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Comparative Study on Competency-Based English Curriculum

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Competency-based curriculum has been a world trend in educational reform, and 2015 national curriculum employed the competences in general guidelines and subject-specific areas. In line with the competency-based national curriculum, various research has been conducted on the alignment of the competences in general guidelines with those in subject curriculum, interconnectedness of competences among the components in the national curriculum, appropriateness of the unified content matrix format in each subject in terms of applicability of the competences, and degree of specified description of the competences. In fact, some aspects of the 2015 national curriculum has been criticized regarding the lack of respecting for the characteristics of individual subject. The purpose of this study is to draw implications for raising applicability of national curriculum into local schools through analyzing general guidelines and English curriculum in two countries, Finland and Singapore, both of which employed competency-based national curriculum. The results of this study draw three main implications based on the analysis of the curricular; classification and specification of competences, emphasis on how to teach with what to teach, and respect for subject-specific characteristics. Further research is provided for raising applicability of the curriculum to schools through more in-depth international curriculum analysis.

[key competence/competency-based curriculum/comparative study/national English curriculum/content matrix]

I. INTRODUCTION

Key competences have been one of the major issues in the field of education, especially in national curriculum, including general guidelines and subject-specific national curriculum (Chang, 2017; Yim, 2017). The introduction of the competences to the national curriculum was based on the international trend in which the rapidly changing characteristics and values

of knowledge, skill, and attitude should be reflected in the national curriculum.

In Korea, the discussion on the key competences was initiated nationwide from the time when the OECD research report was published in 2005 on the DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Key Competences). From the year of 2006, studies were conducted on the competences, such as research on the concept and characteristics of the competences (Yun, Kim, Youn, & Park, 2007), the competences as curriculum reform (So, K., Lee, S., Lee, J., & Heo, H, 2010), analysis of the subject-based national curriculum linking with the competences in foreign countries (Lee, K., Kim, K. Kim, S., Kim, H., Lee, M., Lee, S., & Lee, I, 2013), and major roles of the general guidelines in connection with the competences (Lee, 2014).

Comparatively, the research on the subject specific competences was conducted recently such as the changes and issues of the English language curriculum (Lee, 2016), the connection of the competences with achievement standards (Hwang, 2016), and the relationship between the competences and evaluation criteria (Lee, 2018).

While the research on the competences on the general guidelines focused on the directions and significance of the competences in the field of education, the studies on the English curriculum focused on the problems and issues in applying the competences in the subject specific content. More specifically, the issues were raised on whether the competences in English curriculum were properly selected as to reflect the characteristics of foreign language education, and whether the selected competences were well-incorporated into the other components of the English curriculum such as achievement standards (Lee, 2016). In line with the alignment with the content matrix in the language curriculum, Lee (2018) pointed out that some considerations should be taken into account whether the components of the matrix were designed so as to realize the competences. Regarding to the application of the competences into the school-based curriculum, various research needs to be conducted in the field of subject-specific curriculum (So, et al., 2010). This application issue was also raised due to the lack of the alignment between the competences in general guidelines and subject-specific areas, and among the components in the English curriculum itself.

Given that the introduction of the competences into the national curriculum both in general guidelines and English curriculum was significant, it should draw common consent from the stakeholders and subject specialists. Though the consent can be drawn from the discussions and collections of the educators in domestic area, reviewing and analyzing the competences in the national curriculum in foreign countries will also be of help for us to gain insights and implications of how to improve national English curriculum in Korea.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to draw implications from analysis of the national curriculum in overseas countries for developing better English curriculum in terms of alignment with general guidelines, and alignment among the components in the English subject curriculum. To achieve these purposes, this study selected two countries whose curricular were based on the competences, then analyzed the general guidelines and English curriculum of the countries.

II. KEY COMPETENCES IN NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN KOREA

This chapter reviews the background of the introduction of the key competences both in general guidelines and English curriculum, with issues generated by previous studies.

1. Key Competences in General Guidelines

The status of the key competences in the general guidelines was positioned just next to the "vision of an educated person" (Ministry of Education, 2015a, p. 1). The vision is specified as four items such as a self-directed person, a creative person, a cultivated person, and a person who lives in harmony with others. Following the vision, key competences are specified with six items such as self-management, knowledge-information processing, creative thinking, aesthetic-emotional, communication, and civic competency (or community competency).

Next to the definitions of six items of key competency, the principles of curriculum design are presented where the key competency is stated in connection with the principles, explaining that the vision as a creative and integrative learner with moral character can be designed by developing key competences, and that the principles are linked to the competences. Six principles were presented such as basic literacy development, the alignment with subject content areas focusing on big ideas, self-directed learning development with suitable teaching methodology which are suited to the characteristics of each subject area, the assessment with emphasis on process of learning, coherence of the components among educational objectives, contents, teaching-learning methodology as well as evaluation, and basic skills matching to National Competency Standards for high schools.

In line with the competences presented in the general guidelines, rare studies were found which criticized the rationale of introducing the competences to national curriculum; rather the studies have explored the ways how to apply them into the subject areas and how to implement them into the school –based curriculum. For example, So et al. (2010) suggested that practical implementation case studies were needed in order to obtain implications on how to integrate the competences into school level instruction process. They also stated that the ways of integrating knowledge and skills in each subject should be reviewed, adding that the alignment of the competences with evaluation methods also be researched. Searching for desired approaches to applying competency-based elementary and secondary schools, Lee, Jeon, Huh, Hong, and Kim (2009) showed the changes in school curriculum in foreign countries. They suggested that social and national consensus should be drawn on the nature and role of the competences in national curriculum, and discussed the ways how to develop the competences through the school curriculum. With regard to the alignment of the competences in general guidelines with other components in the curriculum, Lee, et al. (2013)

invested the ways of linking teaching-learning process and educational assessment to the competences in subject areas. Suggestions were provided by the researchers that the competency-based curriculum required teachers' professional and cooperative inquiry in order to realize the intent of introducing the competences into the national curriculum, adding that reconstruction of the subject-based curriculum necessarily required teachers' professional reinterpretations.

In general, the previous studies on the competences in general guidelines mainly deal with the directions and ways of how to integrate them to subject areas, and how to apply them into school based curriculum. There were rare studies that raised the problems of the introduction of the competences in national curriculum, from critical point of views.

2. Key Competences in English Curriculum

Following the directions of the general guidelines in 2015 national curriculum, English subject employed competency-based subject-specific curriculum. Four key competences are selected such as self-management, knowledge-information processing, English communication, and civic competency (or community competency) except the two competences, creative thinking and aesthetic-emotional presented by general guidelines.

While the various topics have been dealt with the point of competences, including the proper selection of the competences and ambiguity of the competence descriptions or lack of interconnectedness among the components in English curriculum in terms of competences (Hwang, 2016; Lee, 2018), the most controversial point has been put into the Concept Matrix. The unified matrix format itself has been criticized, however, the fundamental reason for the critical point was due to the lack of the respect for the characteristics of individual subject.

As stated in the general guidelines, each subject is recommended to organize the learning content based on the big ideas, and place emphasis on the participatory assessment linking with the key competences. To better understand the concept of the big ideas, we need to see the content matrix of English curriculum. The content matrix has five components, such as learning areas, key concept, generalized knowledge, content elements, and functions. The big idea refers to the second component in the matrix, key concept, which was introduced to the national curriculum as one of the main components when each subject organizes its curriculum.

Though the emphasis of the key concept was placed in the general guidelines as the core organizer in subject-based curriculum, the concept was criticized by English curriculum specialists. For example, Lee (2016) pointed out that the 'Key Concept' itself in the format has limitations with presenting the skills and performance which are recognized as the main components in language subject. This mismatch may due to the fact that the developmental process of the national curriculum in Korea follows the order of "general education first,

subject education later" (Yim, 2017, p. 140). Clear example of this mismatch was shown in the content matrix as also stated in the Lee (2016). The form and sub-title of the matrix are all the same regardless of the subject. Even though the sub-title 'Key Concept' was controversial in the field of language curriculum, all the subject were required to employ the same form and sub-title.

The reason for this controversial matrix was due to the key roles of the matrix in the curriculum. Key competences were closely related to 'what to teach' in subject area, and the matrix represent this key teaching area. However, previous research stated that the title 'Key Concept' is nothing more than just learning element in English curriculum, which required resetting the title and roles of the key concept itself. In designing subject-specific matrix, the characteristics of each subject should be taken into consideration. As clearly presented in the 2015 revised national curriculum and English curriculum, the main purpose of the English language teaching and learning were improving learners' English communicative competency. The purpose of English should be directly linked to the 'what to teach' which focuses on language four skills and performance. Therefore, the form and sub-title of the matrix should be aligned with the characteristics of English curriculum.

Under this circumstances where the national curriculum has been recognized and perceived by teachers as a law with which they should comply (Kang, 2016), the role and the status of the document are crucial in order to reflect the competences to school curriculum. Regarding to the coherence of the components in the matrix, the 'generalized knowledge' was also critically pointed out, in that the 'knowledge' was not appropriate to language subject. For example, one of the 'knowledge' was specified as "learners understand the speech or dialogues" (Ministry of Education, 2015b), however, the subtitle 'knowledge' and the 'understand' have discrepancy in that 'understand' is not 'knowledge' but skills or performance (Lee, 2016; Lee, 2018).

The main four competences in English curriculum were also reviewed by Lee (2016) due to the ambiguity of the meaning. Except the communication competences in English, the other three competences have lack of clarity. In particular, the issue was raised on how the community competence and self-management competences can be aligned with the achievement standard, both of which are backbone of what to teach and how to assess. In English curriculum, the interconnectedness from the objectives to assessment takes a significant role to enhance language learners' communicative competences (Lee, 2017). In fact, English national curriculum include little information on the alignment among main components. This issue was also due to the fact, as stated by Yim (2017), that subject-specific competences were selected among those in the general guidelines without considerations of the characteristics of English curriculum. In general, individual subject should be provided with the authority to select and modify the competences presented by general guidelines, including the title of the competences, formats for learning areas, and others.

Ⅲ. KEY COMPETENCES IN GENERAL GUIDELINES AND ENGLISH SUBJECT IN OVERSEAS NATIONAL CURRICULUM

To review subject-specific competences in national curriculum in foreign countries, Finland and Singapore were selected. The two countries have national level curriculum and English curriculum as a second or foreign language. The both countries have competency-based curriculum and place emphasis on reflecting the competences into educational reform (Lee, 2013). In particular, the two countries maintain stable economic foundation and strong competitiveness in the field of education (Kim, 2010). In addition, the two countries have alignment system between the competences in general guidelines and subject-specific areas, by respecting the characteristics, values, objectives of each subject (Lee et al., 2013). Reviewing the competency-based curriculum in the countries is significant when exploring the directions and drawing implementations for improving national curriculum and subject-based competences in Korea (Paik, 2014).

In this chapter, the characteristics of the general guidelines and English curriculum in each country will be reviewed. In particular, this review focuses on how the competences are described, how the competences are interconnected with other components of the curriculum, and what is the relationship between competences in general guidelines and English curriculum.

1. Finland

1) Competences in General Guidelines

In Finland, the work for new curriculum based on the key competence development (KCD) was completed in 2014, and the new curriculum comes into effect 2016 (KeyCoNeT, 2019). Based on the work, competency-based curriculum was built where the holistic approach to the KCD was recommended to apply to the individual subject in Finland. Municipalities in the country were also recommended to create their own curricula which place the emphasis on the key competences.

The national core curriculum for basic education 2014 (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016) consists of fifteen chapters, including three chapters for grade clusters; Chapter thirteen for the curriculum for grades 1-2, Chapter fourteen for grades 3-6, and Chapter fifteen for grades 7-9. Each chapter for the grade cluster covers all the subjects corresponding the cluster such as Mother tongue and literature, and physical education. The chapters for grade cluster curriculum categorized into four parts, for example in the case of grades 3-6, such as transition phase between grades 1-2 2 and the task of grades 3-6, transversal competences in grades 3-6, issues subject to local decisions, and subjects in grades 3-6. Thus, the chapter one to twelve correspond to the general guidelines in the 2015

national curriculum.

The competences are articulated in the Chapter, part of which is mission and goals of the curriculum, as the "competences both in individual fields and cross-boundaries of individual subjects should be driven" and "the core curriculum defines the objectives and contents both for core subjects for transversal competences" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 20). In addition to this brief articulation, the transversal competences have independent section. Defining the transversal competences as "the equity consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will" in that when students use the knowledge and skills in a given situation, they are influenced by the values, attitudes and will. (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 21)

The seven competences are stated as interconnected areas rather than dichotomized in that they have joint objectives such as growth supporting of pupils. These joint objectives of competences are also explicitly described in chapters thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen, each of which covers the curriculum of grade clusters. It is noteworthy that the Finland curriculum specified the interconnection of the competences and objectives of the subjects as "the competences have been taken into account in the definition of the objectives and key content areas of the subject" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 21) which signifies that the subject descriptions links between the objectives of the subjects and the transversal competences. The curriculum also explicitly states that the objectives of the seven competences should be in line with the mission and goals of education.

The seven transversal competences are:

- Thinking and learning to learn (T1)
- Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression (T2)
- Taking care of oneself and managing daily life (T3)
- Multi-literacy (T4)
- ICT competences (T5)
- Working life competence and entrepreneurship (T6)
- Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future (T7)

Each of the seven competences does not have any sub-components, however, it has clear and detailed explanations. For example, key-words or phrases can be extracted from the description of multi-literacy competence (T4) as: competence to interpret and produce, make a value judgement across a different texts, understand diverse modes of cultural communication, a broad definition of text, knowledge presented by various symbols and their combinations, 'written, spoken, printed, audiovisual or digital form', and cultural diversity. In addition to the concept of the multi-literacy, the explanation includes the definition as 'abilities to obtain, combine, modify, produce, present and evaluate information in different

modes, in different contexts and situations, and by using various tools' (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 23). With the definition of the competence, it specifies what to teach, how to teach, why to teach, why it is significant, how to give opportunities for learners to develop the competence through subjects and teaching-learning environment, and how it is interconnected with other competences; for example, it is stated that multi-literacy supports the development of critical thinking and learning skills. Then, the section of the competence added that the transversal competence will be discussed in great detail at the chapters by grade unit. This detailed description of each subject will be discussed in the English curriculum in this chapter.

One point to be noted is that each chapter covering subject curricular has also their own independent sections for the transversal competences, and even in the chapters one to twelve, the competences are continuously articulated such as (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016):

- The joy of learning and creative activities promote learning and inspire the pupils to develop their competence (in Chapter two, p. 17)
- Basic education offers the pupils possibilities for versatile development of their competence (in Chapter three, p. 19)
- Varied working and assessment methods give each pupil a possibility of demonstrating their competence in different ways (in Chapter four, p. 31)
- Many types of common events reinforce the pupils' transversal competence (in Chapter five, p. 45)
- Viewpoints based on transversal competence objectives that play a key role for the pupil's learning process to which the teacher pays attention when assessing the pupil's progress (in Chapter six, p. 55)

In addition to the alignment among the main components such as mission, goals, objectives, and competences at the level of national curriculum, it is manifested at the curriculum that the link between the components in the general guidelines and local curriculum reconstruction. The emphasis is put on three following aspects (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016):

- the perspectives of the mission of core education
- potential local emphasis of the transversal competence areas defined in the core curriculum
- the arrangements and measures by which the achievement of transversal competence objectives is ensured (p. 26)

Regarding to the local curriculum reconstruction, the municipalities are provided with the authority to make decisions on whether the components in the core curriculum need to be modified. Other requirements such as missions or objectives placed by the government can be also considered to modify based on the local level characteristics.

It can be interpreted that, from the respect of the competences in national curriculum, the interconnection among the components in the general guidelines in Finland was emphasized from the introduction part (e.g., mission and general goals of basic education) to the assessment part, and even to the reconstruction of the local curriculum. The definitions and explanations of the competences are also clearly stated in the independent section, then again those are more specified by grade unit based on the learners' developmental phases.

2) Competences in English Curriculum

While the general definitions and objectives of the transversal competences are described as independent section in Chapter three as part of general guidelines, those for each grade cluster are specifically articulated in the Chapters thirteen to fifteen, also as independent sections. Subject-specific curricular by each grade unit are included in these chapters. Therefore, it is understood that subject-specific curriculum in Finland is designed in considerations of the competences by the grade unit.

Again, comparing to the descriptions of the competences in the general guidelines in Chapter three, the objectives of the competences by each grade in Chapter thirteen to fifteen emphasize the aspects appropriate to the grade level. Pursuant to the competences in general guidelines, those in the chapters for each grade focus on the ways of how to enhance the competences.

For example, the transversal competences, in general, in grades one to two explicitly describe the aspects that should be taken into considerations such as:

- interactive and encouraging community should be provided to each pupil
- pupil should be provided with positive example
- collaborative skills and observing the cultural diversity of the local community should be emphasized with strengthening

In line with the characteristics of the competences by grade unit, the individual competence also has its own descriptions by reflecting the developmental phases of learners. For example, the competence "the Cultural Competence, Interaction and Self-expression (T2)" in the grade one-two highlights the key-words such as "engage in positive interaction and cooperation", "opportunities for practice in interacting with different people", "appreciate the traditions and customs of their own family and community", "opportunity to express themselves and things" and "imagination, creativity, and self-expression through play,

adventures, and handicrafts" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 106)

In comparison of the competences of this grade unit to those in grade seven to nine, they have common feature that focuses on the approach, how to teach. However, the competences in grade seven to nine place the emphasis on cooperation between different subjects, and social, societal, economic, cultural, and ecological aspects, and multidisciplinary modules. The example of the "Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression (T2)" in the Grade seven to nine contains the key words such as "formation of cultural identity", "respecting human rights", "influence of cultures, religions, and worldviews in society", "key conventions on human rights", "read cultural message", "evaluate the impacts of media", "expressing their cultural competence", "international cooperation", "express emotions, views, thoughts and ideas", and "promote aesthetic values and enjoy the various forms of aesthetics" (p. 303). The comparison between the competences by grade unit shows the clear different ways of how to teach the competences based on the grade characteristics.

The competences in subject-specific areas do not have any independent section, however, those are stated in the Objectives of Instruction Table (OIT) which has similar function with the Content Matrix in the 2015 national curriculum in Korea. The Content Matrix takes a role of providing the directions to selecting and organizing the learning content in each subject area in line with the key competences (Lee et al., 2013; Lee & Jeung, 2017).

The table in Finland consists of Objectives of instruction, Content areas related to the objectives, and transversal competences. The example of the OIT is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

The Objectives of Instruction Table (OIT)

Objectives of instruction	Content areas related to the objectives	Transversal competences
Growing into cultural diversity and language awareness		
O1 to promote the pupil's ability to reflect on phenomena related to the status and the variants of English and to provide the pupil with prerequisites for developing his or her intercultural competence	C1	T1, T2
O2 to encourage the pupil to find interesting English-language contents and environments that expand his or her perception of the globalising world and opportunities for acting in it	C1	T1, T2
O3 to guide the pupil to observe the regularities in the English language and how the same concepts are expressed in other languages and to use linguistic concepts as support for learning	C1	T1, T3

(Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 376)

In the OIT for English, the Objectives of instruction consists of five domains such as 'growing into cultural diversity and language awareness' shown in the Figure 1, 'language learning skills', 'evolving language proficiency, interaction skills', 'evolving language proficiency, text interpretation skills', and 'evolving language skills, text production skills'. Each domain has a couple of objectives each of which is directly linked to the 'content areas

related to the objectives' and transversal competences. Therefore, each of the five domains including cultural and language awareness, receptive and productive skills, as well as interaction skills has language objectives, which are explicitly linked to the transversal competences. The content areas marked as abbreviation 'C' refers to:

- C1: Growing into cultural diversity and language awareness
- C2: Language-learning skills
- C3: Evolving language proficiency, interaction skills, text interpretation skills, text production skills (p. 376)

In general, competences of the English curriculum in Finland are designed to have strong connection with those in each grade level unit which are directly linked to those in general guidelines. Also these competences in subject-specific areas are explicitly linked to the corresponding subject learning content.

2. Singapore

1) Competences in General Guidelines

The competency-based general guidelines in Singapore are presented as web-based digital version through the MOE homepage, rather than paper-based published version, without any marked pages. In 2008, the Ministry of Education Singapore initiated Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE) as educational vision which includes Self-directed Learner, Confident Person, Concerned Citizen, and Active Contributor (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2012; Paik, 2014). The DOE represents the most crucial skills for living in future society, which focus on the alignment with the competences. (Kim, Park, Choi, & Lee, 2013; Paik, 2014).

Pursuant to this new vision, the MOE established three key competences as the title of 21st competences. The general guidelines in Singapore summarize 21st Century Competences such as:

Civic literacy, Global Awareness and Cross-Cultural Skills
Critic and Inventive Thinking
Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills

These cross-curricular competences are regarded as the foundation for developing subject-based curriculum as a framework. However, the subject-specific area is recommended to infiltrate the 21st competences into each subject, rather than being forced to follow the three 21st competences as such. For example, each subject can set up its own title of competences based on its characteristics or select one or two competences established by the general

guidelines.

In connection with the 21st century competences, the general guidelines present Social and Emotional skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. These skills are interchangeably used as the name of Social and Emotional Competences in the general guidelines.

It should be noted at this point that the Social and Emotional Skills are applied to all subjects to accomplish the 21st Century Competences, however, it is recommended that the skills be taught mainly in the school context through a safe and caring school environment including positive teacher-learner relationship. This is the reason the skills are underpinning parts for 21st Century Competences as a foundation for building the competences as well as the DOE. The four Social and Emotional skills are guided by the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), while focusing on learning components, which specifies the five domains and descriptions as shown in the Table 1. The definition of the SEL is stated as "Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an umbrella term that refers to students' acquisition of skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2018). For example, part of the key domains of SEL is described as in Table 1.

TABLE 1

The Domains of Social and Emotional Skills (SEL)

Key Domains	Description
Relationship Management	Communication, social engagement and building relationships
	Working cooperatively
	Negotiation, refusal and conflict management
	Seeking and providing help
Social Awareness	Perspective taking
	Empathy
	Appreciating diversity
	Respect for others

(Ministry of Education Singapore, 2018)

The Social and Emotional skills are clearly linked to the SEL, which includes the definition and key domains as well as descriptions of the skills, by underpinning the competences. The competences and components of skills are also guided by teaching principles which are recommended for school teachers to apply to students. The guiding principles being aligned to SEL are stated as follows:

• Principle 2: Social and emotional competences should be taught to students to ensure that they acquire the skills, knowledge and dispositions that will help them face future

challenges. The five key domains of skills are Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Management, and Responsible Decision Making. Teaching of social and emotional skills to students can be explicit, through infusion or through teachable moments.

Other principles elaborated the ways of how to teach the SEL in connection with the competence, such as the crucial role of teachers in teaching of SEL, teachers' role model, the important role of school environment for students to support the teaching and learning of SEL.

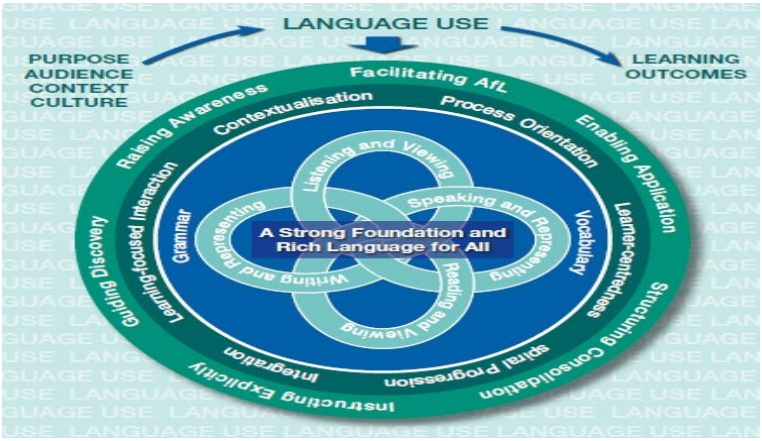
From the overall review of the general guidelines in Singapore in terms of the alignment of the competence with other components, it is understood that the competences are underpinned by Social and Emotional Skills, and that the skills were articulated by the clear statement of the definition and description of the domains as SEL. These competence, skills, and domains are also linked to the teaching principles.

1) Competences in English Curriculum

The characteristics of competency-based English curriculum in Singapore are presented in the English syllabus (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2010). The 2010 English curriculum was revised 9 years after the 2001 English syllabus, thus, the concept of competences was reflected into the recent 2010 English curriculum (Yim, 2017). Based on the independent revision cycle in each subject in Singapore, competency-based curriculum has been applied to each subject in different year. Each subject in Singapore has its own framework representing the key features such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, including its objectives.

FIGURE 2

The Key Features of the English Language Syllabus 2010



(Ministry of Education Singapore, 2010, p. 13)

The Figure 2 represents the key features of the English language syllabus, which include, from the inner circle to outer circle; areas of language learning with receptive and productive skills and knowledge, the grammar and vocabulary; six teaching-learning principles such as contextualization and process orientation etc.; teaching processes such as raising awareness, facilitating AfL (Assessment for Learning), and language use as overarching aim. The overarching aim specifies that the language use is affected by the four elements such as purpose, audience, context, and culture (PACC), and language learners will be assessed based on their learning outcome. The competence in English curriculum is specifically and clearly articulated as effective language use (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2010, p. 7), as shown in the Figure 2.

This main competence in English syllabus is well linked to the national general guidelines (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2018) in which the competence 'language use' means 'effective communication'. The framework of curriculum in general guidelines in Singapore consists of four main parts, represented by a diagram such as the core values positioned at the innermost part circle, social and emotional skills, key competences (21st century competences), and Desired Learning Outcomes at the outermost circle. In line with these main parts, the guiding principles are articulated in the different part of the general guidelines.

This effective language use was articulated in the English curriculum as a form of language competency from the first chapter. English language curriculum consists of three chapters; Guiding principles, Areas of Language Learning, and Role of the Language Teacher. The Chapter one includes introduction, English in Singapore, desired outcomes for EL proficiency in Singapore, building one the past, philosophy of language learning underlying the English language syllabus, approach to EL teaching in the English language syllabus, syllabus Aims, Principles of EL Teaching and Learning, and Teaching Process. Chapter two mainly focuses on the learning areas, including language four skills with overview diagram and charts.

The clarification and specification can be understood as the characteristics of English curriculum in Singapore, which takes a role of raising readability and applicability. For example, components each circle in the key features of English curriculum in Figure 2 are specified in the document. The 'Teaching Process' such as raising awareness in the Figure 2 has six sub-components with detailed explanations. One of the six 'Teaching Process', Raising Awareness, has its own three sub-components; motivating, connecting, and focusing. The 'connecting' is specified as follows:

- Connecting

Show pupils how to activate their prior knowledge, and help them make connections between what they know and what they are learning, and between classroom activities, texts, and the wider world. This is especially important for low progress learners who often find difficulty making these connections on their own. Learning must be situated in contexts that

are relevant and familiar to their life experiences (p. 86)

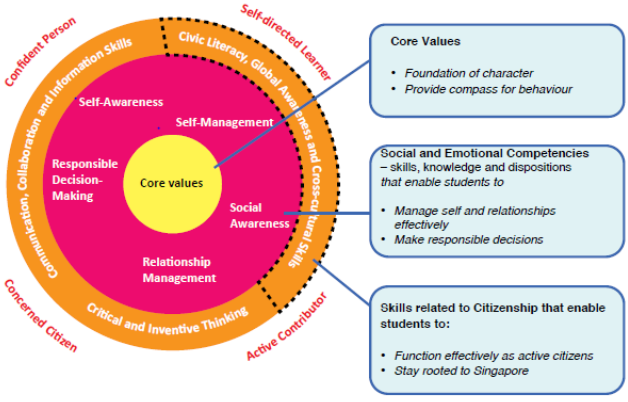
It is noteworthy that even though the general guidelines in the Singapore curriculum clearly articulated the competency-based curriculum, accommodating the 21st competences, English curriculum adopted only the one competence, the effective language use as language competence, by modifying the titles of the three 21st competences presented in the general guidelines. The modified title, language competency, was found at the several parts in the curriculum (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2010) such as:

EL (English Language) teaching and learning in Singapore schools should raise the language competency of all pupils, in the part of Desired Outcomes for EL Proficiency in Singapore in Chapter One. (p. 7)

In general, reviewing the competency in English curriculum and competences in general guidelines presented in Figure 2 shows the characteristics of the competency-based curriculum in Singapore. First of all, the name of competences in English curriculum is differentiated from those in general guidelines. The name of the competency in English curriculum is language use, and the competence is interpreted as an effective communication competence. Second, even though the name of the competences is different, however, the core concept and intent of the competences in the general guidelines are well-incorporated into the English curriculum, the effective communication and language use competences. Third, the general guidelines provide each subject with the authority to interpret and modify the name and sub-areas of the competences designated by the guidelines. Thus, each subject has different name of subject-specific competences.

FIGURE 3

Framework for 21st competences in Character and Citizenship Education



(Ministry of Education Singapore, 2012, p. 1)

For example, the subject curriculum in 'Character and Citizenship Education' (CCE) places emphasis on the one competence, "civic literacy, global awareness and cultural skills", as shown in the following Figure 3.

The CCE subject curriculum selected and emphasizes the key competence among the three 21st century competences in that, as stated in the curriculum, the selected "civic literacy, awareness and cross-cultural skills" linking with the underpinning social and emotional skills are crucial in the subject. In particular, the CCE curriculum categorized the competence into four domains, each of which was specifically described. Then, the interconnectedness of the components of the curriculum such as core values, social and emotional skills, the selected competence, are designed to be aligned with the guiding principles in the CCE.

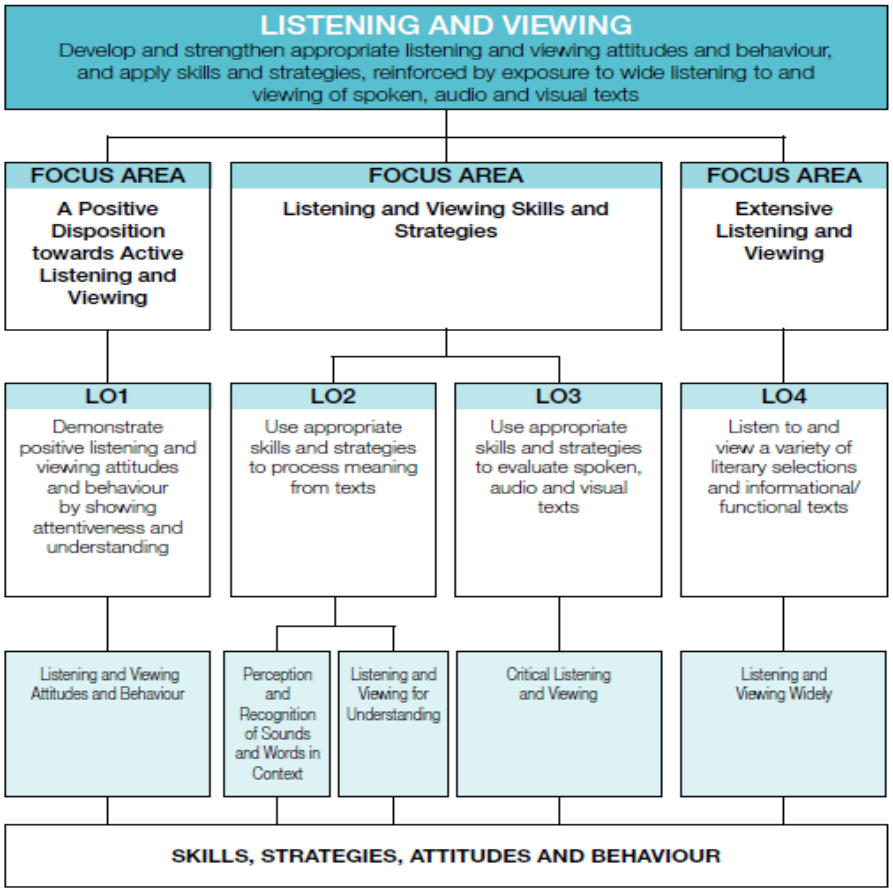
Comparing the competences in subject-specific curricular between English curriculum and CCE (Character and Citizenship Education), it can be noted that each has its own framework based on each subject's characteristics. The competence in English curriculum is an effective language use, while that in CCE is 'civic literacy, global awareness and cultural skills'. Even the name of the competence was also modified in the English Curriculum, in that 'the language use' was not specifically articulated in the 21st century competences. The language use as the main competence in the curriculum modified from the 'Communication, Collaboration, and Information Skills', one of the 21st Century Competences into the language use. In the CCE, the competence, the 'civic literacy, global awareness and cultural skills' was selected from the three 21st Century Competences, then elaborated the rationale of the competence through interconnecting the main components of general guidelines, such as values, four skills, competences, and guiding principles.

In terms of what to teach in line with the competences, English curriculum in Singapore has Language Learning charts which correspond to Content Matrix in the curriculum in Korea. As stated before, the Content Matrix represents provides the directions and principles for selecting what to teach and how to organize the learning content in each subject area in line with the key competences (Lee K, Kim K, Kim S, Kim S, Lee M, Lee S, & Lee I, 2013; Lee & Jung, 2017).

The charts in Singapore have their own format including language learning area (e.g., Listening and Viewing) which has sub-area consisting of focus areas, Learning Outcomes, and SSAB (skills, strategies, attitudes and behaviors). For example, Listening and Viewing as learning area has three focus area (e.g., extensive listening and viewing), four Learning Outcomes (e.g., listening to and view a variety of literacy selections and informational/functional texts), and five SSAB (e.g., listening and viewing widely). The Language Learning charts for 'Listening and Viewing' area is shown in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4

Language Learning Chart



(Ministry of Education Singapore, 2010, p. 19)

In particular, the SSAB explicitly articulates the strategies (e.g., select relevant information) and attitudes and behavior (e.g., listen and view with empathy and respect). This SSAB is applied to all the learning area, including listening and viewing, reading and viewing, speaking and representing, writing and representing, grammar, and vocabulary. The English curriculum stated that the effective communication as language competency requires the receptive skills, productive skills, and knowledge about language such as grammar and vocabulary. The learning charts in English curriculum are clearly compared with those in the subject 'Character and Citizenship Education' in which, centering on the three big ideas such as identity, relationships, and choices, the content of thee subject is designed to derive from four main components such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes.

FIGURE 5

CCE Learning Chart

	Big Idea 1: Identity	Big Idea 2: Relationships	Big Idea 3: Choices
Synopsis	*Identity, Relationships* and *Choices*, are interconnected and impact one another. • Students need to know who they are in order to relate positively with others. • The relationships they forge shape their identity and influence the choices they make. • The ability to make good choices impacts their understanding of their own identity and the relationships they form. The three big ideas need to be anchored on values to form the support structure for students to live their life as persons of good character and useful citizens in a globalised world.		
Key Understandings (These are what the students need to know.)	Students will understand that • Identity is complex. • Identity shapes perceptions and relationships.	Students will understand that • Relationships are fundamental to life. • Relationships change over time.	Students will understand that • Choices shape character. • Choices affect self and others.
Overarching Key Questions (These questions guide students to develop the key understandings.)	• Who am I? • What is different about me? • How do I see people and the world around me?	• How do I define relationships? • Why build relationships? • How do my relationships affect others and me?	• Who can I be? • What choices do I make? • How do I make choices?

(Ministry of Education Singapore, 2012, p. 11)

The charts in English and Character Education have distinctively different format, each of which follows the characteristics and unique competence in the subject.

Ⅳ. IMPLICATIONS AND DISDUSSIONS

Through the chapter Ⅰ, Ⅱ, and Ⅲ, English curriculum and general guidelines in the two countries are reviewed in terms of competency-based curriculum, with linking to the issues raised by researchers in Korea on 2015 national English curriculum in connection with general guidelines. This chapter draws implications from the curricular in two countries, and discuss the applicability of the implications.

1. Classification and Specification of Competences

While the concept of key competences in 2015 national curriculum in Korea has been stated in relevant research area as having ambiguity and broad concept in their definitions especially when it comes to application to subject-specific area, the competences are described in independent sections with specified explanations in Finland as the title of

transversal competences. The detailed definition and explanation of the competences are designed to connect to those in grade level based on the developmental stage of learners. With the specification of the competences, the curriculum showed clear links of the competences with mission, goals, and teaching principles in the document, in that it describes what to teach, how to teach, how the components are connected in terms of realizing the competences. Also this interconnectedness of the components in general guidelines or subject-specific area is presented as diagram or chart which show the classification of the competences in line with relationship among the components.

The classified competences as the name of 'T', in Singapore, are designed to directly connect to the content matrix, in which the objectives and content areas in each subject can be interconnected. The Matrix in Korea was introduced in 2015 national curriculum with the intention that the learning content in each subject is designed to have both horizontal and vertical fabric system in order to realize the competences (Lee & Jeung, 2017). The Content Matrix in English national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2015b) consists of learning areas such as language four skills, key concept such as main idea or specific information, generalized information such as 'understanding the main idea in text', context element such as cause or effect of an event, and skills such as 'understand' or 'infer'. The classification and specification shown in overseas countries can be distinctively compared to 2015 national curriculum, in that it has been criticized due to the questions on how to teach the competences, and how competences in the curriculum to be alignment with the components in national document.

2. Emphasis on How to Teach with What to Teach

The competences in Finland are continuously put an emphasis among the main components in the general guidelines with the clear definition of what to teach. In addition to the clear definition of the competences, the document in particular stipulate the competences in teaching principles, which put an emphasis on the interconnection of what to teach with how to teach. The principles are designed to link to even the reconstruction of local curriculum, and development of the school culture, and assessment for realizing the competences.

In Singapore, the competences are also connected to the six principles of how to teach the language competences, which is expected by the government to inform the local school of how to plan and implement the competences. The subject-specific curriculum in Singapore employed the Social and Emotional Skills as foundation for reaching out the competences, in that the SES were intended to apply to all subjects in line with the competences. The SES has not only clear description of what to teach, but also how to teach, how to facilitate students' learning, and how to meet the developmental stages of the corresponding grade and students'

individual characteristics.

The ways of how to teach the competences in the countries are compared with the 2015 national curriculum, in which the competences are only stated in the general guidelines as just part of vision of education in general guidelines, and characteristics and achievement standards in English education. In a certain respect, the competences should be taken considerations on how to be infiltrated into the teaching-learning process.

3. Respect for Subject-specific Characteristics

Selection and modification of the competences presented by the general guidelines should reflect the characteristics of subject-specific area. In Finland, the competences in general guidelines are modified into those fitting to grade levels on which the curricular of subject-specific areas are based. The content areas are designed to directly link to the objectives of instructions which also linked to selected transversal competences suggested by the general guidelines. All the competences in the English subject are selected according to the objectives and content areas in the subject. Therefore cultural aspect, interpretation skills, and production skills have their own transversal competences in relation to the characteristics by reflecting their own linguistic and cultural learning areas.

In Singapore, the competence in English education is modified into its own language competence from selecting the competences in general guidelines which include those of communication and literacy. Other competences can be selected and modified by individual subject by itself. Key features of English language syllabus consist of components which activate effective language communication, rather than those are directed by general guidelines. The chart containing foundation, teaching-learning approach, teaching process, and principles has its own form, which connects to the learning aim and language competence. The components in the chart have also their own title focusing on skills, strategies, attitudes, and behaviors reflecting the features of language learning subject.

By selecting and modifying the titles of competences, designing the content matrix (or chart and diagram), and composing the elements of matrix based on the individual subject's own decision, the English curriculum was provided with the authority to reflect the characteristics of language learning. This authority is clearly contrasted with the 2015 national curriculum, in that the title and formats in all subjects are directed by general guidelines regardless to the key features of individual subject such as content-based or skill-based teaching and learning.

Through reviewing and analyzing the general guidelines and English subject in the two countries, three main implications were drawn as shown above; classification and specification of the competences, emphasis on how to teach with what to teach, and respect for subject-specific characteristics. Given that these three implications can be applied to

national curriculum in terms of competences, the priority should be given to raising applicability of the curriculum into local schools. In consideration of the different situations such as social and educational background of each country, the ways of organizing general guidelines and subject-specific areas may be differentiated; therefore, the results of analysis over the national documents need to be discussed with stakeholders. Then the collected feedback and suggestions from the discussions and research analysis should be taken into considerations when revising the next national curriculum. To do this, more studies need to be conducted on the general guidelines and subject-specific areas in other countries, and analyzed in terms of raising applicability of the curriculum to schools.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Language: English

Applicable Levels: Elementary/Secondary

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