Konin Language Studies
Faculty of Philology, State University of Applied Sciences in Konin, Poland
KSJ 6 (2). 2018. 111-138
http://ksj.pwsz.konin.edu.pl
doi: 10.30438/ksj.2018.6.2.1

ESL departments in English-medium international schools in East Asia

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide information concerning the current practices of language acquisition and language acquisition departments in sixteen English-medium international schools in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Participating in a targeted online exploratory survey were seven English as a second Inguage (ESL) Department Heads, six ESL teachers, one Director of Professional Learning, one Learning Support Coordinator, and one special needs teacher. The survey explored various aspects of ESL Departments and sought information concerning staffing, ESL support and special educational needs, assessment, program models, curriculum and planning, policy, evaluation, language-specific professional development, and staff turnover. In addition to having set options to choose from, participants were provided with an opportunity to specify their answers for many of the questions. Specified participant responses offer further insight into the inner workings of ESL Departments in English-medium international schools. Of particular importance were responses concerning policy development, language teaching models, and inclusion. Data from this study shows that ESL Departments in English-medium international schools in East Asia are using a combination of push-in (inclusion) and pull-out for providing students with ESL support. In addition, survey responses reveal that push-in is the preferred language support model amongst survey participants.

Keywords: ESL department; international school; language acquisition; English-medium

1. Introduction

Teachers in English-medium international schools can experience a variety of English language teaching methodologies and language acquisition programs. Each international school is unique, and a thorough understanding of the linguistic needs of the students in each school should be the primary concern when developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating a school's language acquisition model and the effectiveness of the language acquisition program. Unfortunately, there is a deficiency in the literature specific to international schools concerning effective pedagogical practices in working with language learners (Baker & Lewis, 2015).

In the following review of the literature, the author provides a short history and definition of English-medium international schools. Next, he outlines the need for policy development and language-specific professional development as a means of supporting students and teachers in English-medium international schools. Lastly, the researcher summarizes the critical role that school leadership plays in fostering a productive learning and working environment in English-medium international schools. The literature review precedes the evaluative description of the results of an online survey intended to examine various aspects of English as a second language (ESL) departments in English-medium international schools in East Asia.

2. International English-medium schools

Much confusion exists in defining what constitutes an international school (Bunnell, 2016). According to Sylvester (2015), the rise of international schools began in 1910 with the establishment of the international experimental Odenwald School in Germany and the International School of Peace in Boston. With the close of World War II, an increase in the growth of international schools began to occur (Bunnell, 2007; Hayden & Thompson, 1995). Carder (2007) pinpoints this increase of growth arising from the need to provide educational services to children of Allied personnel, and many international schools adapted the words *American* or *British* to reflect the curricula and the language of instruction. While there are different types of international schools, the term *English-medium international school* is used to describe international schools in which the primary language of instruction is English.

The growth of international schools after World War II was gradual, and by the year 2000, there were approximately 2,580 English-medium international schools (ISC, 2015). Growth in the international school market has been escalating, and the number of international schools has risen from approximately 2,580 schools in 2000 to approximately 7,545 in 2015 (Hoerle, 2015). ISC Research (2016)

has predicted that the number of international schools will increase to 16,000 schools by the year 2026. Following World War II, many of the students attending English-medium international schools were native-English speaking children of expatriates. However, there has been a shift in the demographics of English-medium international schools and local students now make up more than 80% of the enrollment in international schools (Lewandowski, 2012; ICEF Monitor, 2013).

2.1. English language acquisition

The increased enrollment of non-native speakers of English has intensified the need for English-medium school administrators and teachers to be informed of what are considered to be best practices in working with English language learners (ELLs). Unfortunately, pedagogical methods and strategies for working with ELLs are often negated by belief systems and national ideologies that are imported into English-medium international schools (Ainscow, Dyson, & Weiner, 2013; Allan, 2002; Carder, 2013). Moreover, administrators and teachers often lack the knowledge and skills required to make an accurate assessment of students with linguistic needs and instead rely upon general subjective impressions (De Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013).

2.2. Language policy

One way to unify and develop a shared vision and purpose in an English-medium international school is through a democratically developed and fully implemented school language policy (International Baccalaureate, 2011). A formal school language policy should detail what, how, and why (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996) and be implemented with the purpose of maximizing classroom instruction and language acquisition (Shoebottom, 2009). Because no two English-medium international schools are alike, a common language policy that appropriately addresses the needs of the teachers and students is unavailable (Fee, Liu, Duggan, Arias, & Wiley, 2014). As international English-medium education evolves, schools are no longer just "dispensers of information and knowledge" (UNESCO, 2012, p. 10); administrators and teachers in English-medium international schools should understand that ELLs must be taught both content and language.

2.3. Professional development and efficacy

Many native-English speaking teachers in the US and England begin their careers with little training for working with ELLs (Mehmedbegović, Skrandies, Byrne & Harding-Esch, 2015; Menken & Antunez, 2001). Additionally, many school administrators lack training and knowledge in second language acquisition (Padron

& Waxman, 2016). However, according to Tran (2015), language-specific training for working with ELLs bolsters teacher efficacy. Through the examination of long-term and structured professional development for working with ELLs, Tong, Luo, Irby, Lara-Alecio, and Rivera (2017) found that language-specific professional development for enhancing ELLs' academic language increased ELL academic performance. Moreover, collective teacher efficacy is directly related to student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000), and teacher efficacy is directly related to teacher job satisfaction (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). In sum, teacher efficacy is a decisive factor in how long a teacher will persist in a given situation (Bandura, 1977).

2.4. School leadership

Perceived administrative support plays a critical role in the formation of teacher efficacy in international schools. Studying retention of teachers in overseas American schools, Mancuso, Roberts, White, Yoshida, and Weston (2011) found that administrative support was one of the top reasons teachers provided for remaining or leaving a school. Additionally, teachers who believe their administrators are supportive have higher levels of teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). According to Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008), "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (p. 27). One way school leadership can provide support to teachers is through meaningful professional development (Robinson, 2007) that is content-focused, has active learning, utilizes collaboration, incorporates curricular models and modeling, contains coaching and support, provides feedback and reflection, and is sustained in duration (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).

2.5. Terminology

English as a second language (ESL) is used in this article to represent the department and teachers that work with English language learners. English language learner (ELL) is used to depict students who are receiving English language acquisition support from an ESL specialist teacher or an ESL department.

3. The study

3.1. Background of the study

English-medium international school administrators often lack the knowledge, skills, and understanding required to develop, implement, manage, and evaluate language learning programs effectively in an international setting (Gallagher,

2003). As a result, some international ESL departments and ESL specialist teachers find themselves struggling to negotiate their position within the school. Also, because of misunderstandings and complexities in differentiating language deficiencies from learning disabilities, many ESL specialist teachers unknowingly double as special education needs (SEN) teachers. Furthermore, some ESL specialist teachers find themselves working with classroom teachers that are ill-prepared to deal with the unique needs of ELLs. Consequently, numerous uncertainties face ESL specialist teachers in English-medium international schools.

ESL specialist teachers seeking knowledge and answers to questions will discover scant resources in literature specific to international schools, much of which is dated. Furthermore, there is little current information available for school administrators, ESL departments, and ESL specialist teachers to read and study concerning the practices of ESL departments in English-medium international schools. This lack of information can cause international ESL educators to feel isolated. Having access to literature that provides details for how some ESL departments in English-medium international schools function can reduce feelings of isolation and foster professional dialogue. The scarcity of literature detailing current practices of ESL departments in English-medium international schools prompted this survey-based research study.

The purpose of this study was to discover current practices and experiences of ESL departments in English-medium international schools in East Asia. Findings from this study will provide English-medium international school leaders, ESL Departments, and ESL specialist teachers with knowledge of current practices and experiences of other English-medium international schools in East Asia. Information presented in this study will supply data concerning staffing, ESL support and SEN, assessment, program models, curriculum and planning, policy, evaluation, language-specific professional development, and staff turnover.

3.2. Survey design and procurement of participants

The researcher designed the survey. He is currently an ESL Curriculum Coordinator at an English-medium international school in East Asia and consulted with two other ESL specialists and a SEN specialist. One of the ESL specialists and the SEN specialist took the survey as non-participants before initiating the survey-based study.

Following the development of the survey, the researcher developed a list of English-medium international schools in East Asian countries by cross-referencing schools listed on the website for Search Associates and schools reviewed on International Schools Review. Search Associates is an international school recruitment organization, and International Schools Review is a website that provides a platform for stakeholders to post reviews of international schools, English-medium

schools, and international programs. The final list contained 294 schools from the targeted countries of China (including Hong Kong and Macau), Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Next, the website for each school was located to acquire the names, and contact information for English as an Additional Language (EAL), English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Academic Purpose (EAP), and English Language Development (ELD) staff. For the sake of brevity, EAL, ESL, EAP and ELD will be referred to as ESL unless another term was used in a participant's written response. Of the 294 schools, 66 schools listed staff with contact information in one form or another. When multiple staff members were recorded, the personnel member specified as being head of the department was chosen. When a department head was unspecified and multiple language support teachers were listed, an ESL specialist or support teacher was chosen at random. The survey intended to procure a single response from as many targeted schools as possible. In each survey invitation, a request was made not to forward the survey link to another staff member unless the invitee chose not to complete the survey.

Sixty-six emails were sent containing an invitation to complete an online survey (see Appendix). A paid subscription to an online survey service was used to host the study. The survey was open for a total of nine days. Of the sixty-six emails sent, sixteen invitees, representing approximately a 24% completion rate, chose to become participants by completing the survey. Anonymity in completing the study was assured unless the participant wanted to identify himself or herself by leaving a contact email address. No payment or gift was promised for completing the survey other than providing participants with an opportunity to receive raw data at an unspecified time after the closing of the study. An answer to each of the first twenty-four questions of the survey was required for the participant to submit the questionnaire. The final two items on the survey offered participants an opportunity to include comments and or provide additional information, including contact information.

3.3. Research question

What are current practices in ESL departments in English-medium international schools in East Asia concerning

- school size and ESL staffing;
- ESL support and Special Education Needs (SEN);
- assessment of student language ability;
- language acquisition program model;
- curriculum and planning;
- ESL department policy and evaluations;
- language-specific professional development; and
- staff turnover?

4. Data and findings

The total number of participants for each set of data was sixteen (N = 16). Although survey questions provided multiple options for participants to respond, discussed are only the responses chosen by participants unless further clarification supported the overall content of the response. Of the 16 participants, five were from China (one from Macau and one from Hong Kong), five were from South Korea, two were from Japan, one was from Taiwan, two were from Vietnam, and the country for one participant was unlisted by the online survey service used to conduct the survey. Of the 16 participants, seven described their current position as ESL Department Head, six as ESL teachers, one as Director of Professional Learning, one as Learning Support Coordinator, and one as a special needs teacher.

4.1. School size and ESL staffing

First, participants provided information concerning the ages of the students in the school. Three participants reported being in a 3-12 elementary school, one participant reported being in a 12-18 secondary school, and 12 participants reported being in a 3-18 preK-12 school.

Participants also reported the number of students in the school (see Table 1). The number of participants responding is in parentheses: 1-100 (1), 101-200 (1), 201-300 (1), 301-400 (2), 401-500 (3), 601-700 (1), 900-1,000 (3), and 1,000 or more students (4). Next, participants provided the demographics of the school regarding the number of local students enrolled (see Table 1). The number of participants responding is in parentheses: 0-10% (4), 11-25% (3), 26-50% (1), 51-75% (3), and 76% and above (5). Also, participants reported the number of ESL teachers on staff; the number of participants is in parentheses: one (1), two-three (3), four-five (4), six-seven (3), and eight or more (5) (see Table 1).

Participants reported the minimum criterion for being an ESL teacher at their English-medium international school. One participant reported the minimum criterion as being a Master's in TESOL/ESL/Linguistics. Five participants reported a university degree being the minimum requirement. Another five participants reported the minimum as being a university degree with a TEFL certificate. The remaining five participants reported an education degree or post-graduate credential (PGC) was the minimum criterion for an ESL teacher at their school.

4.2. ESL and SEN

Participants provided information concerning the percentage of school population receiving ESL support (see Table 1); the number of participants is in parentheses:

1-5% (2), 11-15% (2), 16-20% (5), 21-25% (3), and more than 26% (4). Participants also provided the percentage of students receiving both ESL support and SEN support (see Table 1). One participant reported 0%, and 12 participants reported 1-10%. Two participants reported 11-20%, and one teacher reported 21-30% of the students receiving ESL support were also receiving SEN support. Moreover, participants indicated the level of professional communication that occurs between ESL and SEN staff in their school. Three participants stated that communication between ESL and SEN staff was low. Five participants noted the level of communication as being medium, and five participants stated the level of professional communication between ESL and SEN staff to be high. Three participants reported there was no SEN staff in their school.

Table 1 Demographics

n=16	School population	% of enrollment local	% of population receiving ESL support	% ESL receiving SEN support	Number of ESL teachers
1	1-100	11-25	11-15	1-10	2-3
2	101-200	0-10	>26	1-10	4-5
3	201-300	> 76	>26	1-10*	2-3
4	301-400	26-50	1-5	0*	1
5	301-400	0-10	16-20	1-10	4-5
6	401-500	51-75	21-25	1-10	4-5
7	401-500	> 76	16-20	1-10*	2-3
8	401-500	11-25	>26	1-10	6-7
9	601-700	> 76	11-15	1-10	≥8
10	901-1000	0-10	1-5	1-10	4-5
11	901-1000	> 76	16-20	11-20	6-7
12	901-1000	> 76	>26	1-10	≥8
13	>1,000	51-75	16-20	1-10	≥8
14	>1,000	51-75	21-25	21-30	6-7
15	>1,000	0-10	16-20	11-20	≥8
16	>1,000	11-25	21-25	1-10	≥8

Note. *No SEN staff; > Greater than; ≥ Equal to or greater

4.3. Assessment of student language ability

Participants disclosed which of the following determines whether students will receive ESL support:

- previous school records;
- all students receive support;
- classroom teacher recommendation;
- standardized assessment (ELDA, IPT, KELPA, WIDA, etc.);
- in-house language assessment;
- other (please specify).

None of the participants reported using previous school records as the single criterion for determining whether a student would receive ESL support. One participant revealed that classroom teacher recommendation determined whether students would receive ESL support. Nine participants reported using standardized assessment, and two participants reported the use of an in-house language assessment. Four participants chose to specify what determines whether students will receive ESL support in the following ways:

1) Standardized assessment plus teacher observations.
2) All of the above; all students receive support in the form of SIOP strategies which are being implemented school wide within core classes.
3) Reading assessment/language survey.
4) Assessment based on previous school records/former teachers' reports, standardized tests, for English and core academic content, and personal interviews.

Later in the survey, participants reported which of the following best determines when a student will no longer receive ESL support:

- classroom teacher recommendation;
- ESL teacher recommendation;
- administrative decision;
- standardized assessment;
- in-house language assessment;
- other (please specify).

One participant revealed that classroom teacher recommendation determines when a student will no longer receive ESL support. Three participants reported that ESL support ends upon recommendation by an ESL teacher. Two participants reported that administrative decision ends support and one teacher reported the use of standardized assessment. Three participants reported the use of in-house language assessment, and six participants chose to specify what determines when a student will no longer receive ESL support with the following responses:

1) WIDA + homeroom/ELL teacher input.
2) Standardized tests plus teacher recommendation.
3) A combination of WIDA test data, running records, writing assessments and various classroom tools.
4) Transition to HS, since all support is mainstreamed/push-in.
5) Combination of teachers recommendation (classrm & ESL), standardized assessment.
6) An EAL Dept. head and principal look at evidence of work samples and test results from classroom teacher and EAL specialist recommendations.

Also, participants revealed how often student assessment for English language acquisition occurs. One participant reported that evaluation of students' English does not happen. Another participant reported that it takes place once a year. Six participants reported assessing students twice a year and seven participants reported three times a year. Finally, one participant reported a monthly assessment of students.

4.4. Language acquisition program model

Participants were requested to specify which English language teaching model was currently in place at their school by choosing from the following:

- no set program in place;
- intensive English for a short period before transitioning to the classroom;
- pull-out (ESL taught outside of the mainstream classroom);
- push-in (inclusion);
- combination of both pull-out and push-in;
- other (please specify).

Thirteen participants reported the use of a combination of both pull-out and push-in. Two participants reported that pull-out with ESL instruction took place outside of the mainstream classroom. One teacher chose to specify and reported a combination of push-in and an extra class.

Seeking to gain additional information concerning push-in support, participants were asked to specify the designated role of the ESL teacher during push-in by choosing from the following:

- no push-in occurs;
- designated role is unspecified;
- only works with students designated as in need of ESL support;
- co-teacher;
- pre-teaches English academic vocabulary to the whole class;
- assistant to the classroom teacher;
- advisor/consultant to the classroom teacher;
- other (Please specify).

Five participants reported the designated role of the ESL teacher was co-teacher. Three participants reported that the ESL teacher only works with students identified as in need of ESL support. Three participants reported that the role of the ESL teacher was unspecified and one participant reported that push-in did not occur. Four participants chose to specify the designated role of the ESL teacher with the following responses:

1) Varies by division and by teaching partnerships but the goal is co-teacher, co-planner, co-assessor.
2) Co-teacher, pre-teaches Eng vocab to whole class, advisor, assistant, small grp leader.
3) Focuses on students designated as in need of EAL support but will work with other students in a group along with the targeted students. Sometimes co-teacher if the relationship with that teacher has been built.
4) Teaches writer's workshop to entire class.

Additionally, participants disclosed the level of satisfaction among classroom teachers and ESL personnel with push-in (see Figure 1).

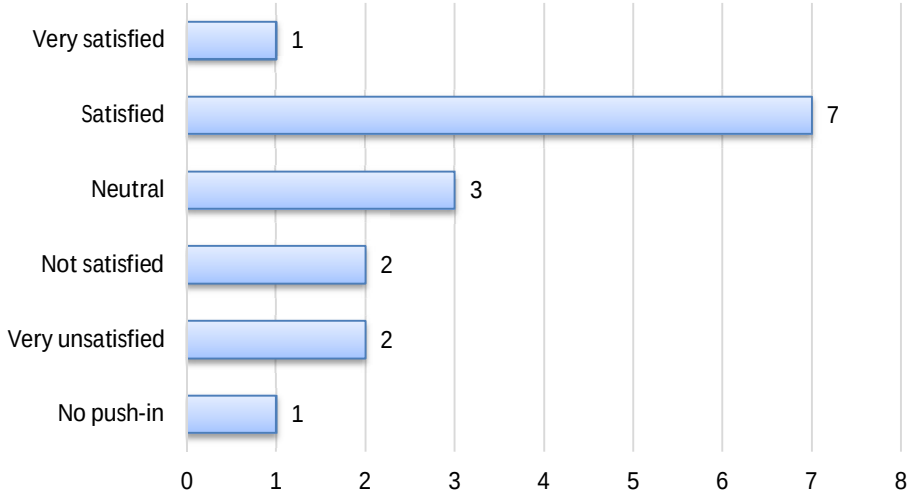

Figure 1 Level of satisfaction with push-in (N = 16)

Furthermore, participants communicated their preferred language support model by choosing from one of the following:

- intensive English for a short period before transitioning to the classroom;
- full-Inclusion with push-in (no pull-out);
- primarily push-in with limited pull-out;
- all pull-out (no push-in);
- primarily pull-out with limited push-in;
- other (please specify).

Figure 2 details the responses concerning preferred language support models. Three participants (the “other” category in Figure 2) chose to specify their preferred language support model with the following responses:

1) Varies by division with a combination in ES and MS and all mainstream support in HS.
2) Combination - push-in + extra class.
3) 1 WW [Writer's Workshop] class and 1 pullout class every second day (A Day / B Day system).

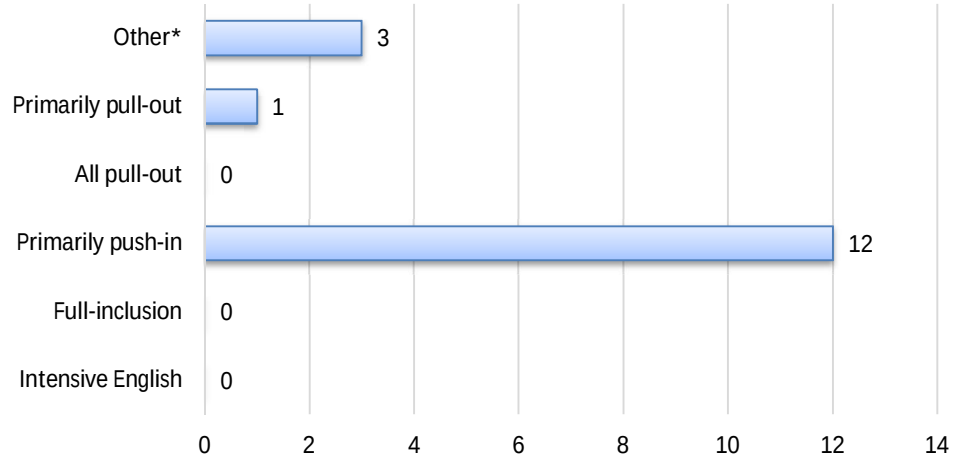

Figure 2 Preferred language support model (N = 16)

4.5. Curriculum and planning

Participants reported which curriculum was in place at their school. Nine participants reported that their school curriculum was PYP//MYP/DP, five participants reported US curriculum, one participant reported Canadian curriculum, and one participant reported their school curriculum as being IPC/IMYP.

Later, participants reported the protocol for completion of ESL lesson plans by choosing from of the following:

- no lesson plan required;
- teacher's choice;
- same lesson plan template as completed by classroom teachers;
- ESL designed lesson plan template;
- other (please specify).

Two participants revealed that no lesson plan was required. Seven participants reported the completion of lesson plans were by teacher's choice. Three participants reported ESL teachers used the same lesson plan template as classroom teachers. One participant reported the use of an ESL designed lesson plan template. Three participants chose to specify with the following responses:

1) Collaboration on units of inquiry and daily lessons.
2) Varies by division but UbD planning is a school-wide expectation.
3) Writing Assessments are based on PYP units of inquiry/pullout lessons are also based on PYP work being completed during units of inquiry.

4.6. ESL department policy and evaluations

Participants specified how ESL policies were established. Six participants reported the Head of ESL and one participant reported the Curriculum Director developed or decides ESL policies. Four participants reported the Principal/Head of School, and five participants chose to specify with the following responses:

1) EAL director in conjunction with school admin.
2) ELL team in collaboration with administration.
3) ELL department with principal approval.
4) Unknown policies.
5) I collaborated with our then PYP Coordinator regarding the need for a more balanced and inclusive language support system. Our language policy was reworded and a Writers' Workshop system was implemented to ensure that there was a balance of push-in and pullout for students receiving language support.

Additionally, participants reported the frequency of reviewing ESL policies by choosing one of the following:

- policies have been set and further revisions are unnecessary;
- every few years as needed;
- yearly.

Three participants revealed that policies had been set and further revisions were unnecessary. Six participants reported every few years as needed and seven participants reported that policies undergo an annual review.

Participants also described the evaluation process for ESL teachers by choosing from the following:

- no evaluation;
- administrator observation;
- classroom teacher(s) recommendation;
- assessment data;
- other (please specify).

Twelve participants reported that ESL teacher evaluation occurs via administrator observation. One participant reported evaluation via classroom teacher(s) recommendation. Three participants chose to specify with the following responses:

1) Standard classroom teacher revaluation model.
2) Same as all teachers: tech evaluation, department evaluation, administrator/divisional evaluation.
3) Year 1 & 2: Admin evaluation. Year 3 & 4: self/peer eval.

4.7. Language-specific professional development

Participants reported which of the following professional development opportunities specific to language teaching were made available to classroom teachers:

- no opportunities are available;
- online development;
- in-house development;
- outside consultant/presentation (in school);
- conference attendance;
- other (please specify).

One participant reported that classroom teachers were provided professional development specific to language teaching via online professional development and another participant reported in-house development. Five participants reported that outside consultant/presentation (in school) was used and five other participants reported conference attendance as the means for classroom teachers to receive professional development specific to language teaching. Four participants chose to specify professional development for classroom teachers with the following responses:

1) All of the above.
2) All of the above dependent upon budget.
3) Mostly in-house, but all teachers have yearly PD allotment that can be used for outside workshops.
4) Teaching ESL students in mainstream classrooms (TESMC): Teacher Development Course plus in-house development and conference attendance.

Participants were prompted with the same options to report which professional development opportunities specific to language teaching were made available specifically to ESL teachers. One participant reported online development and another participant reported outside consultant/presentation (in school). Twelve participants reported conference attendance and two participants chose to specify with the following responses:

1) All of the above.
2) As above.

4.8. Staff turnover

Lastly, participants disclosed the ESL staff turnover rate in their school. One participant reported the rate to be very low and another participant reported the rate as being low. Ten participants reported the ESL staff turnover rate to be medium and four participants revealed the turnover rate to be high.

5. Discussion

The participants in this study revealed a broad range of practices concerning language instruction in English-medium internationals schools in East Asia. Data from the study shows that there is considerable variation in the practices of English-medium international schools and ESL departments in regards to policy formation, language-specific professional development, language acquisition models, and ESL teacher self-efficacy. A common element that permeates many of the topics explored in this study is school leadership, and according to Leithwood et al. (2008), "a key task for leadership (...) is to improve staff performance" (p. 32). Leithwood et al. (2008) indicated that this task could be exemplified by the term *instructional leadership*, which is currently one of the most sought styles of leadership by international schools seeking to fill leadership positions (Roberts & Mancuso, 2014).

As seen from some of the responses, ESL policy is sometimes developed by administrators without the input of ESL specialist teachers and other stakeholders, which can result in a stagnancy that hinders more than facilitates the actual implementation of a successful language acquisition program. Because school leaders and educators often import dispositions and pedagogical culture from their national systems (Carder, 2013), it is important for English-medium international schools to develop language instruction and ESL department policies with input from multiple stakeholders (Fee et al., 2014; International Baccalaureate, 2011). Because no two schools are alike, language and language instruction policies must be developed and implemented based on the unique needs of the students and school (Fee et al., 2014). Moreover, an English-medium international school language policy should reinforce the concept that all teachers are language teachers (International Baccalaureate, 2011). As such, the optimal learning environment in classrooms of English-medium international schools requires that all teachers be able to provide instruction that meets the needs of English language learners. However, the ability to provide such instruction "presupposes familiarity with the facilitators of second language acquisition" (Shoebottom, 2009, p. 14). Regardless, English-medium international schools should develop support structures for efficiently implementing language policy,

which includes long-term, language-specific professional development for both ESL specialist teachers and classroom teachers.

When completing the survey, one participant stated, "All students receive support in the form of SIOP strategies which are being implemented school wide within core classes". SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) is an instructional model that helps teachers scaffold instruction and utilizes both content and language objectives. Although Krashen (2013) contended that there is conflict within SIOP when analyzed according to his hypotheses for language acquisition, SIOP may be considered a step in the right direction as it can help enable content teachers to become aware of their role as language teachers. When answering the question concerning classroom teacher professional development in language teaching, one participant reported, "*Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms (TESMC): Teacher Development Course plus in-house development and conference attendance."* Aligned to the Australian Curriculum literacy requirements, TESMC is a teaching course that considers all teachers to be language teachers. The course consists of nine modules with 50 hours of professional development activities.

Conference attendance and outside consultant/presentation (in school) specific to language learning received a high response rate for professional development available to both classroom and ESL teachers. However, such options for professional development are not likely to facilitate long-term change unless reinforced in a protracted manner with skill and understanding. Recent research reveals that effective professional development is content-focused and sustained in duration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), and English-medium international schools should provide language-specific professional development to help close gaps in knowledge that teachers may have in working with language learners (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Professional development implemented over time with vision can lead to a faculty culture that values reflective practice (Powell, 2000). Additionally, English-medium international school leaders must realize that structures provided and constructed through their leadership have an impact on student learning that is second only to the teachers working directly with the students (Leithwood et al., 2008).

The use of push-in as a language acquisition model has been escalating in English-medium international schools. Reasons for this escalation vary from a desire to reduce staffing costs to importing home country practices concerning ELLs, sometimes a combination. Some administrators view push-in (mainstreaming/inclusion) as a way to reduce costs while providing equity in education (UNESCO, 1994), thus a problem solver. However, mainstreaming does not necessarily provide equal opportunity as seen in the US Supreme Court ruling in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). Considering that three participants reported their school

did not have SEN support staff in addition to the reported percentages of ELLs receiving SEN support, there is concern that some English-medium international schools may not be appropriately meeting the needs of some learners as the practice of push-in escalates.

When asked to report a preferred language instruction support model, only one participant reported their preferred model as being primarily pull-out. By contrast, 12 participants preferred primarily push-in with limited pull-out, and although three participants chose to specify, their preference was to some degree a combination of primarily push-in with some pull-out. When asked to report the current level of satisfaction between classroom teachers and ESL personnel with a push-in model, only eight participants reported being satisfied, and just one of those participants was very satisfied. In contrast, seven participants reported being neutral, not satisfied, or very unsatisfied. Moreover, when asked to report on the designated role of the ESL specialist teacher during push-in, five participants reported co-teacher was the designated role. Three participants reported that the ESL specialist teacher only works with students designated as in need of ESL support. One participant reported that the ESL specialist teacher would work with other students assigned to a group that contained ELLs. However, that same participant acknowledged that the ESL specialist teacher could function as a co-teacher if a relationship between the ESL and classroom teachers existed and fostered such an arrangement. Of concern are the three participants that reported the role as being unspecified. While Holderness (2001) discussed how the ESL specialist teacher and classroom teacher might need to negotiate and agree upon their roles, the respective positions should be clearly defined within the policy documents to avoid confusion and frustration.

The self-efficacy level of a teacher is influenced by their working conditions (Bandura, 1977), and teacher retention in international schools is directly related to the actions of school leadership (Mancuso, Roberts, & White, 2010). While researching international school retention, Hardman (2004) found that teachers were more likely to renew contracts when the work climate ensured such qualities as feeling respected and valued, a team member environment, and a well-communicated purpose and vision. Just as Gallagher (2008) warned parents of ELLs about the imbalance of power that can exist in English-medium international schools, ESL specialist teachers must also be aware of the imbalance of power lest they find themselves in the position of fighting for both the rights of their students and their rights as teachers (Carder, 2013). All too often, ESL specialist teachers find themselves in a situation of lower status in schools (Leung & Franson, 2001). Perceived lower status might be a reason why four of the sixteen participants reported that the ESL specialist teacher turnover rate was high and ten participants reported a medium turnover rate.

6. Limitations

This survey targeted 66 potential respondents of which 16 chose to participate. Although the response rate was approximately 24%, participants represent only a fraction of the ESL specialist teachers and English-medium international schools in operation in the targeted countries. Further research is needed in English-medium international schools regarding language acquisition policy, program models, inclusion, SEN, assessment, administration, and staffing. In the final section of the survey provided for participants to make open-ended comments, two participating teachers offered the following criticisms:

1) Good luck with your research! The questions without an "other" option (except for the school demographic questions) on this survey were not answered well because they would've been more accurate to provide additional information or "not applicable".
2) It would be better to give the option of choosing more than one answer when more than one answer applies.

The above comments point to additional limitations of this exploratory survey. While allowed open-ended responses, these two participants chose not to elaborate on any particular question(s) or their answer(s). Multiple responses were not allowed to narrow the responses to that which "best describes" a particular circumstance. Also, participants were allowed to respond with the choice of "Other (Please specify)" to clarify their desired response. As a result, participants that chose to complete the survey and to specify their answers offered additional information that could be useful to some of the readers of this article.

Positive comments were also received within the section for open-ended comments found in the ending section of the survey. These comments included the following:

1) These are great questions for every EL department to consider. The absence of answers points to the gaps in the program.

Additionally, several participants replied to the email containing the invitation and link to complete the survey. The ensuing emails offered in-depth responses, clarification, and words of encouragement that provided opportunities for professional reflection.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to provide English-medium international school leaders, ESL departments, and ESL specialist teachers with knowledge of current practices and experiences of other English-medium international schools in East Asia. Current practices and experiences reported in this article pertain to language instruction policy, program models, inclusion, SEN, assessment, administration, and staffing. The researcher hopes the reported data and subsequent discussion provide school administrators, ESL Departments, and ESL specialist teachers with points to consider as schools develop, implement, manage, and evaluate language acquisition models and policies in English-medium international schools. Although the data originated from a limited number of participants in a sizeable but specific geographical area, the information provided can be of value to school administrators and ESL departments worldwide. Through careful study, reflection, and discussion concerning the survey questions, participant responses, and publications of referenced authors, school administrators, ESL Departments, and ESL specialist teachers can make better decisions concerning language acquisition models and policies.

While all teachers negotiate policy within their classrooms (Menken & García, 2010), school administrators should ensure that school policies are in alignment with a transparent language policy that is supported by contemporary research findings. Furthermore, ESL Department policy should be open to the school community and help support the overall academic vision of the school. Although "there is no one written language policy that schools can rely on to ensure that they have a strong language policy or strategy for implementation" (Fee et al., 2014, p. 128), information is available concerning the development of language and ESL Department policies. Some of the authors and sources referenced in this article provide valuable information concerning the development, implementation, management, and evaluation of language acquisition policy and ESL programs in English-medium international schools. In sum, school administration is responsible for the success or failure of the language instruction model and ESL Department in an English-medium international school.

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Appendix

The survey used in the study.

1. Please indicate which of the following best describes your position.
    - EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD Department Head
    - EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD Teacher
    - Principal / Head of school
    - Other (Please Specify)
2. Please indicate which of the following best describes the ages of the students in your school.
    - Age 3 through 12
    - Age 12 through 18
    - Age 3 through 18
3. Please indicate the range that best describes the student population of the school.
    - 1-100
    - 101-200
    - 201-300
    - 301-400
    - 401-500
    - 501-600
    - 601-700
    - 701-800
    - 801-900
    - 901-1000
    - 1001-higher
4. Please indicate which best describes the demographics of the school.
    - 0-10% local population
    - 11-25% local population
    - 26-50% local population
    - 51-75% local population
    - 76% and above local population
5. How many EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teachers are on staff?
    - 0
    - 1
    - 2-3
    - 4-5
    - 6-7
    - 8 or more
6. What is the percentage of school population receiving EAL/ESL/AEP/ELD support?
    - 1-5%
    - 6-10%
    - 11-15%
    - 16-20%

- 21-25%
- More than 26%

7. What is the school curriculum?
    - PYP MYP DP
    - IPC/IMYP
    - IGCSE
    - Independent
    - England
    - U.S.
    - Other (Please Specify)

8. Please indicate which of the following is the minimum educational criterion set for being an EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teacher?
    - No qualification
    - TEFL certificate, but no university degree
    - University degree
    - University degree and TEFL certificate
    - Education degree/Post graduate certificate
    - Master's in TESOL/ESL/Linguistics
    - Other (Please Specify)

9. What English language teaching program is currently in place?
    - No program in place.
    - Intensive English for a short period of time before transitioning to the classroom.
    - Pullout (EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD taught outside of the mainstream classroom)
    - Push-in (Inclusion)
    - Combined – both pull-out & push-in
    - Other (Please Specify)

10. What is the designated role of the EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teacher during push-in?
    - No push-in support with an EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teacher occurs in the school
    - Designated role is unspecified
    - Only works with students designated as in need of EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD support
    - Co-teacher
    - Pre-teaches English academic vocabulary to the whole class
    - Assistant to the classroom teacher
    - Advisor/consultant to the classroom teacher
    - Other (Please Specify)

11. Please indicate which of the following best describes the current level of satisfaction between classroom teachers and EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD personnel with push-in.
    - No push-in occurs
    - Very unsatisfied
    - Not satisfied
    - Neutral
    - Satisfied
    - Very satisfied

12. Please indicate which of the following best describes your preferred English language support model.
- Intensive English before transitioning to the classroom.
- Full-inclusion with push-in (no pull-out)
- Primarily push-in with limited pull-out
- All pull-out (no push-in)
- Primarily pull-out with limited push-in
- Other (Please Specify)

13. What determines whether students will receive EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD support?
- Previous school records
- All students receive support
- Classroom teacher recommendation
- Standardized assessment (ELDA, IPT, KELPA, WIDA, etc.)
- In-house language assessment
- Other (Please Specify)

14. Please indicate which of the following best describes how often students are assessed for language acquisition.
- Students are not assessed
- Once a year
- Two times a year
- Three times a year
- Monthly

15. Please indicate which of the following best determines when a student will no longer receive EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD support?
- Classroom teacher recommendation
- EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teacher recommendation
- Administrative decision
- Standardized assessment
- In-house language assessment
- Other (Please Specify)

16. Please indicate which of the following best describes the level of professional communication that occurs during school between EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD personnel and SEN/Special Needs personnel.
- No SEN/Special Needs Staff
- Low
- Medium
- High

17. Please indicate which of the following best describes the percentage of students receiving EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD support who are also receiving SEN/Special Needs support.
- 0%
- 1-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- More than 31%

18. Please indicate which of the following best describes how EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD lesson plans are completed.
    - No lesson plan required
    - Teacher's choice
    - Same lesson plan template as completed by classroom teachers
    - EAL/ESL/AEP/ELD designed lesson plan template
    - Other (Please Specify)

19. How are EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teachers evaluated?
    - No evaluation
    - Administrator observation
    - Classroom teacher(s) recommendation
    - Assessment data
    - Other (Please Specify)

20. Who established or decides EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD policies?
    - There are no policies in place for EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD
    - Individual EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teachers
    - Head of EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD
    - Curriculum Director
    - Principal / Head of School
    - Other (Please Specify)

21. Please indicate which of the following best describes how often EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD policies are reviewed.
    - Policies have been set and further revisions are unnecessary
    - Every few years as needed
    - Yearly

22. Which of the following professional development opportunities specific to language teaching are made available to classroom teachers?
    - No opportunities are available
    - Online development
    - In-house development
    - Outside consultant / presentation (in school)
    - Conference attendance
    - Other (Please Specify)

23. Which of the following professional development opportunities specific to language teaching are made available specifically to EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD teachers?
    - No opportunities are available
    - Online development
    - In-house development
    - Outside consultant / presentation (in school)
    - Conference attendance
    - Other (Please Specify)

24. Please indicate which of the following best describes the EAL/ESL/EAP/ELD staff turnover rate.
    - Very low
    - Low

- Medium
- High
- Very high

25. If you wish to make any comments concerning this survey, please make them here.
26. Leave an email address if you would be willing to answer additional questions concerning push-in language learner support in international or English-medium schools.