

An Introduction to the Realization of Internationalized Opportunity in Taiwan:

How English Imposed on English Textbooks for Junior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Educational policy has been playing an important role in forming the fundamental construction of a given country that enables the people to acquire knowledge in favor of the possible future since the compulsory education starts to take on a part of responsibilities for the sake of the national development. Under the age of 21st century, the globalized trend turned English into a prevailing tongue that makes a large number of countries either revise their laws or reconstruct their educational system in order to seize the promising possibilities. This paper is to look into the educational development of the globalized English in Taiwan in order to understand the interactions between the curriculum reallocation and the textbooks. In particular, the globalized tongue started to present its influence that indicates the its international connections and a possible chance in favor of developing the national competitiveness.

Keyword: Globalized education, English curriculum, Contextualization, Assessment

I. The Invisible Influence of Globalized English

1. Language Intervention

Language is a communicative tool as a vehicle for people to convey the meaningful message in order to satisfy the individual needs that carries a variety of purposes to display its existence in the world. It indicates, as well, the representative image as a symbolic icon for a specific group of people either to create the interactions with the others or show the influence upon the ones. In the case of English, it had been acting a role as a vernacular not long ago in some western countries but becomes much more important afterwards to signify its immense importance.

Date back to the very beginning of Industrial Revolution, a large number of local mediums started to seize the slice of chance for the further development and being of widespread circulation all over the world. It is absolutely a real situation for English, itself, to be circulated with the explosive development of information technology and instant transportation under the internationalized trend of Westernization. Even though in the case of the ancient China, the empire of Qing Dynasty adopted English as one of the languages in its national educational system that English had preliminarily showed its potential influence abroad.

It is noted for the authority that English has been either transforming itself into being internationalized tongue or playing various functions to get involved in the different environments. Further speaking, the empire ruler had comprehended that English, somehow, started to be circulated as a communicative tool to exaggerate its invisible importance. As Kliebard (1992) stated that “symbolic action is centrally concerned with the symbols that give meaning and order to our world...in the political sphere, symbolic action works at least in part by giving cues to targeted social groups that they occupy a certain status in relation to other groups.” Under this circumstance, the government had no choice but to adopt it as one of the concerns to implement its national policies in order to satisfy the needs for national competitiveness that provided people with another possible route to acquire knowledge. Thus, the Qing government offered English a chance of being one of the targets in its educational system that people had the chance acquiring it through the formal education when they started the Westernization movement in order to catch up with the fellow countries at that time.

It was noted for the local residents in Taiwan that English as resource, to some extent, carried the invisible influence to oblige the authority to accept its co-existence in the society. In other words, English was a visible carrier with a huge potential amount of cultural capital to represent its inevitable necessity and indicate the portable international competitiveness against the other vernaculars in the environment.

2. Globalized Education

The educational system has been playing a part of important role as a functional infrastructure for the manmade world since it started to act on various features instead of its original purpose in a

society that the supreme ruler wanted to dominate the obedient subjects in the ancient hierarchical environment. As time goes by, a variety of social movements transformed the exclusive right of education for the privileged into fundamental requirements of world citizenship that a large number of people have the chances of further acquiring modernized knowledge. Since then, the educational system has commenced taking on the multifunctional role in a society either to develop people's knowledge, to trigger their enlightenment or to reposition the social status.

Under the age of the 21st century, the educational system has been an important implication of national competitiveness that a large number of countries make an effort to establish a comprehensive infrastructure in order to offer an ample support for the its self-development. Interestingly, quite a number of subjects in the compulsory educational system has gained much more attentions from people and government that Educations anywhere, to some extent, have something in common in the curriculum design all over the world. In terms of the curriculum, the courses of language-learning, mathematical logics, social studies, information technology, art appreciation are parts of the core courses in any given countries that governments hope to impose on their nationals.

Education is not only, basically, a localized movement for a kind of issue the public social welfare but also, spontaneously, an internationalized accommodation for the entire national development in order to catch up with the pace of Globalized internationality. To some extent, either the language policy or the language education for a country is being undergone the influential impact interacting with the other countries. In the case of English, it seized the possible chance to exist in a foreign country with the political and economical assistances of the internationalized linguistic uniqueness. Kliebard (1992) emphasized that "the concept of symbolic action may cast light on what we regard as the success of vocationalism as curriculum policy...an instrumental action, vocationalism was a policy that would bring the American curriculum in line with the requirements of a modern industrial society by providing needed job skills for certain segments of the school population and by shoring up American industry to meet the competition presented in the world marketplace." In a way of concerning about this situation, it had acquired quite widespread influence and importance to play a possible role as a medium to connect people all over the world that turned itself into a globalized tongue from either a local one or international one.

It is such an eye-catching condition for the field of educational system that a rising number of countries have either been or being affected to make the alternations for their [national] language policies based on the considerations of national competitiveness. A large number of EFL or ESL countries started to adopt English as one of their language educational systems to build up their young generation's multi-linguistic capabilities of the Anglicized globalized tongue. As a matter of fact, Taiwan has been one of the members in Global Village to have the inevitable interface with English in the name of globalized national competitiveness that creating the possible.

II. The Alteration of Localized English Curriculum

1. Vernacular and English

It has been a very truth that a language plays multi-functional role as a facilitative medium in a society to convey a variety of either abstract concept or concrete linguistic message in order to reach the goal of message-exchanging since it was originated and endowed with the symbolic meaningful implications. In the case of Taiwan, there are a number of vernaculars spoken by the locals such as Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka, or aboriginal languages that each of the native languages acts as a joint to either unite or connect any one of the given groups of people in its community. To some extent, there should be some close connections between language and cultural identity that language is either a symbolic representation or a backbone for a specific group of people because a language could be the core of infrastructure for people.

As Tyler (1979) mentioned that “they view the school as the agency for helping young people to deal effectively with the critical problem of contemporary life.” Beyond the public recognition, the Westerner verbal outsider, English, indicates its globalized practicability and importance to induce more and more countries to recognize and accept it as a part of the language educational system. As expected, the globalized verbal tool has been introduced into the domestic environment and coexisted with the other native languages in Taiwan that even though most of the people have no chance speaking in it on daily uses for real conversations. It shows us the implications for the lack of real usage in life that one unfamiliar tongue still can have the exclusive chance coexisting without any public acceptance but to fulfill a certain functional role with its substantial cultural capitals for the national interest.

2. Curriculum Reallocation

Officially, the national language, Mandarin, had been the only legitimized tongue that all of the young generation have no options but to acquire it until the participation of English based on the compulsory educational system. Beside the mandatory language subject, Mandarin, English has been accepted, as the second to none, to oblige the young to start learning it in the 5th grade since the Minister of Education of Taiwan announced the new national language policy in 2001. It is clear for the locals that Mandarin possesses the exclusive patent to gain most of the students' concentrations on language-learning without the coexistence of English before the re-enactment of new language policy by National Languages Committee.

When English comes to another one of the target languages playing a part of the role in the compulsory educational system that it, politically, either re-illustrated the functional distributions of multi-lingual co-existence or signified the struggling conditions for cross-lingual interactions. English, exclusively, was the only one of the exceptional cases for the young learners in Taiwan to be acquired based on the political manipulations rather than the down-to-earth functionality after Chinese government as a successor taken over the national sovereignty from the Japanese domination.

The alterations derived from the language subjects would likely to be an inevitable dilemma for the compulsory educational system in Taiwan that any of the supporters for the courses would be eagerly to obtain any possible chance for more educational resource.

In other words, the curriculum allocation for school subjects was likely to be troublesome confrontations for any of the courses that spontaneously turned the compulsory education into a controversial battlefield in order to procure more possibilities for more classes than the others. Once, Kliebard (2004) mentioned that “social efficiency as a curriculum theory was almost at its zenith, and attention to curriculum reform had reached the point where curriculum was being recognized a vital subspecialty within the broader spectrum of education.” Under the compulsory educational system, the foreign tongue has played a functional role beyond its linguistic characteristics since the Taiwanese government commenced implementing the different language policy than previous one. Particularly, the young students in elementary and junior high schools just aimed at better and better academic performance because the parents would care much more about it and the children were obliged to concern how to seize the better chance promoting their ability to get good grades. In the name of Credentialism, the more scores they are eager to make, the more importance of English they perceive that more future possible they would expect.

III. The Realization of Internationality in Textbooks

1. Contextualized Text

It has been playing an important role of the textbook for the current educational system in any of the countries that indicates the macro-scope perspectives of the schooling operation in order to satisfy the goal of political concern since the education started to offer the functional service. In the case of Taiwan, it has the similarity to show the vague implication that any of the textbooks can signify the intentional representation for the country itself to reveal the potential arrangement. In the name of the national competitiveness, a variety of concerns started to emerge from the written publication that is being authorized to take on a part of the responsibility of developing students’ capabilities in learning.

As Kliebard (2002) stated that “if the curriculum is to be substantially tied to those things that human beings need to know in order to perform their daily tasks successfully, then as those activities and perception of the problems of living change, the curriculum must change correspondingly.” Under the age of globalization, especially, the knowledge in a textbook can be a political medium to convey a kind of certain intention of concerning how to fulfill the realization. In other words, localization, internalization, or globalization is any of the terms that more and more people want to access it because the high correlation between educational system and national requirements. To some extent, it shows people the significance of the teaching materials that enables the young generation to acquire some specific knowledge in order to satisfy the needs for either the individuals or the nation.

It is noted that the school knowledge in Taiwanese compulsory educational system should be more realistic and down-to-the-earth than the previous old one because it avails the possible practicalities and high probabilities in the real world. Taking one of the examples of the English-learning materials in the junior high schooling published by Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing Group, there have been six volumes for Grade 7 to 9 which contain several parts in each chapter including warm-up activity, dialogue, listening-oral practice, word power. Fundamentally, a large part of exercises in the text guide the young generations to assess the internationalized linguistic skills that make them be capable of employing the globalized tongue beyond the boundary.

The written contents are, the most interesting parts, to indicate that many of them are closely being connected the students' linguistic knowledge to the real-life-experience. Obviously, contextualized materials in English-learning turns into an important part related to the students' daily life experience that make them more motivated and enthusiastic toward the linguistic acquisition under the system of the compulsory educational schooling system. In other words, the real-life-like experience would like to be a spur to have the students acquire the motivations for moving forwards to the English-learning.

2. Globalized Assessment

During the educational process, the examination system is, somehow, likely to play either a decisive or active role to offer the young people a variety of chances as a future filter toward the upcoming development in their life. Under the prevailing trend of Credentialism, a large number of either young children or parents care much about the academic performance in the compulsory educational system in Taiwan because the students have no choice but to follow the consequences of the examinations to choose their future schooling system for their possible career. Moreover, the internationalized certification system is an authorized system to justify that the eligible applicants would likely to be capable of showing their professional competency for the future vacancy before their participations. It means that the examination system for assessing people is a way of offering the professional classification and possible guarantees in order to satisfy their career arrangement.

In the case of English, a variety of the foreign language proficiency tests emerged have been a notable phenomenon in Taiwanese society that more and more [young] people of all ages engage in joining the linguistic assessments since it gradually turned into widespread verbal tool. TOEIC, IELTS, TOEFL, GEPT, BULATS, and more and more different linguistic assessments are to take part in any of the societies in countries that indicate the influential significance of English all over the world starts to show its powerful intervention. From the compulsory educational system to the assessment system, it indicates that English is a kind of the possible feasibility for the national internalization due to its booming globalized tendency from the previous local vernacular.

In particular, the policy makers in Taiwan had taken the globalized English into consideration and referred it as an important qualification for the future schooling system entrance in the compulsory educational system. As Hoben (2013) stated that "standardized testing provide technology for

stratification even as it allows administrators and politicians to wash their hands of any responsibility for endemic social inequality...this subtle operation of power allows schools to marginalize more local and critical forms of knowledge and encourages a curriculum that ignores the need to create a democratic citizenry conscious of the need for cooperation in the pursuit of social justice.” Noteworthy, the government regards it as a way of assessing the realization of internationalized opportunity that either enable or compel people to broaden their points of view toward the outside world beyond the national boundary. The parents of young generations regard the alien English as a future path for assessing the future possible promising life toward personal development. Even more, the young learners of compulsory educational schooling treat it as a beneficial propellant of academic performance that would likely to be an incentive to favor their future academic performance that actively transforms the passive foreign language acquisition into feasible political realization of internationalized/globalized opportunity in Taiwan.

IV. Conclusion

The globalized English can be meaningful tool for either the authority or people in Taiwan that its cultural capital represents the inevitable necessity in favor of enhancing the national competitiveness. With the assistance of language policy, it is enabled to either coexist in the compulsory educational system or signify the symbolic meaningful implications. Under the educational system, the curriculum reallocation offers English the great chance to play multifunctional role as well as providing the possibility of the realization of internationalized opportunity in Taiwan. In the compulsory educational system, the English textbooks and the globalized assessments could be the possible ways to make the education move forward to the goal of internationalization. Either the contextualized materials or the globalized assessments make the young learners more motivated and enthusiastic towards possessing the internationalized standpoints in favor of enhancing the personal or national competitiveness. In other words, English would like to be a political medium to facilitate the young generations in the compulsory educational schooling to be the global citizens.

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