

The Impacts of ASEAN Community on the Role of English and the Classroom Outlooks of Indonesian Local Schools

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Abstract: The present article is to disclose the role of English and the classroom outlooks of Indonesian local schools as impacts of the implementation of ASEAN Community. Thus, the results are English in ASEAN including Indonesia will serve as ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), a working language of ASEAN citizens who have different native languages. Moreover, the classroom outlooks of Indonesian local schools will have changes in terms of students' background. The students will be more various not only from Indonesia but also from other ASEAN countries like Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Philippine. Ergo this present article is intended to give clear views and insights for Indonesian EFL teachers and teacher educators on the critical issue of the impacts of ASEAN Community in realm of English language teaching and learning.

Keywords: ASEAN Community, ELT, EFL, ELF, Classroom, Indonesia

The historical sketch of Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Indonesia has been intertwined with the developments of curriculum, starting from the 1947 curriculum to the 2013 curriculum. However, the policy of Indonesian government in implementing English instruction in secondary schools was in 1967, based on the Decree of the Minister of Education Number 096/1967, which was issued in 1967 (Cahyono & Widiati, 2011:3). Ergo the formally establishing English as a subject in school is along with the practice of the 1968 curriculum. This chronicle of English teaching has hitherto become an inquiry on the nature of English as a Foreign Language or EFL.

In Indonesia, EFL principle has been used due to the first language of societies either Indonesian or local languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, Minagkabau, Banjarese, and so forth. This means that English is not used as a mean of communication in everyday activities. The English language, however, is utilized as a language instruction at schools or classrooms. Although in this context, it implies that the people are not much exposed by the English, the

use of EFL principle itself still has greatly contributed on the enhancement of linguistic competence of the people and the creation of diversity on the English language *per se*.

One single facet to be considered on the nature of EFL teaching in Indonesia is the latest uses of English language in the life of Indonesians. In the past, English was not a central foreign language had to be learnt by the people especially students at schools or university levels. Nevertheless, in the late 21st century, English has received an existence especially in the academic settings and business cooperation. In the academic settings for instance, students from playgroup to university levels now learn English either as compulsory or supplementary subject. Furthermore, profusion of books and journals as learning resources are written in English; students, teachers, and researchers are aimed at mastering the English in order to get critical information they are looking for. Likewise, universities in Indonesia are asking students to have certain TOEFL score in order to graduate and meet global competitiveness. While in the context of internationalization of education to achieve a world class university, the products of partnership such as Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Memorandum of Action (MoA) are also greatly written in English. Besides, in the business cooperation, lease agreement found some use English, a primary language in international business (Bhatia and Bahatia, 2011:25). Of these English exposures, the societies have realized that English is important and therefore they should be informed on the impacts of current global economic integration(ASEAN Community) in which English lies within.

The Emergence of ASEAN Community and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

The emergence of ASEAN Community started couple years ago on January 13th, 2007 and it was officially agreed by ASEAN leaders to accelerate the ASEAN Community by 2015 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008:2). This committed political, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation bring English as a working language of ASEAN (Natiladdanon&Thanavisuth, 2014:16). Hence, Indonesian English teachers, practitioners, researchers, and teacher educators have new responsibilities to devise new techniques, approaches, methods, and so on to deal with the possibilities of diverse students in the classroom; the students might be from different nationalities and ethnics across ASEAN countries. These possibilities are at the same time become the challenges for not only the teachers but also the students. Indonesian students will not only compete with national students but also with international students in academic and non-academic achievements. An example of this has been come out

in the higher education level. The classrooms in the undergraduate and graduate level are increasingly filled by international students from ASEAN countries. These phenomena might be revealed in the levels of education from playgroup to senior high school in the future. Therefore, the continuum of Language Teacher Education (LTE) from pre-service EFL teachers to heads of departments, faculties, or universities need to deal with these issues.

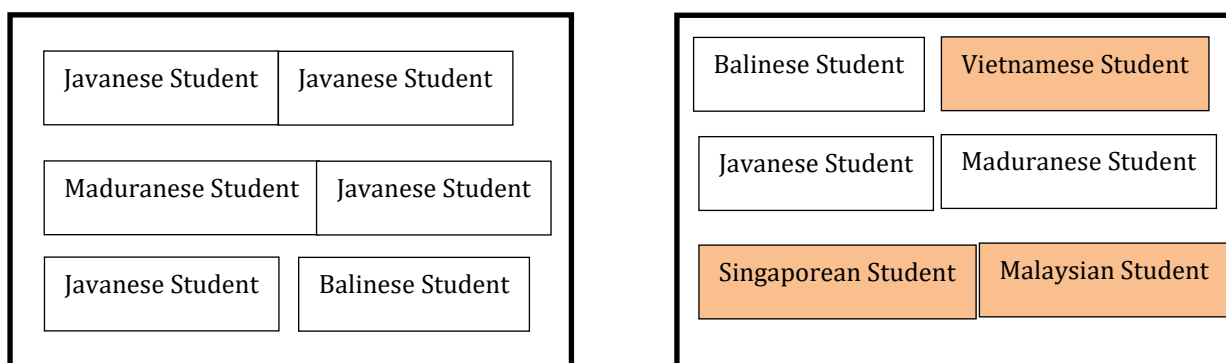
The creation of ASEAN Community itself has actually been inspired by the spirit of new ASEAN at the event of ASEAN Charter in Cebu, the Philippine in 2007 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009:1). This ASEAN Community brings three core pillars related to the issues of security, economic, and culture (John, 2008 as cited by Benny and Abdullah, 2011:40). The three core pillars of ASEAN Community are then called ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). These APSC, AEC, and ASCC have been planned, written, and described clearly in the road map of ASEAN Community (2009-2015).

Approaching the implementation of ASEAN Community by 2015, ASEAN Secretariat published ASEAN Charter catalogue in 2008. In article 34 of the catalogue, it states clearly that “the working language of ASEAN shall be English” (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008:29). This brings critical issue in the world of English language learning and teaching in ASEAN. English will therefore serve as a lingua franca or ELF in which it is used as a mean of communication by people with different native languages in ASEAN. This principle will likely become new foci by ESL and EFL learners or teachers. EFL countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar will have a new task in terms of boosting intercultural communication skills of the citizen and therefore English language *per se* will mostly serve as a pivotal language in the world of international business in ASEAN (Crocco&Bunwirat, 2014:24). Thus, playing key roles as a government counterpart, EFL teachers must bring the issues of ELF in their classrooms; to prepare the students succeed in ASEAN Community.

Future Classroom Outlook

Within the framework of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), professional labors can easily work across ASEAN countries including in every region in Indonesia. Of this case, they most probably bring their families to stay couple of years in Indonesia. And the most possible issue comes out is that the parents might school the children in Indonesia and therefore it induces new diversity of students in local schools of Indonesia. Here is the

possible illustration of Indonesian classroom before and after the ASEAN community that Indonesian EFL teachers must know.



Classroom in Indonesian Schools **BEFORE**
the Implementation of ASEAN Community

Classroom in Indonesian Schools **AFTER**
the Implementation of ASEAN Community

Illustration 1: The Classroom Outlooks BEFORE and AFTER the Implementation of ASEAN Community in Indonesia

From the illustration 1, prior to the coming of AEC, the students are from various backgrounds across Indonesian regions, yet after the AEC comes, the changes on students' diversity might be happen. The teachers will have students from Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia itself.

Regards of that future classroom outlook as impact of ASEAN Community, Indonesian EFL teachers must therefore start thinking about how to teach English within the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). For example, to give contextual teaching materials, teachers can use video of conversation between Malaysian and Singaporean where they use English in the workplace. Teachers can highlight the varieties of English and communication strategies they use when speaking. Teachers in this case try to infuse and introduce the concept of ASEAN Englishes to students. In short, Indonesian EFL teachers within ASEAN Community framework must think about giving proportions in introducing ASEAN Englishes to students.

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