



## **Language Policy at School of Education, Tadulako University in ASEAN Economic Community Era**

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**Abstract:** The research aims at investigating the Language Education Policy in supporting the SEA Teacher Project at the Faculty of Education, Tadulako University. It has become one of the Teacher Training Colleges in Indonesia selected to be a partner institution of SEA Teacher Programs, with other Teacher Training Colleges from universities of three Southeast Asian countries, including Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The research employs a qualitative approach with the main data collection instruments, including Observation, In-dept Interviews, and Documentation. The research sites are at study programs within the Faculty of Education involved in the collaborative programs with the SEA Teacher Project. And the informants selected consist of six key informants. They are informants from the student side, study program representatives, and faculty leaders. Furthermore, the data of documentation and observations were taken from study program offices and from the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The research findings show that the language education policy has supported and motivated the selected students to use instructional language in English with important related technical terms. The recruitment systems of the SEA Teacher program are improved gradually. The SEA Teacher Management has learned a lot from their students' experience and their own. The students have got better overseas teaching experiences from target universities and schools where they were placed during SEA Teacher programs.

**Keywords:** *Education, teacher training, school, language, higher education*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the introduction of Southeast Asian Economic Integration Policy, there have been many kinds of cooperation projects and bilateral relationships with other higher educational institutions within southeast Asian countries developed. There are ten countries of Southeast Asia. They are Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and East Timor. Nearly half member of ASEAN country members use Malay as a lingua franca.

Several Southeast Asian Countries belong to common Wealth Countries Organization. And from the historical perspectives those countries have political and historical emotional attachment with United Kingdom and thus English has been spoken as a second language in those countries. Yet, many other Southeast Asian countries teach English at schools as a foreign language including Indonesia.

Of ten members of ASEAN countries at the moment only four countries participate in SEA teacher program. And so far the SEA Teacher project were more frequently participated by non-malay speaking countries. That is why it is important to consider the teaching and learning of instructional language and in this regard English should become a

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linguafranca as well.

As Teacher Training Institution, Faculty of Education, Tadulako Univeristy have got good opportunities to participate in SEA Teacher program and to send their prospective teachers to target shools and universities involved in SEA Teacher Program. Over the last three years there have been more than twelve students. The SEA Teacher Project is sponsored by Southeas Asian Minister of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and in collaboration with Teacher Training Colleges in Southeast Asian Countries.

Through SEA teacher project, there will be mutual benefits, mutual understanding and mutual respects as well among the stakeholders of SEA Teacher project. The students who participate in SEA teacher project will have broad pedagogical knowledge and inspirational experience from overseas. They will also learn cross culture understanding and intercultural communication so that they will understand and appreciate linguistic and culture of the countries where they were placed in SEA Teacher program.

So far there have four Batches of student techers exchange programs, the student teachers have been sent the countries especially that are actively involved in the SEA-Teacher Project. The students who were selected and sent overseas from Tadulako university were from Chemistry Education Study Program, Primary School Study Program, Math Education Study Program and English Education Study Program.

In the Era of Southeast Asian Economics Integration, the prospective student teachers have oppportunities to be recruited as teachers in Southeast Asian countries that have cooperative programs of education. Therefore, it is important to keep establishing such educational collaborations of universities and particularly faculties of education among southeast Asian countries. The overseas of teaching practicum experience is one of the important requirements for teaching staff position overseas.

The research was conducted at Faculty of Education, Tadulako University and it involved the study programs that have been selected before. The selection and students recruitment system consider several criteria. In the early introduction of the SEA Teacher project, the requirements were not so strict. Eventhough students who have not undertaken teaching practicum experience before could apply and participate in this programs.

The data collected were from related stakeholders including student teachers, returnees, faculty management, study programs and International of Office of Tadulako University, observations in the classrooms and documentary data from mainstream media and government official letter have also become sources of qualtiative data of this research studies.

### ***Language Education Policy in Souteast Asian Perspectives***

Multilingualism has become a common issue in many parts of the world including developed and developing countries. In this context, multilingualism is associated with local languages, national languages and international language (Baldauf & Luke, 1990; Marhum, 2013b).

On the one hand, the government and the local communities in all countries are challenged to manage multilingualism by introducing a language policy for multilingualism (Marhum, 2013a, 2018). On the other hand, the education sector needs to provide significant resources for the development and promotion of multilingualism. The incorporation of multilingual teaching into the school curriculum needs to have positive implications for the development and promotion of local, national and global language education particularly in the era of Southeast Asian Econimic Community (Marhum, 2005).

Three Southeast Asian countries use and understand Malay language as linguafranca. They are Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darusalam. Meanwhile many people who live in South Thailand and Singapore can speak and understand Malay (ASEAN, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2014; Rosli, 2019; Zulfikar, 2013).

Yet, many southeastern people prefer to use English when they meet their colleagues from Malay speaking countries since they feel more compartable to communicate with English rather than Malay. Furthermore, there have been many vocabularies of Malay and Bahasa Indonesia which have different meanings (Choomthong, 2014; Hu & McKay, 2012; Mohd. & Yakin, 2018).

### ***Pre-Service Student Teacher Exchange Program (SEA Teacher) at University***

The pre-service teacher exchange program give opportunities to students from faculties of Education in Indonesia and other universities within Southeast Asian countries to participate in SEA Teacher Program for around one month. They are sent to the target countries that have multilateral cooperation under agreement and support of SEAMEO and SEA Teacher Project.

The SEA Teacher Project was firstly introduced and sponsored by Southeast Asian Ministry of Education Organization (SEAMEO). The Organization was founded in 1965 and aims at promoting cooperation of education and culture among Southeast Asian Organisation members.

The main objectives of SEAMEO are to improve education quality in Southeast Asian countries and to revitalize the education quality of teachers and keep strengthening teachers capacity in each country (SEAME, 2017; Universitas Lampung, n.d.). The SEA Teacher project involve students of the following study programs such as English Education Study Program and Science Education. Yet, recently othe study programs such as Education and Social Science Education are welcome as well.

The mechanisme of the programs is cost sharing basis in other words the program is sponsored and covered by both universities that are involved in the SEA Teacher Project. The student teachers who participate in the programs are supposed to have teaching practicum experience and observing the teaching in the classroomn (Dulyadaweesid, 2013; Marhum, 2018; Meidrina, Mawaddah, Siahaan, & Widayarsi, 2017).

The recruitment process of the SEA Teacher covers from the selection in the study program level and if they are selected, they will be recommended to proceed the selection to department level and then if they are accepted at Department level, they are recommended to apply for the SEA Teacher Program. And later they will be invited to take join selection test and if they are accepted, they will be sent to the target countries (Nunan, 2003; Marhum, 2013a; SEAME, 2017).

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research employ qualitative approach with the main instruments of data collection are in-depth interview, documentation and observation. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews which involved nine stakeholders of informen and they are research stakeholders which came from different backgrounds.

There were six informants who were interviewed in this reseasearch. They were two informants from college students with the codes (CS01 and CS02), two informants from faculty management or faculty deans (FD03 and FD04) and two informants from coordination of study programs (CP5 and CP06).

In order to collect data from informant, the researchers implemented snowball technique. The researchers interview only knowledgeable and trustworthy interviewees.

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

Based on the data analysis chosen, I used the technique of data analysis that involved the analysis of data as recommended in Miles and Huberman (1984) and Keeves and Swoden (1997). In terms of data analysis in this study, it is crucial to consider such procedures as data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification, summarizing and integrating findings.

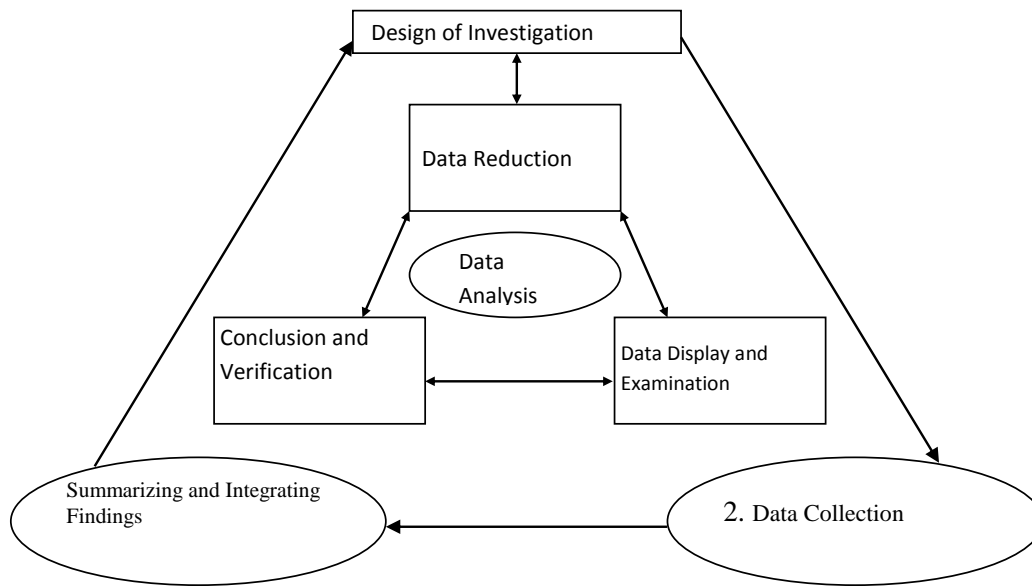


Figure 1 Model. Source: *Keeves and Swoden (1997)*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discuss the research finding of the fieldwork research conducted at Faculty of Education Tadulako University on the implementation of language education policy in supporting the SEA Teacher project at Tadulako University. The data collected through the use of qualitative approach. The presentation and discussion of the research data are based on the research problem and the research questions. At the beginning of SEA Teacher programs, the early recruitment of students teachers candidate who would be sent overseas for teaching practicum experience did not have to meet high standard and strict requirement. The programs are based on the evaluation, assesment and monitoring results, it was than considered to introduce new criterai and requirement.

The recruitment procedures of Candidates of SEA Teachers programs include following steps. They interviews on the academic aspect and non-academic aspects including pedagogical skills and students motivation to join the programs. The second step was the students were invited to teach in front of the class based the subject they teach. They must be able to show their teaching skills and their ability to the classroom management. Each testee had to do teaching performance in front of the classs for around 15-25 minutes and in front of two reviewers. And nearly all reviewers were graduated from universities in foreign countries and they had a lot of experience in teaching and reseearch.

The recruitment system and the recruitment process were conducted in faculty level and at international office. Yet not all study programs were involved on the recruitment. Only the study programs that have been selected and based on the recommendation from SEA Teacher Project Commitee and SEAMEO. Informant, CP03 stated:

“Students of study programs involved in SEA Teacher programs were recommended to improve their language skills and pedagogical knowledge and skills in order that they can follow the program well and properly if they are accepted”.

The assesment and review of the students teaching performance were conducted during joint selection test and consider several components such as the content and process of teaching. The students have good knowledge on the subject content they teach and he or she must know how to teach the subject properly. The candidates must able to make their teaching activities meaningful. The applicants of the test should know the objectives of their teaching and the aims of curriculum implementation. They should know the learning styles of their students and the assesment is also focused on the subject being taught by the students who were attending teaching performance test.

Since the beginning implementation of SEA Teacher Project and the involment of Faculty of Education, Tadulako University in this program, faculty management and all the stakeholders have been very keen to support this helpful and beneficial program. The faculty management was recommended to provide good cooperative project with the leading school in Palu City to accomodate prospective student teacher to undertake teaching practicum experience.

The leading schools in Palu such as SMP Madani, SMA Madani, SMP AlAzhar, SMA AlAzhar, SMP two, SMA One and SMA two and SMP one. These leading schools have sufficient facilities and infrastructure of education and good human resources as well.

By giving opportunities to prospective teachers to conduct teaching practicum experience in the leading schools, those participant candidates of SEA Teacher project will have a standard quality of knowledge, practice and experience in teaching at quality standard schools. On the other hand, if the students are sent to schools that have below quality standard, they will not have compatible quality experience with the target school overseas.

From the in-depth interview with the returnees of SEA Teacher Project it was conveyed that many students in the past were accepted to participate in that program even though they have not passed their teaching practicum class experience before. And some of them admitted that they only had experience in teaching at English schools but not in formal class like formal educational institutions (Informant CS02).

The requirement and criteria of student teacher candidates most recently must meet the main criteria that is they must prove that they have had a teaching practicum experience before. With such experience, it can be guaranteed that the candidates will be able to do their main tasks in overseas schools properly and very well.

Since English has been used as instructional language in overseas teaching practicum experience, all study programs that are involved SEA Teacher project have improved the standard of English language teaching for the improvement of prospective SEA teacher participant candidates. Informant CS02 suggests:

The students who are going to join SEA Teacher project must take English for specific class in order that they can have technical skills of using English as instructional language in the areas of their discipline background. So students from Chemistry education study program need to have English lesson and other related subject content areas in English for specific purposes.

According to the Curriculum policy at Faculty of Education, the teaching of English is focused more on the reading skills and writing skills. So the students can develop their ability and skills to write the research paper and thesis in the future based on their relevant disciplines. Furthermore they can present the research paper in international conference. And the more important thing is that they can use the technical language in writing report of their teaching practicum in English.

Since the language used during the SEA Project is English, the participants of this program must be able to speak and write in English. Some returnees who have joined the program tell a story on the importance of language skills. Although the participants have good pedagogical skills, he or she will be in trouble, if he or she is not able to use English correctly.

Thus faculty management and study programs must support and motivate the students to brush up their English before joining this program. In addition it is also important for all the participants to learn cross culture understanding and intercultural communication so that at least they will not be in trouble when they are in foreign countries dealing with the main programs and they will be able to avoid conflicts and cultural shock.

Regarding the lesson plans that were implemented in Thailand, some students have reported that they had problems in dealing with the lesson plans from schools where they joined the teaching practicum particularly in the countries where English is used as a foreign language like Thailand and Vietnam. In those countries many teachers and students can not speak English (Informant, CS02). Furthermore, in Thailand many students and teachers can not read Latin Alphabetical scripts. For those reasons students who were placed in those schools found it difficult to understand their lesson plan since the students had to adapt or adjust with the local model of lesson plan.

Furthermore, in terms of university and faculty accreditation, the participation of student teachers in such programs have positive and significant implications particularly for university and faculty management (Informant, CP06). Through cooperation with foreign higher education institutions, Tadulako University and Faculty of Education will receive awards and credits from Higher Education Accreditation Assessment Board.

Several study programs at Tadulako University have already had international classes in which some overseas students attended the international class along with local students. International class should become good models to develop international cooperation with other foreign universities particularly within Southeast Asian countries and in the future it is expected the international cooperation of higher education programs particularly in the teaching areas will be extended with higher education institutions beyond Southeast Asian nations (Informant, FD 04).

Since nearly all batches of the programs did not provide sufficient pre-departure training and cross culture understanding or cross culture communication, many students had cultural shocks and found some difficulties particularly

in adjusting with the situations in the countries and schools where they were placed (Informants, CS02 and CS02).

Some students conveyed that they had also had difficulties in adjusting with situation in those foreign countries particularly those who were Muslims. Yet, in Philippines some Muslims participants had no problems with foods, accommodation and prayer since the committee of SEA Teacher project in Philippines have good cross culture understanding.

Student teachers had problems with cultural and linguistic barriers in Thailand since many people can not speak English and moreover Thailand have their own specific and unique alphabetical scripts. In the future the students that will be sent to Thailand must at least understand a little Thai Language and culture. They must be equipped with the skills of cross culture and intercultural communication skills as well.

The components to be assessed in interview sessions covers the following aspects such as clarity that is first of all the students must be able to communicate with clear message they conveyed. Second, the students must be able to speak fluently in front of reviewers. Third the students must have comprehensibility, the student teachers must comprehend on what they say or explain. And the scores range from 50 the lower ones and up to 100, the maximum score (Informant, FD03).

In relation to the implementation of language policy implementation at schools, I would argue that there have been no explicit, more details and elaborated language policy in Indonesia so far. Yet the language policies have been integrated into education policy and curriculum policy and in addition to cultural and economic policy.

There have been no language education policy explicitly introduced by central government and local government. So far the language policy is still integrated into educational policy. It is important to recommend the central government and the local government to introduce language education policy so that the language education in educational institution especially in higher education can be promoted and improved.

The language policy integrated in educational policy for example found in the National Educational Law No 20/2003, Chapter VII, article 33, verse 3 stated that foreign language can be used as an instructional language at schools to support the language skills of students. English is one of the most dominant foreign language in Indonesia and it is most popularly taught at schools. Other language policy is implicitly and in general term. Law number 24/2009 has no relation to the teaching and use of foreign language instead it is only related to the Indonesian National Flag, Indonesian National Anthem and Indonesia National Language or Bahasa Indonesia.

The recruitment system and the joint selection test need to be improved continuously. Informant CS 02 suggests,

Some students who joined the selection tests recommend that in the future the test mechanism need to be changed, the applicants should be separated and grouped or clustered based on their disciplines. So far the tests have been collectively combined. For example all students from different discipline backgrounds are put in the same class of joint selection. And also the lecturers involved as reviewers come from the different background of disciplines.

Yet it should be understood that nearly all types of joint recruitments and selection tests for overseas scholarships are not exclusively separated. In general the applicants of the joint selection test who were invited to interview sessions were separated and their interviewers are also from diverse discipline backgrounds. It was argued that the joint selection core does rely on the uniformity of disciplines or clustering matter but the more important things in that the joint selection process should be fair and objective.

The assessment of teaching and learning process and the teaching skills were assessed which also include, first teaching strategy that is to make sure whether the students are able to use good strategy of teaching, second implementing communicative approach in teaching by using both verbal and non-verbal as a media to support the language teaching and learning process, third the students must be able to apply effective classroom management, can create joyful academic atmosphere, finally the students must have good self disciplines as model that students can follow or imitate (Informant, CP05).

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

SEA Teacher Project has significant implication in supporting the improvement of student teachers teaching performance quality, it can also establish good networking of Faculty of Education in particular Southeast Asian Countries. Furthermore the emerging of SEA Teacher program can contribute to the revitalization of Teaching Training Colleges in Indonesia in general and at Tadulako University in Particular. The management of SEA Teacher project and the faculty management must work hand in hand to keep monitoring, evaluating, assessing, reviewing and improving the quality of SEA Teacher program from year to year effectively. In the future there will be opportunities to involve more

Teacher Training Colleges from other Southeast Asian countries to participate in SEA Teacher project.

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