POLICIES AND HISTORY OF ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION IN JAPAN: WITH FOCUS ON THE LINKAGE OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Abstract-Elementary and secondary English teachers in Japan are now facing a major reformation of the system of English education. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has announced a vision for a full-scale development of new English education that is timed with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Elementary schools are to conduct English Language Activities classes one to two times a week for third and fourth graders, and are to conduct English Language classes as a subject three times a week for fifth and sixth graders. Lower secondary schools are to conduct classes in English in principle. Under such a situation, it is important to research policies and history of English teacher education in Japan. Therefore, this study purposed to research and analyzes policies and history of lower secondary pre-service English teacher education in Japan. Results of the study suggest that the allocation of credit units per subject group has drastically changed in the past seventy years. Results have also revealed that more than one third of the English teacher training courses are English communication courses, while only one tenth of the courses are cross-cultural understanding courses.

Index Terms- Curriculum management English education, Four skills integrated approach, Pre-service teacher education

I. INTRODUCTION

English teachers in Japan are facing a large scale reformation of the system of English education. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has announced a vision for a full-scale deployment of new English education that is timed with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

On June 30th, 2011, the Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency proposed in the "Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication" to "promote students' awareness of necessity of English in the global society, and stimulating motivation for language learning," provide "students with more opportunities to use English through effective utilization of ALTs, ICT and other means," and reinforce "English skills and instruction abilities of English teachers, [1]"

On December 13th, 2013, the Education Minister stipulated in the "English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization" that English education should being from 3rd grade, and 3rd and 4th grade students should participate in English language activities one to two times a week, with the purpose of nurturing the foundation of communication skills. Furthermore, the Minister announced that 5th and 6th grade students should be taught three times a week as official English language subject classes, with the purpose of nurturing basic English language skills [2]. In order to meet the purpose of English education in elementary education, the MEXT proposed to 1) promote elementary school teachers' English teaching skills, 2) develop and promote materials for teacher education, and 3) expand placement of assistant language teachers, [2].

As for English education in secondary education, the Education Minister announced in the "English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization" to "nurture the ability to understand familiar topics" and to "carry out simple information exchanges" in lower secondary schools, and to "nurture the ability to understand abstract contents for a wide range of topics and the ability to fluently communicate with English speaking persons" and to conduct classes "in English with high-level linguistic activities" such as doing presentations, debates, negotiations and to "describe familiar matters in English" in upper secondary schools [2]. So as to meet the purpose of English education in secondary education, the MEXT suggested to 1) develop English education promotion leaders in secondary schools, 2) promote secondary school English subject teachers' teaching skills, 3) promote placement and utilization of Assistant Language Teachers, and to 4) develop and promote Information and Communication Technology-based teaching materials for teacher education [2].

On December 21st, 2015, the Central Council of Education proposed in the "Promotion of School Teachers' Qualities and Abilities for School Education in the Future: Report" that universities should improve pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills in English education and English as a subject [3]. The Council also suggested universities and boards of education to cooperate to develop core curricula for pre-service and in-service teacher education in English education [3].

Thus, English teachers in Japan are confronted with

major reformation of the system of English teacher education and training as well as English education. Therefore, this study purposes to research policies and history of lower secondary pre-service English teacher education in Japan and to analyze what is needed to promote good teachers and classroom lessons in lower secondary schools.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to research and analyze policies and history of lower secondary pre-service English teacher education in Japan.

The research questions to be addressed in this study are: 1) How has the standard curriculum for lower secondary pre-service English teacher education changed in the past seventy years?, 2) What are the issues of the lower secondary pre-service English teacher education curricula provided by universities?

III. HISTORY OF THE STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Currently, pre-service teacher education is provided by universities and colleges in Japan. Universities develop pre-service teacher education curricula and courses that meet the standards regulated by the Education Personnel Certification Act.

The Education Personnel Certification Act was enacted on May 31st, 1949 with the principle of "teacher education at university level" and "open system policy," where any national, public or private university/college could provide teacher education courses if its curriculum is qualified by the MEXT. Under the "open system policy," teacher education is not limited to teacher training universities or faculties of education. The "open system policy" is based on the philosophy that school teachers must study liberal arts in order to promote their knowledge, generic skills, and wisdom as the basis for their lives in the teaching profession. Therefore, English teacher education is conducted not only in faculties of education, but also in faculties such as foreign languages, literature, humanities, liberal arts, communication, and culture.

A. 1949 Standard Curriculum for Lower Secondary Pre-service English Teacher Education

Table I shows the subject groups and course detail of the 1949 standard curriculum for lower secondary pre-service English teacher education, and credit units that are required to receive a lower secondary English teachers' license.

TABLE I: 1949 STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	Course Detail	Credits
Liberal Arts		36
Contents of School Subjects: English		18
Teaching Profession	Adolescent Psychology	3
	Principles of Education	3
	English Teaching Methods	3
	Teaching Practice	3
	Elective Courses	8
Total		74

Table II shows the breakdown of credit units of the 1949 standard curriculum for lower secondary pre-service English teacher education per subject group. In order to enhance school teachers' general knowledge, wisdom and skills generic skills, pre-service teachers were required to get a lot of credits (48.65 percent) from the Liberal Arts subject group. The percentage of the credits required from the Contents of School Subjects group is at the lowest rate (24.32 percent) in the 1949 standard curriculum.

TABLE II: PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION OF CREDIT UNITS PER SUBJECT GROUP: 1949 STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	%
Liberal Arts	48.65%
Contents of School Subjects	24.32%
Teaching Profession	27.03%
Total	100.00%

B. 1954 Standard Curriculum for Lower Secondary Pre-service English Teacher Education

Table III shows the subject groups and course detail of the 1954 standard curriculum for lower secondary pre-service English teacher education, and credit units needed to receive a lower secondary English teachers' license.

TABLE III: 1954 STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	Course Detail	Credits
Liberal Arts		36
Contents of School Subjects: English		32
Teaching Profession	Principles of Education	3
	Adolescent Psychology	3
	English Teaching Methods	3
	Teaching Practice	2
	Elective Courses	3
Total		82

Table IV shows the breakdown of credit units of the 1954 standard curriculum per subject group. According to the 1954 standard curriculum, pre-service teachers still had to get many credits (43.90 percent) from the Liberal Arts subject group. The percentage of credits required from the Contents of School Subjects group increased drastically from 24.32 percent to 39.02 percent.

TABLE IV: PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION OF CREDIT UNITS PER SUBJECT GROUP: 1954 STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	%
Liberal Arts	43.90%
Contents of School Subjects	39.02%
Teaching Profession	17.07%
Total	100.00%

C. 1988 Standard Curriculum for Lower Secondary Pre-service English Teacher Education

Table V shows the subject groups and course detail of the 1988 standard curriculum, and credit units required to receive a lower secondary English teachers' license.

TABLE V: 1988 STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	Course Detail	Credits
Subjects determined by Article 66-4 Ministerial Order of the Teacher's License Law	Japanese Constitution	2
	Physical Education	2
Subjects Specialization: English	English Linguistics	40
	English Literature	
	English Communication	
	Cross-cultural Understanding	
Subjects for the Meaning of Teachers		8
Developmental and Educational Psychology		
Educational Sociology, Educational Systems, and Educational Administration		
Educational Technology		
English Teaching Methods		6
Theories and Methods of Moral Education		
Extra-curricular Activities		
Theories of Student Guidance and Career Guidance		2
Educational Counseling		
Teaching Practice		3
Total		63

Table VI shows the allocation of credit units of the 1988 standard curriculum per subject group. The percentage of the credits required from the Liberal Arts greatly decreased from 43.90 percent to 6.35 percent. On the other hand, the percentage of credits required from the Contents of School Subjects group additionally drastically increased drastically from 39.02 percent to 63.49 percent. This leads to the result that the credits required from the Contents of School Subjects group is at the highest rate in the 1988 standard curriculum.

TABLE VI: PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION OF CREDIT UNITS PER SUBJECT GROUP: 1988 STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	%
Liberal Arts	6.35%
Contents of School Subjects	63.49%
Teaching Profession	30.16%
Total	100.00%

D. Current Standard Curriculum for Lower Secondary Pre-service English Teacher Education

Table VII shows the subject groups and course detail of the current standard curriculum, and credit units needed for a lower secondary English teachers' license.

TABLE VII: CURRENT STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	Course Detail	Credits
Subjects determined by Article 66-6, Ministerial Order of the Teacher's License Law	Japanese Constitution	2
	Physical Education	2
	Foreign Language Communication	2
	IT Operation	2
Subjects Specialization: English	English Linguistics	20
	English Literature	
	English Communication	
	Cross-cultural Understanding	
Subjects for the Meaning of Teachers		2
Basic Theories	Principles and History of	6

in Education	Education	
	Educational Psychology	
	Developmental and Educational Psychology	
	Educational Sociology, Educational Systems, and Educational Administration	
Curriculum Studies and Educational Pedagogy	Curriculum Studies for Secondary Education	12
	English Teaching Methods	
	Theories and Methods of Moral Education	
	Extra-curricular Activities	
	Educational Technology	
Subjects for Educational Guidance and Counseling	Theories of Student Guidance and Career Guidance	4
	Educational Counseling	
Teaching Practice		5
Educational Practice Seminar		2
University-based Subjects		8
Total		67

Table VIII shows the allocation of credit units of the current standard curriculum per subject group. The distinguishing feature of the 1998 current standard curriculum is the addition of the University-based Subjects group. Furthermore, the percentage of the credits required from the Contents of School Subjects group decreased by half from 63.49 percent to 29.85 percent, while credits required from the Teaching Profession group increased greatly from 30.16 percent to 46.27 percent.

TABLE VIII: PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION OF CREDIT UNITS PER SUBJECT GROUP: CURRENT STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	%
Liberal Arts	11.94%
Contents of School Subjects	29.85%
Teaching Profession	46.27%
University-based Subjects	11.94%
Total	100.00%

E. The Next Standard Curriculum for Lower Secondary Pre-service English Teacher Education

Japanese Education Minister Hakubun Shimomura proposed in the "Curriculum Standards for Elementary and Secondary Education: Inquiry" to revise the "Courses of Study" and the pre-service teaching standard curriculum on November 22th, 2014 [4]. Education Minister tasked the Central Council for Education to revise the standard curriculum by the end of AY2016, and to implement the revised standard curriculum from April 1st, 2019. On December 21st 2015, the Central Council for Education suggested in "Promoting School Teachers' Qualities and Abilities that Lead the Future of Education: Report [3]" to strengthen the connection of the Contents of School Subjects group and English Teaching Methods. The council insisted to integrate subjects related with English Teaching Methods into the Contents of School Subjects group.

Table IX shows the subject groups and course detail of the next standard curriculum for lower secondary English teacher education, and credit units required for a teachers' license.

TABLE IX: NEXT STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY ENGLISH PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	Course Detail	Credits
Subjects determined by Article 66-6, Ministerial Order of the Teacher's License Law	Japanese Constitution	2
	Physical Education	2
	Foreign Language Communication	2
	IT Operation	2
Contents and Methods of School Subjects	English Linguistics	28
	English Literature	
	English Communication	
	Cross-cultural Understanding	
	English Teaching Methods	
Basic Theories in Education	Principles and History of Education	10
	Meaning of Teachers	
	Educational Sociology, Educational Systems, and Educational Administration	
	Developmental and Educational Psychology	
	Special Needs Education	
	Curriculum Studies for Secondary Education	
Subjects for Educational Pedagogy, Guidance and	Theories and Methods of Moral Education	10
	Teaching Methods of the "Period for	

Counseling	Integrated Studies"	
	Extra-curricular Activities	
	Educational Technology	
	Educational Counseling	
	Theories of Student Guidance and Career Guidance	
Subjects for Educational Practice	Teaching Practice	7
	Educational Practice Seminar	
University-based Subjects		4
Total		67

Table X shows the breakdown of credit units of the next standard curriculum per subject group. As the subjects related with English Teaching Methods are to be integrated into the Contents of School Subjects group, the percentage of credits required from the Contents of School Subjects group relatively increased from 29.85 percent to 41.79 percent, while credits required from the Teaching Profession group and University-based Subjects group decreased.

TABLE X: PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION OF CREDIT UNITS PER SUBJECT GROUP: NEXT STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

Subject Group	%
Liberal Arts	11.94%
Contents of School Subjects	41.79%
Teaching Profession	40.30%
University-based Subjects	5.97%
Total	100.00%

IV. INTRODUCTION OF THE CORE CURRICULUM FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

In order to cope with the revision of the standard curriculum for lower secondary English teacher education and the "Courses of Study," the Foreign Language Working Group, Central Council of Education announced the Core Curricula for English education and English as a subject in elementary and secondary education on June 28th, 2016 [5]. Figure 1 is the pre-service teacher education Core Curriculum for English education in secondary schools, and Figure 2 is the pre-service teacher education Core Curriculum for English as a subject in secondary schools.

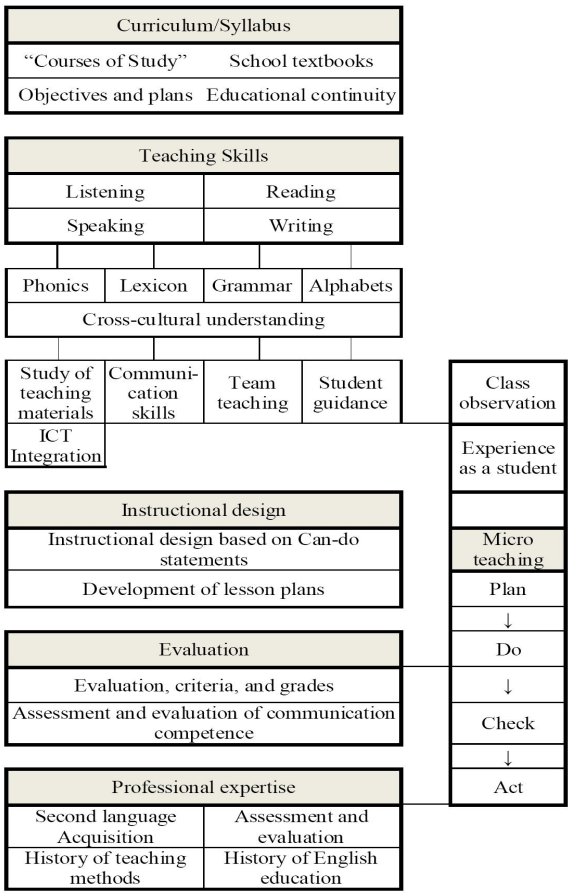


Fig. 1. Core Curriculum of English Education: Pre-service Teacher Education for Secondary Education (source: Foreign Language Working Group, 2016, translated by author)

English communication	
Listening	Reading
Speaking	Writing

Linguistics
Phonetics, phonology
English grammar
History of English language

Cross-cultural communication
Cross-cultural exchange
History, society and culture of English-speaking countries
English literature

Fig. 2. Core Curriculum of English as a Subject: Pre-service Teacher Education for Secondary Education (source: Foreign Language Working Group, 2016, translated by author)

Universities which conduct pre-service English teacher education are to revise their curriculum by

March 31st 2018 with response to the Core Curricula. In order to cope with the change, it is important to reveal the state of lower secondary pre-service English teacher education. Therefore, eighteen universities in Japan that provide lower secondary pre-service English teacher education courses were analyzed in this study. Table XII shows the breakdown of lower secondary pre-service English teacher education courses provided by eighteen universities.

Category	Courses	Mean	%
English Linguistics	87	4.83	21.17%
English Literature	61	3.39	14.84%
Cross-cultural Understanding	47	2.61	11.44%
English Communication	144	8.00	35.04%
English Teaching Methods	72	4.00	17.52%
Total	411	22.83	100.00%

TABLE XII: BREAKDOWN OF THE CURRICULA FOR LOWER SECONDARY PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

n=18

Results show that English communication courses account for the greatest proportion (35.04 percent), while cross-cultural understanding courses are the smallest proportion (11.44 percent).

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to research and analyze policies and history of lower secondary pre-service English teacher education in Japan.

Regarding the first research question "How has the standard curriculum for lower secondary pre-service English teacher education changed in the past seventy years", result of the study show that the allocation of credit units per subject group has drastically changed in the past seventy years. Figure 3 shows the transition of the allocation of credit units per subject group for lower secondary pre-service English teacher education. Results show that especially, credits required for the Contents of School Subjects group has greatly decreased from 1988 to 2019, while credits required for the Teaching Profession group has greatly increased in the past seventy years.

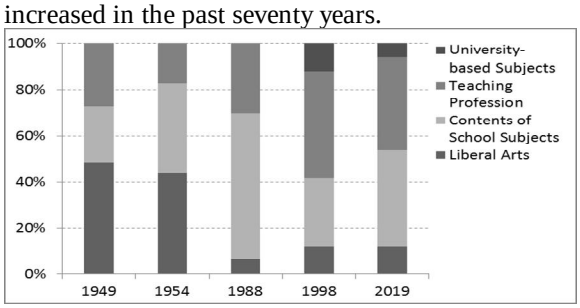


Fig. 3. Transition of the Allocation of Credit Units per Subject Group for Lower Secondary Pre-service English Teacher Education

With regard to the second research question "What are the issues of the lower secondary pre-service English teacher education curricula provided by universities?", results reveal that more than one third of the English teacher training courses are English communication courses, while only 11.44 percent are cross-cultural understanding courses. It is sure that enhancing pre-service teachers' English communication skills is important. However, considering the core curriculum announced by the MEXT, it is also important to raise pre-service teachers' knowledge, understanding, and awareness of other countries culture, history and society.

CONCLUSION

As this study focused on lower secondary pre-service teacher education, it is recommended to use other samples from other educational stages, countries and teaching experience for future generalization. Especially, it is meaningful to investigate the present condition of in-service teachers, and the contents and teaching methods of in-service teacher training curricula/courses.

Given the findings of the study, it is significant to develop effective and cross-cultural understanding courses in each university which provide pre-service English teacher education.

In addition, findings of this study are expected to contribute to develop effective and realistic in-service teacher training curricula/courses in order to facilitate in-service teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitude toward English education, and consequently lead to enhance the quality of English education in elementary and secondary schools.

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