevance of learning style concept towards foreign and second language learning. Banasiak Ryba's research focused on comparing vocabulary learning strategy of different cultural background. Kobylecka studied the effect of cognitive, metacognitive factor, and motivation on English language learning achievement in junior high school. He decided which personal variable that influence self-control in English learning and built relevant correlation through descriptive study. Klimas analyze high school students' preparedness to determine foreign language learning goal, trait, and coherence on education goal and social. His findings indicated that the participant had preparedness in deciding their own goal, but the decisions were influenced by contextual factors such as teacher, books, and curriculum.

3. Language Teacher Training

Research on Language Teacher Training reflects situation diversity of the teachers. In reviews written by Ker, Adam, and Skyrme (2013: 246-247), research on language teacher training studied by Daly and Spiller in 2008 Viller, Tolosa and East in 2010, also Smith in 2006. Daly and Spiller analyze the use of reflection journal in language teacher training. Meanwhile, Smith emphasized on case study about the importance of new technology for future teachers.

On the other hand in Singapore, the analysis focused on standardized language issue. Research on pedagogy issue aimed at two matters. First, certain English varieties legitimacy as appropriate norm for Singaporean Speakers, those are British English (BrE) or American English (AmE). Second, the characterization of Singaporean English (SE) in relation to the varieties (Rubdy and Tupas, 2009:319). Next, friction about stress and research orientation is gradually emerged. At first, the interest questions linguistic difference between English pronunciation in Singapore and Malaysia and Standard British English using "error analysis" approach. The following analysis provides data and new analysis to describe grammar and SE pronunciation. The last invention was built by considering SE as separate variety.

Beside of that, ethnographic analyses on teachers' attitude toward CLT in Singapore also become trending topic. The analysis arise the effectiveness of communicative syllabus in facing Asia reality. The conclusion derived from those research are communicative methodology does not fit in any situation or time (Rubdy and Tupas, 2009:323).

As for Israel, the orientations of research on language teacher training are practical. Investigations on language teacher training in Israel are studied in various points of views. A quite representative research in relation to the issue can be observed in the research by haim in 2005, leshem &bar-hama in 2008, Yogev & Waldman in 2004, Pepignan, rubin & Katznelson in 2004, and Rajuan in 2004 (Aronin, l & Spolsky, B., 2010:313)

Haim research explored learning material that related to EFL. The research was a comprehensive study on English as second/ foreign language learning material. The researcher elaborated a framework to help teachers in figuring lesson materials that accentuate relation between amount and teacher's learning material profundity and its potential impact on teachers' activities.

Leslem & bar-Hama noticed the teaching practice evaluation. They described the issue that obstructs assessment and the criteria. Their findings showed that even resemblant criteria can be interpreted differently by different rater. Yogey and Waldman did a collaborative research for two years to assess teacher knowledge for a better practice. They analyzed conversation using content analysis and their findings showed that there is relation between score and teachers' perception.

4. The Teaching of Language Skills

This topic is quite popular in several countries in Europe and Asia. Research in Europe, such as New Zealand and Poland can be used as representation of the issue. In New Zealand, research on four language skills are mostly filled with studies about reading

and writing skills (Ker, Adams, and Skyme. 2013:232) Mostly focused on research writing publication that raised issues on transition from English language to academic purposes. In speaking skill, pragmatics became the important sub-theme, especially work-place communication.

Language skills researches in a number of dissertations in reputable universities in Poland reflect on the studies that face the development, sub-system goal and language skill (Dro´zdzia; Adam; Pawlak. 2012: 359). Five of the research involved issues on learning and the teaching of grammar (Mystkowska-Wiertelak in 2010), Phonetics (Nowacka and Rojczyk in 2008), reading (Cirocki in 2008) and writing (Salski in 2006).

Mystkowska-Wiertelak investigated grammar teaching in productive skills which represented in Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) and the use based on grammar instruction. Phonetics analysis studied by Nowacka and Rojczyk dealing with acquisition through English as foreign language pronunciation. This research explored learners' phonetics acquisition productively and receptively.

A fairly representative research on language skills in Asia As for research in Asia on language skills are seen in Singapore and Israel. Analysis on language skills in Singapore in reading and writing can be formulated into three main points (Rubdy and Tupas, 2009: 325). First, the analysis always separate between reading and writing skills. Second, local literature focused on writing, with less noticing the reading skill. Third, as the other local research, English language teaching in Singapore also derived as response toward political and ideology climate changes in the country. The notion on theory development is not as big as the notion toward classroom language teaching practice. For example, the analysis on the teaching of reading through text organization and other concept of the same text (Varaprasad in Rubdy and Tupas, 2009: 325) and research on Questioning types in main class during reading practice (Wong & Saddah, in Rubdy and Tupas, 2009:325).

Research in Israel on writing skill is quite interesting considering the publications and the applications which is international while the research was done locally. The researcher who investigated literal and academic writing are connected in a research organization named *Israel Forum for Academic Writing* which supported by institution called MOFET. Their members consist of more than 140 researcher who direct the issues on students' shifting estimation and the use of technology in the teaching of writing. In their fourth conference in 2010, the issues are focused on questions about writing significance in various languages.

Typical, scope, and point of view on the teaching of writing research in Israel is quite huge. This fact is reflected in Aronin's review, and Spolsky (2010:306-307) and in some researcher, Hoffman-Schwarz in 2004, Holzman in 2009, Zuckermann in 2006, and Perpignan, Rubin and Katznelson in 2004, and Rajuan in 2004.

Hoffman-Schwarz traced the development of literacy concept of the eight century as media to prepare the development in the future. Beside of that, Holzman also studied writing on specific topic for a few years on writing accuracy. The other research on writing is Zuckermann who stated that differences should be made on types and goals of academic

writing. His findings showed that students faced difficulties in moving one type of academic writing to the other.

Perpignan, Rubin and Katznelson studied teachers' perception and English language learner for academic goal in writing academic. As for Rajuan in his research, he proposed the comparison between teacher supervisions and learners in teacher training program. He found that there is significant correlation between personal and professional development. And the relation between those two has complementary tendency.

5. Methods in English Language Teaching

A quite interesting model of Language Teaching seen on the researches that worked on New Zealand and Israel. The language Teaching model that is being applied in New Zealand are various, although communicative teaching has strong influence in it. These teaching models are also combined with thematic based learning design. Input based acquisition model that set aside systematic grammar learning assessment is still very obvious. This kind of research is presented in Community Language and ESOL (CLESOL) conference. The discussions reflect that the research focused on the grammar form that mostly classified as writing learning model. Besides, the study of vocabulary acquisition is presented quite strongly in the research. (Ker, Adams, and Skyme, 2013:232).

The study on English language Teaching methodology the Israel researcher focused more on the multicultural and multilingual issue by using traditional and communicative approach. In the articles published in Trends Journal, kalekin-Fishman (in Aronin, and Spolsky, 2010:303) emphasized that teacher training on multiculturalism aiming at refining political difference. Therefore, he believed multicultural as the basis for teacher training. Multilingual approach are presented by Aronin (2010:303) in his two theoretical articles. He underlined the importance of multilingualism in the modern society and underscore multilingual acquisition should play dominant part in the society today and that it is very crucial in deciding the society future.

C. Conclusion

Researchers always choose research topic based on the problems arises in their countries their research are commonly as responses toward the problems that are being faced by the education practitioners. Government viewpoint on functions and English language status also has strong position in encouraging the researcher to study on related policy that the government takes. However, the researcher usually oriented to find solution towards practical issues in their countries. It is very difficult to decide global issue in English language teaching for various problems that arises. The five topics that are discussed cannot cover the whole issues arise in all around the words. But, it can be a general description of English Language teaching research topic trends in several countries today. This review can be references for English Language researcher to study more about those five topics and solve the problems.

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