



English Language Proficiency in Indonesia: Issues and Prospects¹⁾

Willy A. Renandya

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Fuad A. Hamied

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Joko Nurkamto

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

In this article, we discuss key issues about English language proficiency in Indonesia, focusing in particular on the level and kind of proficiency that English language teachers need to have to support their classroom teaching. We first define the concept of proficiency and how it is usually measured, and then present some data about teachers and students' English language proficiency in Indonesia and the Asian region. The next section discusses research that helps us understand why a threshold of proficiency is required for effective teaching. As many teachers may not have reached a level of proficiency considered sufficient for effective teaching, we then discuss key theoretical principles from SLA that can be used as a basis for developing a training programme to help raise teachers' proficiency. We conclude by calling all stakeholders (i.e., policy makers, language education providers and professional associations) to work together and find ways to support teachers in their effort to acquire a higher level of proficiency in English.

Keywords: English language proficiency, Indonesia, teachers' proficiency

What is Language Proficiency?

Broadly speaking, language proficiency refers to one's ability to use language for a variety of communicative purposes. Proficient users are said to have a good command of the language, i.e., they can understand the language without difficulty, express a range of ideas clearly in speech and writing, and interact with other speakers comfortably. Five performance indicators are usually used to assess language proficiency, i.e., accuracy, fluency, complexity, appropriacy and capacity (Richards, 2018).

Accuracy refers to the ability to produce language correctly in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. We score high on this indicator if our speech or writing is free of language errors. Fluency refers to the ability to express ideas smoothly and to use language resources to sustain the flow of our communication and avoid communication breakdowns. In writing, fluency is demonstrated by our ability to organize our ideas coherently so that they flow nicely together. Complexity refers to our ability to use complex language i.e., whether we are able to use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar. An advanced level speaker uses a wider variety of vocabulary and sentence structures, unlike a beginner level speaker whose speech is characterized by the use of simpler language. Appropriacy is about whether the language we use is relevant and appropriate for the purpose, audience and context of the situation. Finally, capacity

refers to how much of what we know can be used to discuss and write about a variety of topics in various settings (formal or informal) and with what levels of sophistication (superficial or deep). In the classroom context, capacity refers to the extent to which a teacher is able to make full use of their target language proficiency to explain, give examples, select relevant teaching materials, model correct language use and provide effective feedback on student performance.

Based on these performance indicators, people's communicative competence can be described along a range of proficiency levels, for example: elementary, intermediate or advanced. For instructional and assessment purposes, each level may be further broken down into several sub levels. Thus, the elementary level can be subdivided into pre-elementary, elementary and post-elementary levels. Commercial language teaching providers usually use this classification for instructional and certification purposes.

A well-established and internationally recognized language proficiency framework is CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference). CEFR has been used as a broad guideline to describe the language abilities of learners of foreign languages (English being one of these languages) across Europe. More recently, the framework has been adopted, with some modifications, for use as a proficiency standard for both English teachers and students in the region including Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Interestingly, CEFR has been used by foreign language programmes in universities in Indonesia (e.g., French language teaching), but it has yet to gain currency in English language teaching. Many ELT professionals in Indonesia are familiar with standardized proficiency tests such as TOEFL and IELTS, but only a few have heard about CEFR.

The framework describes proficiency in terms of three broad categories: Basic user, Independent user and Proficient user. Each category is divided into two sub levels (See Appendix 1). The descriptors of each of the subscale provide information about what people can do with the language and with what levels of sophistication. A Basic User at the A1 level for example can use the language to meet very basic communicative needs such as giving simple introductions and asking and answering questions about personal details. At the other end of the scale, a highly Proficient User at the C2 level can understand complex information from various sources and express a wide range of communicative needs fluently and accurately using appropriate and complex language where relevant².

What is the Level of Proficiency of English Teachers in Indonesia?

This is a very important question but unfortunately, nationwide official data on English teachers' language proficiency is largely unavailable. Where data is available (see, for example, Azis, 2018; Hamied, 2018), it is not always easy to make meaningful interpretations of this data. There are two problems here. First, the proficiency test comprises multiple choice items, which primarily assess teachers' receptive knowledge of the language; thus, the test results do not provide reliable information about teachers' ability to use the language for communicative and pedagogical purposes. Second, test results are expressed in terms of scores, and not in terms of proficiency bands. As we all know, test scores do not provide useful information about what one can or cannot do with the language and are therefore of a limited value to policy makers and language educators.

The Ministry of Education, Indonesia, however has some interesting data on the English proficiency of teachers who taught at the International Standard Schools (locally known as RSBI schools) some years ago. As reported in Coleman (2009), of the 27,000 RSBI teachers who took the TOEIC test, only a tiny percentage (less than one per cent) of these teachers had a high level of proficiency in English. Half of them had a very low proficiency level, while the other half had a proficiency level in the elementary and intermediate range.

More than half of all teachers and head teachers possess only a 'novice' proficiency level in English, scoring between 10 and 250 on a 990-point scale. A further 45% of teachers and head teachers have an 'elementary' or 'intermediate' level of English. Only 0.7% of teachers and 0.2% of headteachers

have an 'advanced working' or 'general professional' level of proficiency in English. (Coleman, 2009, p. 7)

While the data above may not reflect the proficiency situation of all English teachers in Indonesia, the general impression among ELT scholars in Indonesia seems to be that the proficiency of English teachers in Indonesia is hugely variable. We have on numerous occasions met teachers who speak fluent and flawless English; but we have also met some whose proficiency falls below our expectation. The majority probably fall in the lower intermediate range, possibly in the B1-B2 levels on the CEFR scale. Anecdotal evidence seems to support this observation. Senior teachers and teacher educators that we have worked with often share their observations with us saying that many Indonesian English teachers are not very fluent and lack confidence in using the language in and out of the classroom. Many have to resort to using their L1 because of their limited proficiency, and also because their students may not understand much English.

Fresh graduates from teacher education colleges in Indonesia also show varied levels of proficiency. Again, no official data is available. From what we know, some teacher education colleges require their student teachers to demonstrate evidence of proficiency before graduation, but others simply let their students exit the programme although they may not have met the proficiency standard to teach English in schools. These universities usually use TOEFL as their preferred proficiency test for their graduation requirement. The benchmark scores typically range from 450 to 525, although some elite universities may require a higher TOEFL score.

Given the popularity of TOEFL in Indonesia, a relevant question to ask would be whether TOEFL is an appropriate test to measure teachers' language proficiency. Most ELT experts would probably agree that TOEFL is probably not the best measure of one's general language ability. As we know, TOEFL is designed to assess one's language ability to function in an academic setting where English is the main language of instruction at overseas tertiary institutions such as in the USA. Thus, while TOEFL may be a valid test for those who want to pursue academic studies abroad, it is probably not the best measure of one's overall language proficiency. There is no guarantee that someone with a good TOEFL score would be able to use English fluently in social, non-academic settings. More importantly, TOEFL does not assess one's ability to use English for teaching purposes. There is agreement in the teacher education literature that an English teacher needs to be proficient in general English and classroom English (Richards, 2017). The latter is a specialized language skill that effective teachers need in order to be able to teach English *through* English effectively.

Limited language proficiency among English teachers, however, is not unique to Indonesia. Other countries in the region and elsewhere in the world are also facing the same problem. Butler (2004), for example, reported that many of the primary and high school English teachers in Korea felt that they did not have sufficient English to teach effectively in English (the situation may have changed somewhat following a series of policy initiatives that involved retraining of English teachers to upskill their proficiency). More recently, Young et al (2014) observe that many NNEST (non-native English-speaking teachers) teachers may have a limited proficiency in English and have to rely on their first language when teaching their students, who also have a low proficiency in English. Thus, it is not uncommon that both teachers and students use their L1 for the most part of the English lessons.

Similarly, many English teachers in the region do not seem to meet the standards set by their governments. In a recent colloquium on language teacher education in Asia at the 2017 AsiaTEFL conference that the first author chaired, the colloquium speaker from Thailand reported the results of a large survey involving some 400 English teachers in Thailand. The findings showed that

60% of them had knowledge of English and teaching methodologies below that of the syllabus level at which they were teaching; of the remaining top 40%, only 3% had a reasonable level of fluency, and only 20% were teaching class-levels for which they were both qualified and competent. (Sitthikul, 2017, in Renandya et al., 2017)

Other researchers largely confirm the proficiency levels of English teachers in Thailand reported by Sitthikul. Baker (2008) and more recently, Todd (2016) call for a more concerted effort to help Thai English teachers develop more confidence in using English in the classroom.

The proficiency data from Vietnam is fairly similar. In the same colloquium, the speaker from Vietnam reported that about 50% of primary and secondary school English teachers in Vietnam had a proficiency level below the benchmarks set by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training. Malaysia fared better compared to Thailand and Vietnam. The colloquium speaker from Malaysia reported that on average English teachers' proficiency was in the B2 range, slightly below the national benchmark which is set at C1 on the CEFR scale.

It is important to note that the three countries have compiled their national teacher proficiency data and have started massive retraining programmes for their teachers to improve on their proficiency levels. Indonesia, however, has not even started. We are therefore glad that TEFLIN (The Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia) has taken an important first step in the right directions by organizing a summit in February 2018 and inviting key stakeholders (i.e., policy makers, senior and master teachers, language teacher educators, language researchers and publishers) to discuss issues and challenges related to language teachers, language teaching and language teacher education.

How does Indonesia Compare with Other Countries in the Region?

The English Proficiency Index (EPI) produced by English First (a large English language teaching provider with branches all over the world) has recently been used by governments, international funding agencies and business leaders to gauge the overall proficiency levels of their population for various purposes. While the tools used by English First Education to arrive at proficiency scores may not be the most valid or reliable from a language assessment perspective (i.e., it is an online a multiple choice test on language skills), the data provides the largest ranking of English language skills by country in the world.

The 2017 EPI data show that Indonesia ranked 39th out of 80 countries in the world, and 10th out of 20 countries in Asia. With an average score of 52.15, Indonesia falls under the 'low proficiency band' category (<https://www.ef.sg/epi/regions/asia/>).

TABLE 1
2017 English Proficiency Index

Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score
1	Singapore	66.03	11	Taiwan	52.04
2	Malaysia	61.07	12	Macau	51.87
3	Philippines	60.59	13	Bangladesh	50.96
4	India	56.12	14	Pakistan	49.88
5	Hong Kong	55.81	15	Thailand	49.78
6	South Korea	55.32	16	Sri Lanka	47.84
7	Vietnam	53.43	17	Kazakhstan	45.95
8	China	52.45	18	Mongolia	44.21
9	Japan	52.34	19	Cambodia	40.86
10	Indonesia	52.15	20	Laos	37.56

To our knowledge, official/national proficiency data on Indonesian learners of English is unavailable. There is, however, one study conducted by Nurweni and Read (1999), which is often cited by international ELT scholars, that provides some information about the proficiency level of Indonesian learners of English. In their study, Nurweni and Reid investigated the vocabulary size of a large group of 1st year non-English major students from a number of universities. They found that on average these students knew about (had some knowledge of) 1226 English words, a figure that vocabulary scholars such as Nation (2006) and Schmitt (2014) consider to be severely inadequate. While estimates vary, vocabulary researchers agree that students need at least 3,000 to 5,000 words to be able to read unsimplified, non-specialist texts with sufficient comprehension (e.g., Cobb, 2007). Given the fairly high correlations

between vocabulary size and students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Alderson, 2005), a small vocabulary size could be taken to mean that the overall proficiency level of the college students in the Nurweny and Read study probably did not meet the expected standard. We are not aware of any recent study on Indonesian students' vocabulary size, but our collective experience seems to suggest that our current students probably have a considerably higher vocabulary size than what was reported by Nurweny and Read. This of course would need to be empirically verified; so we urge Indonesian ELT scholars to replicate that study, or better still, conduct a more comprehensive study into current students' overall proficiency. The results of such study could then be used by policy makers and other stakeholders to plan and design relevant proficiency training programmes.

Why is Proficiency Important?

The answer to this question is quite obvious. Language proficiency is one of the key components that make up a language teacher's professional knowledge. Minimally, a professional language teacher is expected to have sufficient content knowledge (knowledge about the English language), pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge about how to teach English), and sufficient proficiency in the language to be able to teach through the target language effectively. The correlation between proficiency and teaching effectiveness is of course not a perfect one. It is not the case that somebody with a very high level of proficiency can automatically teach effectively in the classroom. If this were the case, then all native speakers would be the ideal teachers in the classroom. Research shows that even highly proficient native speakers of English still need to learn 'classroom language' and use it effectively to facilitate language learning in the classroom (Richards, 2017).

That said, it is important to stress that having a sufficient proficiency is a *sine qua non* of teaching. It is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for effective teaching. Having an adequate proficiency allows teachers to navigate their lessons more smoothly and efficiently. Research shows that teachers with a higher level of proficiency seem to be more adept at using English to carry out classroom tasks and provide appropriate language support to their students. In a recent study with foreign language teachers of different levels of proficiency in New Zealand, H. Richards et al. (2013) examined the following seven aspects of teaching:

1. Exploitation of target language resources
2. Provision of appropriate language models
3. Provision of corrective feedback
4. Use of the TL to manage the class
5. Provision of accurate explanations
6. Provision of rich language input
7. Ability to improvise

The results showed that two of the seven teachers in the study who had higher proficiency levels were able to cover all seven aspects satisfactorily; the other five lower proficiency teachers, however, were not as skilful in doing the first four aspects, and performed poorly on the last two, i.e., ability to provide rich language input, and ability to improvise (e.g., responding to questions about the target language or culture).

Research also shows that a very high level of proficiency, while desirable, is probably not the best solution to improve the overall teaching effectiveness. The reality is that the majority of English teachers in the world are non-native English-speaking teachers and only a few of them reach a very high level of proficiency. There is, however, a consensus among ELT and education experts that a threshold level of proficiency is needed for teachers to be able to teach through English (Richards, 2017). Research by Tsang (2017) in Hong Kong provides some evidence that a certain threshold level of proficiency is indeed

important. However, her study seems to suggest that once teachers have passed this threshold, proficiency does not seem to contribute much to teaching effectiveness (measured as their ability to engage students in the learning process). Other factors, such as teaching skills and teachers' ability to engage and motivate students, seem to play a more important role in teaching.

Tsang's study was done in Hong Kong where the government has already established a proficiency benchmark for language teachers (English and Putonghua). The MOE established a language proficiency centre to assess and certify university graduates (including those from teacher education universities) who wish to join the teaching profession as language teachers. Those who want to teach English will have to take the LPATE³ test (Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers of English) and meet the MOE's standard or proficiency benchmark. Here is a brief description of the test and the minimum standard (level 3 out of 5 levels) required for teaching in Hong Kong schools (<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/lpat/>):

Since 2001, the HKEAA and the Education Bureau (EDB) have jointly conducted the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT), which assesses candidates' proficiency in English Language and Putonghua for teaching the respective subject in schools. Anyone who satisfies the entry requirements can enter for the assessment.

The assessment consists of oral and written papers, as well as a classroom language assessment which is offered to teachers only. Candidates who attain Level 3 or above in all papers of the assessment are deemed to have met the Language Proficiency Requirement for teaching the relevant subject in schools.

A sample of the LPATE test format can be found in Appendix 2. According to the Director of the Testing Centre, Level 3 on the LPATE was roughly equivalent to IELTS 7 (N. Drave, personal communication). The difference between IELTS and LPATE is that the latter is a highly customized test for use in the Hong Kong context and it includes assessment of general and classroom language proficiency. The teachers in the Tsang study obviously were very proficient users of English and the term 'threshold' most probably refers to a proficiency level in the IELTS 7 or roughly in the C1 Level. Thus, the teachers in his study were of high proficiency.

In a recent article, Coniam et al (2017) contend that the LPATE test has served the Hong Kong language education well in terms of raising and maintaining the proficiency levels of their English teachers and ensuring that these teachers could use English fluently and effectively for teaching purposes in the English language classroom. As reported by Coniam et al. (2017), the majority of the 24 teacher respondents in the study pointed out that "the LPATE ensures English language standards; and ... improves language subject-matter knowledge, in particular a knowledge and awareness of grammar" (p. 129).

How Can We Help Teachers and Students Improve Their Proficiency?

To answer this question, we need to turn to the professional literature and examine what language learning theories and principles SLA scholars and ELT experts believe to be important in language learning. We discuss briefly key recommendations by experts in our field.

Prior to 2000s, theoretical discussions on the nature and processes of language acquisition seemed to take centre stage. Competing hypotheses, models and theories were proposed by SLA scholars to provide the most parsimonious explanations of language acquisition. While the discussions were quite stimulating (intellectually speaking), practitioners often felt unsure or even confused about which of the SLA theories could be productively applied in the classroom. Fortunately, in recent years the discussions in the SLA literature has shifted (at least to some extent) to exploring practical applications of SLA theories in the classroom contexts. A recent book by Loewen (2015), for example, 'Introduction to Instructed Second Language Acquisition' is a case in point. The book addresses the more practical concerns about which

theories best explain language acquisition in instructed settings (as opposed to language acquisition in naturalistic settings) and which ones can be used to guide the design and delivery of language instruction.

Shawn (2015) provides a summary of expert opinions about the link between the broad SLA theories and language instruction. Citing Ortega (2007), he explores three possible connections between SLA theories and language instruction: (1) no effect on language teaching, (2) little impact on language teaching and (3) beneficial effects on language teaching. Of significant interest to the purpose of this paper are theories that belong to the third categories of language learning theories, i.e., those that can support or enhance language learning in the classroom. Loewen (2015) mentions three SLA theories which a majority of researchers consider to be applicable for language instruction: Input Processing Theory, Interaction Theory and Skill Acquisition Theory,” (p. 9). To these three, we would add the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990). While this can be subsumed under the input processing and interaction theories, it deserves separate mention since most language programmes include a sizable form-focussed component.

Other theories can be used to support teaching in general (e.g., Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory of learning), but the four SLA theories above should form the major theoretical bases for developing language proficiency. ELT experts such as Nation (2007), for example, have developed a model based on the theories above. He proposes that a successful language programme should be organized around four areas of learning. The four areas and their corresponding theoretical orientations are shown below. He further suggests that each of these strands should take up about a quarter of curriculum time.

TABLE 2
The Four Strands and their Theoretical Support

	Paul Nation’s Four Strands	Theoretical Support
1	Input focused learning	Input Theory
2	Output focused learning	Interaction Theory
3	Fluency focused learning	Skill Acquisition Theory
4	Form-focused learning	Noticing Hypothesis

Nation and his colleagues have written quite extensively on this framework, using it as a basis for designing and developing language curricula and for the teaching of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Nation, 2008; Nation & Newton, 2008). How his framework could be adopted (or adapted) as a basis for the design and development of language curriculum and for instruction in Indonesia or other EFL countries in the region is in our view worth exploring. Given the strong theoretical rationale behind this framework, its adoption may result in significant improvements of our students and teachers’ proficiency.

Nation’s (2014) book “What do you need to know a foreign language?” provides practical illustrations of how the four strands could be productively used for teaching various aspects of language skills. The book is freely available and can be downloaded here: https://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/publications/paul-nation/foreign-language_1125.pdf. We would encourage teachers to read this book and reflect on how their own teaching practices are aligned to the key language learning principles discussed in the book.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Given the phenomenal growth of English as a global language and the increasingly important role that English plays in international commerce, tourism, education and diplomacy, the demand for qualified and skilful English teachers will rise in tandem. Unfortunately, this demand cannot be easily met given the shortage of knowledgeable and effective English teachers in the world today. Andrews (2008) laments that at present, the shortage of qualified teachers can only be met by hiring teachers who unfortunately lack suitable qualifications.

We outline below pressing issues that ELT stakeholders i.e., language teachers, language teacher educators and policy makers in Indonesia would need to address if they are serious about improving the quality of English teachers.

- a. There is a pressing need to establish a national framework of English language proficiency so that appropriate standards can be established for students and teachers at all educational levels. As our neighbouring countries (e.g., Malaysia and Vietnam) have already established their national foreign language frameworks, there is really no compelling reason for policy makers to start from scratch; in other words, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. We can learn a great deal from their experience of establishing their national language standards for teachers and students, and also from the subsequent revamping of their English language curriculum and the nationwide retraining of their teachers. By learning from the experience of our neighbouring countries, we could potentially avoid making preventable and costly mistakes at the policy and implementation levels.
- b. As policy decisions may take some time to materialize, we suggest that the more established teacher education institutions (e.g., those ranked in the top 15 nationally) could begin to find ways to set a language proficiency standard for their graduates⁴. While the standard may vary from institution to institution, a minimum standard based on CEFR could be suggested. We feel that B2 is a sensible standard to achieve for student teachers before they go out to teach in schools.
- c. The same universities identified above could join hands to design and develop a CEFR-based proficiency test that meets the needs of EL teachers in Indonesia. The design of the test should include two components: General Proficiency and Pedagogical Language Proficiency. The language proficiency test used by the Hong Kong Ministry of Education (i.e., LPATE) could be used as a model for developing the test for Indonesia.
- d. The use of TOEFL and IELTS as a measure of general proficiency in government institutions, educational establishments and in particular in EL teacher education institutions should be reassessed. These are good tests of academic English proficiency for those intending to study in English speaking countries but they may not be the most accurate measure of one's ability to use English for general communicative purposes, much less for language teaching purposes in school. TEFLIN and other ELT professional associations in the country could take a more active role in promoting the use of a more relevant proficiency test of English (e.g., CEFR based test of English).
- e. Working with the Ministry of Education, English teachers' professional associations in the country could help identify in-service teachers whose proficiency level falls below the expected standard (below B2) and organize intensive English language training programmes to improve their proficiency. Given the current level of proficiency among English teachers, massive retraining of teachers may be needed. Needless to say, a large amount of funding from the government and other funding agencies (e.g., Asian Development Bank) will be needed to implement the training programme.
- f. There is a need to promote greater awareness among language education people (i.e., language teacher educators, language teachers, school and university leaders) to engage in self-directed and/or other-directed professional development activities. One way of doing this would be to allocate a dedicated session on teacher proficiency in ELT conferences and seminars (e.g., sharing sessions on how teachers work on improving their proficiency levels). In this way, a consistent message about the importance of a high EL proficiency can be communicated to our English teachers.
- g. We suggest that English teacher education providers relook at their undergraduate curriculum and find ways to help student teachers develop a higher level of proficiency before they complete their pre-service education. Four years (the time it normally takes to complete a Bachelor of Education degree) is more than sufficient for students to reach a sufficient level of proficiency in English (i.e., B2). While SLA research has not completely unlocked the secret of success in L2 learning, we now know enough of the most important factors that contribute most to instructed language learning. SLA research has amply demonstrated that one of the best ways to improve overall proficiency is to get

students to read and listen extensively in the target language (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). Some institutions in Indonesia have already incorporated extensive reading and listening in their pre-service curriculum, but the majority have been slow in adopting this powerful approach to language learning.

To familiarize oneself with the theoretical basis of this input-based approach to language learning, we recommend Day & Bamford's (1998) seminal work on extensive reading. Other useful resources that provide practical suggestions on how to implement extensive reading, we recommend the Extensive Reading Foundation's Guide to Extensive Reading: http://erfoundation.org/ERF_Guide.pdf. and Extensive Reading Central: <https://www.er-central.com/>. For a brief, non-technical introduction to extensive listening, we recommend Renandya & Farrell's (2011) article "Teacher, the tape is too fast: Extensive listening in ELT".

- h. TEFLIN and other ELT professional associations could publish a quarterly newsletter on teacher professional development, focusing especially on matters related to teacher language proficiency. It should not be too difficult to get volunteers to manage a newsletter. We can start with a very short, two-page long newsletter featuring EL teachers from around Indonesia in their attempt to improve their proficiency and later increase the length of the periodical. The digital newsletter could then be distributed to all English teachers for free.
- i. Working with the Ministry of Education, TEFLIN and other ELT professional organizations could organize an annual 'Teacher of the Year' event and feature the winning teachers on the Ministry's official website. Teachers can be asked to submit a short video clip of their most successful lessons. A panel of judges then select the winning clips based on a set of criteria (e.g., good use of English, appropriate use of methodology, technology etc.)

To conclude, it is worth reiterating that language proficiency is an important component that makes up a language teacher's professional competence. Higher proficiency teachers can be expected to be more adept at using the target language to deliver more effective lessons than those with lower proficiency. They are more able to provide richer language input and exploit the target language resources to support student learning (H. Richards et al., 2013). We are, however, not claiming that proficiency is the only (or the most) important factor that influences L2 learning. Rather, we are saying that proficiency is a necessary prerequisite, an enabling factor that can help teachers deliver more effective lessons.

Note

- 1) An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Indonesian TESOL Summit, Century Park Hotel, Jakarta, 3-4 Feb 2018
- 2) Detailed descriptors of each level can be downloaded from: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>
- 3) The design and test specification of the LPATE test can be gleaned from this website: (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/Local/Language_Proficiency_Assessment_for_Teachers/LPATE_Handbook.pdf).
- 4) A number of universities in Indonesia have recently developed their own language tests to assess the proficiency levels of their students. UNMUL, UI and UGM for example have developed their own customized EPT (English Proficiency Test) for their students (Maria T Ping, personal communication). This is definitely a positive development in the right direction. Collaborative efforts however would be needed to standardize the many different EPT tests to ensure parity and comparability.

Authors

Willy A Renandya is a language teacher educator currently teaching at the National Institute of

Education, Nanyang Technological University. His teaching and research interests include L2 acquisition and extensive reading and listening. He manages an online teacher professional development group called Teacher Voices: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/teachervoices/>

Fuad Abdul Hamied is professor of language education at Indonesia University of Education at Bandung, Indonesia, currently President of AsiaTEFL, and Former President of TEFLIN. His teaching and research areas include language teaching and assessment as well as language acquisition.

Joko Nurkamto is a full-time professor at the English Language Education Study Program in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia, and currently President of TEFLIN. His research interests include language curriculum development and teacher professional development.

References

- Alderson, J. C. (2005). *Diagnosing foreign language proficiency: The interface between learning and assessment*. London: Continuum.
- Andrews, S. (2003). Teacher language awareness and the professional knowledge base of the L2 teacher. *Language Awareness, 12*(2), 81-95.
- Azis, A. (2018). Re-imagining English competence: Suitable frameworks for English competence. Plenary paper presented at the TEFLIN-TESOL, Jakarta, 3-4 February 2018.
- Baker, W. (2008). A critical examination of ELT in Thailand: The role of cultural awareness. *RELC journal, 39*(1), 131-146.
- Cobb, T. (2007). Computing the vocabulary demands of L2 reading. *Language Learning & Technology, 11*(3), 38-64.
- Coleman, H. (2009). Indonesia's 'International Standard Schools': What are they for? Paper presented at the 8th Language and Development Conference, Dhaka, 23-25 June 2009.
- Coniam, D., Falvey, P., & Xiao, Y. (2017). An investigation of the impact on Hong Kong's English language teaching profession of the language proficiency assessment for teachers of English (LPATE). *RELC Journal, 48*(1), 115-133.
- Council of Europe. Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>
- Day, R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hamied, F. A. (2018). Reimagining English competence. Plenary paper presented at the TEFLIN-TESOL, Jakarta, 3-4 February 2018.
- Loewen, S. (2015). *Introduction to instructed second language acquisition*. New York: Routledge.
- Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia (MNERI). (2007). *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional RI nomor 16 tahun 2007 tentang standar kualifikasi akademik dan kompetensi guru (Ministerial regulation number 16 year 2007 on teachers' academic qualifications and competency standards. (SKAKG 2007)*. Jakarta: MNERI.
- Nation, P. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? *Canadian Modern Language Review, 63*(1), 59-82.
- Nation, P. (2007). The four strands. *International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 1*(1), 2-13.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2008). *Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing*. New York: Routledge.
- Nation, P. (2014). What do you need to know to learn a foreign language? Available at https://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/publications/paul-nation/foreign-language_1125.pdf

- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2008). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. New York: Routledge.
- Nation, I.S. P., & Waring, R. (1997). Vocabulary size, text coverage, and word lists. In N. Schmitt, & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition, and pedagogy* (pp. 6-19). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nurweni, A., & Read, J. (1999). The English vocabulary knowledge of Indonesian university students. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(2), 161-175.
- Ortega, L. (2007). Second language learning explained? SLA across nine contemporary theories. In B. VanPatten, & J. William (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 245-272). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Renandya, W. A., & Farrell, T.S.C. (2011). "Teacher, the tape is too fast": Extensive listening in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 65(1), 52-59.
- Renandya, W.A., & Jacobs, G.M. (2016). Extensive reading and listening in the language classrooms. In W. A. Renandya, & H. P. Widodo (Eds.), *English language teaching today: Linking theory and practice* (pp 97-110). Basel, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG
- Renandya, W.A., Le, V.C., Madya, S., Oda, M., Quah, S. H., & Sitthitikul, P. (2017). Language teacher education in Asia. Colloquium conducted at the AsiaTEFL Conference, 13-15 July 2017, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
- Richards, H., Conway, C., Roskvist, A., & Harvey, S. (2013) Foreign language teachers' language proficiency and their language teaching practice. *The Language Learning Journal*, 41(2), 231-246.
- Richards, J. C. (2018). Communicative competence. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpGvWYPL7cU>.
- Richards, J. C. (2017). Teaching English through English: Proficiency, pedagogy and performance. *RELC Journal*, 48(1), 7-30.
- Schmidt, R. W. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied linguistics*, 11(2), 129-158.
- Schmitt, N. (2014). Size and depth of vocabulary knowledge: What the research shows. *Language Learning*, 64(4), 913-951.
- Todd, R. W. (2016). English proficiency standards in Thai universities. Keynote speech delivered at the Assumption University Annual Faculty Seminar, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Young, J. W., Freeman D., Hauck. M. C., Garcia Gomez P., & Papageorgiou, S. (2014). *A design framework for the ELTeach program assessments* (ELT Research Report No RR- 13-46). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Doi.1002/ets2.12036

Appendix 1

CEFR Levels

PROFICIENT USER	C2
	C1
INDEPENDENT USER	B2
	B1
BASIC USER	A2
	A1

Appendix 2

LPATE Sample Test Format

Paper		Language Proficiency Requirement
Reading		Level 3 or above
Writing	Composition	At least '2.5' or above on any one scale and '3' or above on the other two scales AND
	Correcting and Explaining Errors/Problems in a Student's Composition	'3' or above on each scale
Listening		Level 3 or above
Speaking		At least '2.5' or above on any one scale and '3' or above on all the other scales
Classroom Language Assessment		At least '2.5' or above on any one scale and '3' or above on all the other scales

Source: http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/Local/Language_Proficiency_Assessment_for_Teachers/LPATE_Handbook.pdf