

Final Report

1. Activities at the Singapore Regional Language Center (RELC)

① Interview with Dr. Alvin Pang

During my exchange with Dr. Alvin Pang, director of RELC, I discovered the following things.

SEAMEO

Before going to Singapore, I vaguely understood that the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre (RELC) was a public organization in Southeast Asia, but I discovered the following things via materials and a detailed explanation from Dr. Alvin Pang.

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) was established in 1965 (with its secretariat in Bangkok) with the purpose of promoting cooperation between Southeast Asian countries through education, science, and culture. Its member countries include the 10 members of ASEAN as well as Timor-Leste, and its associate members include Australia, France, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, and the UK. Japan also attends the governing board as an observer, and Tsukuba University has participated in events continuously, focusing mainly on mathematics. Within the region, SEAMEO has 21 regional centers each specialized in a certain field, including educational research, medical education, agriculture, and education, and these centers primarily conduct instructor training and teaching material development.

SEAMEO is operated using contributions from its member countries, but it also conducts each event with donations from many governmental agencies, organizations, and corporations. Substantially, Japan gives more support than other nations, for example granting the SEAMEO-JAPAN ESD AWARD to outstanding examples of education for sustainable development in the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools of SEAMEO member countries. Outstanding schools are provided with an opportunity to visit Japan, where activities are conducted to deepen exchange with Japan's UNESCO school. In addition, the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Biology located in Indonesia focuses its activities on forests, pests, and aquatic biology, and in order to achieve sustainable development of the tropical ecosystem, it gives order of priority and conducts analysis of member countries, and handles important biological problems in the region. The SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning located in Vietnam specializes in research and training for lifelong learning, as the basis for the

development of educational policies, and serves the purpose of strengthening links between Asia and Europe for the purpose of promoting lifelong learning. The SEAMEO Regional Centre for History and Tradition based in Myanmar promotes cooperation in research of the history and traditions of SEAMEO member countries via research, human resource development, education, and networking.

Regional Language Centre (RELC)

For this research I visited the Regional Language Centre (RELC) which was founded in 1968 and is based in Singapore. The centre oversees English education in Southeast Asia, and it conducts language education using expert knowledge, training facilities, and training programs in order to upgrade the skills of language experts and educators. RELC is a 20 minute walk from Orchard in central Singapore. The RELC building includes a hotel, so that teachers and students who have come for training can stay there.

Exterior of Regional Language Centre (RELC)



RELC is the only SEAMEO regional centre based in Singapore. I assumed that Singapore was the hub of Southeast Asia, so I was surprised to find that SEAMEO itself is based in Bangkok and the other 20 regional centres are mostly located in Indonesia and Malaysia. It was also my first time learning in detail about SEAMEO, and I became keenly aware of my lack of knowledge of Southeast Asia.

In the office of RELC Director Dr. Alvin Pang



RELC has 2 major divisions, one of which is Language Teacher Education, which provides courses ranging from 3 week special qualifications all the way to master courses. University instructors, as well as experts in sociology and science take these courses, and I was told that one student from every member country (11 in total) receives a scholarship and is dispatched for each course. There are also a few people who pay course fees to participate. I was able to observe a few of these courses, one of which was a short course aimed at English instructors. Cambodian, Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian and other English instructors from junior and senior high schools, as well as universities, participated in the course. I interviewed each of them about English education and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in their countries, but unfortunately, all of them except for Indonesia said that they do not conduct CLIL, so I decided to ask the instructor from Indonesia for details individually. I also spoke with these members about various subjects besides research, and was able to exchange email addresses, so I believe that I was able to build a personal network in Southeast Asia.

The pictures below are of the members from that course.



RELC also offers courses inCLIL which are the subject of my research, but unfortunately because the CLIL course starts in October, I was not able to observe it this time. The CLIL course is a course for junior and senior high school teachers who must conduct their classes in English, so it focuses on CLIL concepts and linguistic expressions for managing and directing classes. They also teach how to apply books and teaching materials that have been published to CLIL classes.

The other division of RELC is English Language Teaching, in which they teach English or Chinese to students. In response to my question about they have in relation to Japan, Dr. Pang said that one example is their relationship with JACET (The Japan Association of College English Teachers), with whom they send and receive teachers to their respective annual meetings. Also, some universities send

students to RELC. For example, Chukyo University has done a program for over 10 years. The number of university students from Japan has been increasing every year. RELC can provide customized lessons for each university: Some universities get two-day lessons. Dr. Pang also said that they plan to accept Japanese high school students starting next year.

Because people in Singapore speak Singapore English, Japanese students do not have to be embarrassed about their own Japanese-accented English, and can speak with confidence. Accordingly, it is easier for students who are not very good at English to study English in Singapore than to study in the UK or the USA. I would like to send students in my university to Singapore to study English in the future.

Because RELC is under the jurisdiction of SEAMEO, but is concurrently under the jurisdiction of the Singaporean Ministry of Education, RELC Director Dr. Alvin Pang has two superiors above him. Dr. Pang was truly of great assistance in this research, and I would like to conduct joint research with him someday.

② In the library

RELC has its own library, where visitors can view books and other materials on English education.

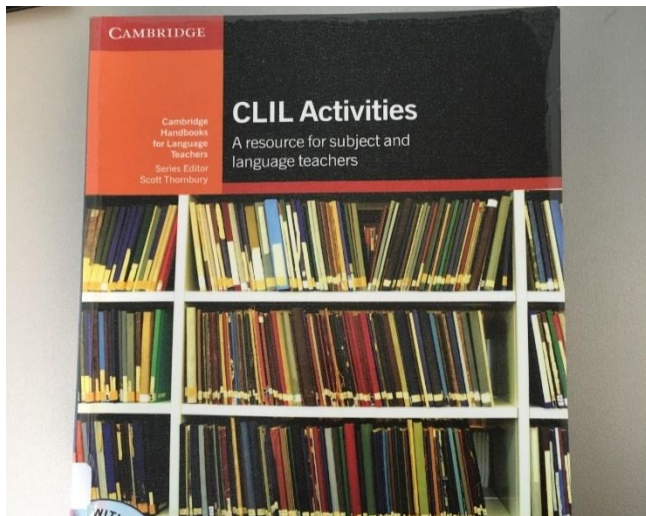
I discovered the following things having researched CLIL related materials in the RELC library.

I found that the British Council was central in promoting attempts to apply CLIL to Southeast Asian countries from 2000 to 2010, and Primary English Language Teaching (PELT) was derived from CLIL promotion policies. PIP (Primary Innovation Programme) seminars were held as CLIL promotion measures led by the British Council East Asia in Ho Chi Minh City in 2007 and again in Bangkok in 2008. Furthermore, members of the British Council visited Indonesia in 2008 as groundbreaking for the introduction of CLIL, where they held symposiums and workshops, and offered information and advertisements for CLIL. Additionally, some Southeast Asian countries use CLIL under a different name, and because the name for CLIL differs between countries, it is referred to generally as English Bilingual Education (EBE).

The following are pictures of the RELC library



A book on CLIL



CLIL in Thailand

Thailand has the longest history of practicing CLIL in Southeast Asia, and this practice is called English Program (EP). It involves teaching 5 major academic subjects in English, with a smaller program that teaches 3 major subjects in English referred to as Mini English Program (MEP). These educational programs are practiced from the elementary to senior high school levels. A distinguishing feature of how EP is practiced in Thailand is the parallel implementation of Thai and English language programs in the same school, in a system that allows students to choose either program. In Thailand they attempt to hire native speakers from English speaking countries for all instructors in the English Program, but it has proven very difficult to secure qualified people, so many schools have hired licensed teachers from nearby English as a Second Language/ESL countries, primarily the Philippines.

Malaysia

Before Malaysia achieved independence, its education was conducted in various languages, but after independence, language was divided by function, with students at Malaysian ethnic schools studying in Malaysian, students at Chinese schools and Indian schools studying in Chinese and Tamil respectively, and students in science and engineering courses studying in English. In the 1970s, the Look East policy was established promoting Malaysianization with emphasis on the national Malaysian language (Bahasa Malaysia), so they turned in the direction of teaching English as a

single subject, but government policy later changed once again to emphasizing English, and they use English as the language of instruction.

Specifically, in 2002, the English became the language of instruction for mathematics and science. Reasons for converting to a policy emphasizing English were that the English abilities of Malaysian people declined due to 30 years of education that emphasized Malaysian and neglected English, and the inability of Malaysian translation of teaching materials to keep up with demand. The pros and cons of this decision have been fought over, and the opinion that Malaysian should be made the language of education once again has grown stronger, so the debate continues. The Malaysian Ministry of Education announced a proposal to return the language of instruction for science and engineering courses to Malaysian in 2009, and have implemented this since 2012. This means that the past 40 years of ethnic unification have failed, and is a sign of ethnic division in the future. For example, there are almost Malaysian students in the MARA Science School and Universiti Teknologi Mara. In this manner, English education in Malaysia has shifted back and forth between ESL and EFL. Now it is leaning towards EFL, and they have just reached the stage of adopting CLIL. In Malaysia, which has a better developed English infrastructure than even European countries, it is relatively easy to secure instructors of math or science with high English ability, so there is no major obstacle to implementing CLIL. This differs significantly from EFL countries in Southeast Asia.

③ Interview with full-time lecturer Wulan Fauzanna of Andalas University

I interviewed Wulan Fauzanna, a full-time lecturer at Andalas University who participated in RELC training. In Indonesia, English education from the first grade of primary school was conducted for over 10 years, but it was cancelled a few years ago. One of the major reasons for this was that children would lose their identity as Indonesians.

CLIL was also conducted several years ago for about three years in public junior and senior high schools. This included not all, but only some junior and senior high schools, and was not done in all classes, but only in special classes. Students who wished to join the CLIL class had to pay a special class fee, so mostly students from wealthy families joined these classes.

Classes which introduced CLIL were taught not by native English speakers, but by teachers of each subject, so although they had some training, their English ability was very low, and Wulan told me that they could not really be called a success. CLIL was canceled around the same time that English education was canceled in elementary

schools. The main reason for this cancellation was the same as the reason for canceling elementary school English education; students would lose their identity as Indonesians. Currently, CLIL is conducted at the university level, and Wulan Fauzanna whom I interviewed is herself involved in CLIL in her university. Students who wish to take CLIL courses in university must pay an additional class fee, and classrooms for CLIL are completely different from those of normal courses with luxurious facilities, carpets, desks, and chairs, so CLIL is a special course for wealthy students in Indonesia.

Wulan Fauzanna of Andalas University in Indonesia. She lived in Japan for 2 years, and has taught English at a Japanese university.



In Japan I had read some literature on CLIL in Indonesia, and this literature mentioned that in Indonesia CLIL is called English Medium Math and Science (EMMS) and classes taught in English are only math and science, but these were offered to all students in junior high schools. I was surprised at how different this is from what I discovered in this interview. I exchanged email addresses with Wulan Fauzanna, who said that she would gladly help me with research on Indonesia, and asked me to come to Andalas University, so I believe that I was able to build my personal network in Southeast Asia.

2. Activities at the National Library

I also visited the National Library in order to collect materials. I had to open my bag so that they could rustle through it every time I entered the reference materials room. Even more inconveniently, because copying is prohibited, I had to visit over and over to copy out any materials that I wished to read. I believe this is done for the purpose of protecting copyrights, and it seemed typical of Singapore which is so strict about laws and rules. Nonetheless, I collected materials on English education and elementary school education in Singapore over the course of several visits to the National Library.

I also visited the Central Public Library in the basement of the National Library because I heard that it has an excellent children's library, and it was indeed made to be very cute, with a large collection of English and Chinese picture books. They also do regular readings of English and Chinese books.



Exterior of the National Library



Entrance to the children's library in the Central Public Library



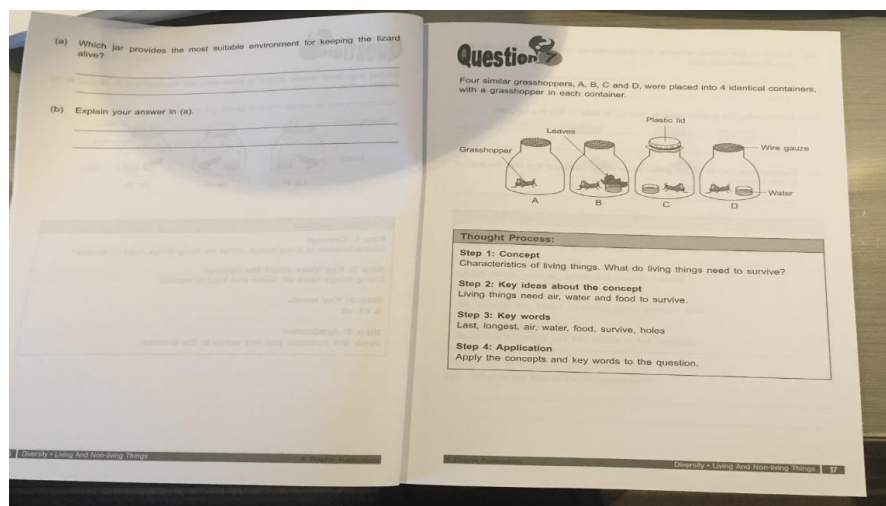
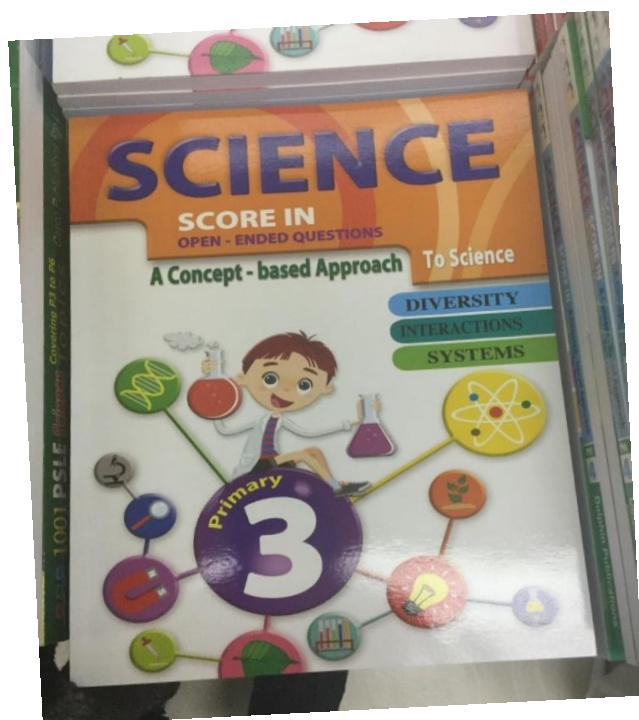
Inside the children's library

3. Visiting bookstores to collect textbooks

Because all classes are taught in English from elementary school in Singapore, I thought that Singapore textbooks on other subjects would be a good reference when we conduct CLIL in Japan, so I visited several bookstores in order to collect Singaporean textbooks. I was very surprised to find that the English was much simpler and easy to understand than textbooks on other subjects made for elementary school students in the UK and the USA. I expect that they are written in easily understood English because English is not a native language for Singaporeans, but only a second language and language of study. I felt that they would be an excellent reference for creating CLIL teaching materials for children in Japan. One of the greatest challenges in implementing CLIL is creating teaching materials, and I felt that textbooks from Singapore, where English is not a native language but a language for studying academic subjects, will be a good reference for Japan from various perspectives in the future. Actually, I had not expected much from textbooks, but they were one of my greatest finds during this visit. As I mentioned above regarding CLIL in Indonesia, the content of a book written by a researcher in Japan differed significantly from the content of an interview I conducted for this research, so I realized the difficulty of conducting research in countries where we do not understand the local languages. I imagine that the book was compiled by interviewing local researchers or reading materials in English, but even local researchers sometimes tell a lot of wrong information if they are not an expert specialized in that area

. Therefore, I doubt that I will not know which opinion on CLIL in Indonesia is actually correct unless I read materials from the Indonesian Ministry of Education written in Indonesian, or actually speak to the person in charge of this. I have done research in South Korea for years. I was able to find various mistakes made by other researchers in Japan because I understand Korean. I feel that if I continue to do research on CLIL in Southeast Asia, because I do not understand the local languages, I am also likely to make mistakes someday. Actually I have found that textbooks in Singapore are written in plain English and that they will be an excellent reference when we create teaching materials of CLIL in Japan. Therefore, I am planning to do research on textbooks of other subjects in Singapore.

A science textbook for third grade elementary school students



4. Marine Parade Community Library in Katong

For the last 5 days, I moved to Katong near the airport. The National Library was very strict, as my bag was searched every time I went in and out of the reference materials room and I was not allowed to make copies, and the person in charge was not kind, answering vaguely no matter what I asked, so it was a very uncomfortable experience.

In comparison, people at the library in Katong were very kind, and although there is no copy machine in the Marine Parade Community Library, they told me that there is one in the National Library. When I told them that the person in charge at the National Library told me that there was no copy machine, they went so far as to tell me where the copy machine in the National Library is and how to use it. They also taught me the details of the library system, including the fact that they now have a system called “eReads”, which members can access to view and download e-books and materials. Even foreigners can access eReads, and it costs nearly ¥1,000 per access, but it is possible to see what books and materials are available with a free ID and password, so the staff kindly helped to acquire an ID and password, so I was able to access eReads and do research. Singaporeans can access eReads for free and borrow e-books for up to 21 days at a time.



The entrance to Marine Parade Community Library

5. Visiting a kindergarten and elementary school in Katong

Katong has a kindergarten and elementary school, so I visited them as well. The private kindergarten was located in a building that looked like sort of a palace. I was surprised at how beautiful the facility was. Photography was permitted from outside, but not from the inside, so I was only able to take pictures from the outside, but I was able to speak with the teachers. They seemed to be heavily focused on English education, and had been awarded many times as an outstanding school.



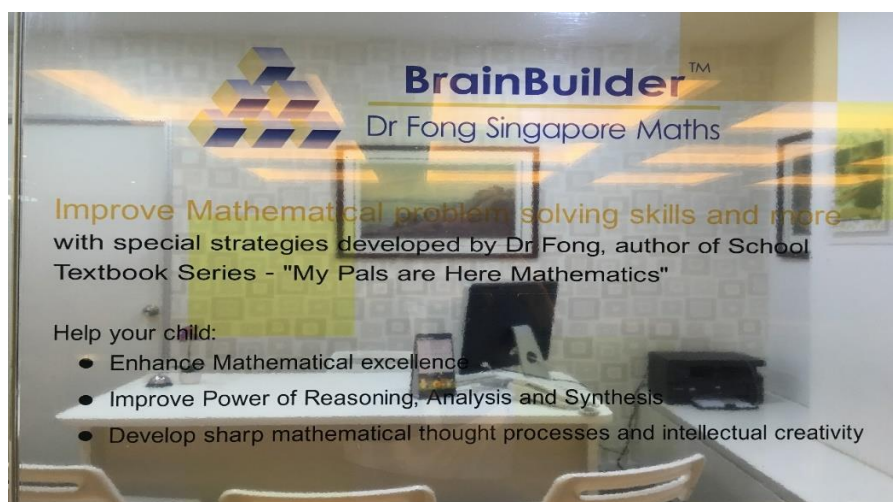
Odyssey The Global Preschool



CHIJ Primary School

This was a private elementary school for girls I could talk with some teachers. If I had visited such a place with the assistance of local researchers, I could have surveyed their classes.

I also found cram schools while walking around, and there were three or four of them in a single shopping center. I think that I would like to spend more time carefully surveying the Singaporean education system on my next visit.



Brain Builder, a cram school specialized in mathematics

Conclusion

Although I was able to achieve the purpose of my activities at RELC, I also felt the difficulty of doing research in Southeast Asia where I cannot understand the local languages. However, I found wonderful textbooks for other subjects in Singapore. Accordingly, I am planning to do research on textbooks for other subjects in Singapore. I can contribute to the development of CLIL in Japan. I did not expect much from Katong where I stayed at the end, but I was unexpectedly able to find valuable information such as eReads, and I believe that eReads will be very useful in further research on Singapore in the future. This was information I could not have found if I simply continued to stay in the central area of Singapore. This time I was able to conduct simple interviews with teachers there, but could not take pictures inside or observe classes. Yet, walking around my hotel in Katong, I could see the daily life of its residents in libraries, kindergartens, elementary schools, community centers, and cram schools. In downtown areas in Singapore, there were only shopping centers and office buildings,

so I felt that somewhere farther from the center such as Katong was better suited to researching education in Singapore. During this stay, I felt the value of doing field work on my feet, and I believe that this experience will be very helpful in making future research plans for Singapore. I was also able to meet with Dr. Alvin Pang, as well as English instructors and university instructors from Southeast Asia at RELC, which built the foundation of my future personal network in Singapore.

I was able to do research. I would like to give my sincere thanks to the Japan Foundation for providing this research opportunity.