



# The Similarities and Differences to English Independent Study in the University and Public Libraries: Comparative Study Between Indonesia and Japan

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## Abstract

This current study was conducted to observe how libraries in Japan and Indonesia are similar and different in regards to supporting English Independent Study (EIS); the investigation was done in both public and university libraries in Chiba and Kyoto (Japan) and Malang (Indonesia). To arrive at the findings, comparative study was conducted by doing site visits to the libraries in Japan and Indonesia; the data collection was done through interview, observation and visitor survey. This study revealed that some indirect supports to EIS activities are detected such as through the availability of physical and digital English collections accessible both online and offline. The similarities found in the investigated libraries covered the unavailability of special English section, the integrated arrangement of English resources along with other resources, challenges in detecting various EIS activities, procurement planning without special attention to English resources, and the same types of collections. The differences of the investigated libraries in both countries were in terms of the arrangement of collections, the procurement of collections, the number of EIS materials—which was relatively higher for Japanese libraries, and the accessibility of collections. The study was ended by proposing some suggestions for better support of EIS in libraries, such as by considering English based material procurement, establishing special EIS section or giving special tag to EIS collection, and integrating better ICT systems.

**Keywords:** English Independent Study (EIS), Library

## 1. Introduction

Learning a new language starts with abundant exposure to the language. As is the case of the first language acquisition in which babies learn their first language from being constantly exposed to the language from their environment, (Lightbown and Spada, 2013), the second and foreign language acquisition also benefit a great deal from rich exposure to the language learned. It is believed that

such situation will positively influence language learning and thus improve the likeliness of success (Renandya (2009) & Nation (2007)). However, in the contexts of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts such as in Japan and Indonesia, the exposure of English is relatively limited since most people do not speak the language. For that, one of the effective approaches in learning the language is through the English Independent Study (EIS).

English Independent Study (EIS), a notion rooted in the concept of autonomous learning, is defined as English language learning that students do outside the class regardless of the presence of any education system such as classroom, curriculum and instruction process (Inayati, 2015a). EIS aims to insert various forms of English language learning into students' everyday activities in order to make it an integral part of students' life, thus making the learning of English a sustainable activities (Inayati, 2015b). Defined as one's capacity to independently take charge of his/ her own learning (Smith, 2008), autonomous learning has been an interesting debate topic in the ELT contexts since the mid 70's (Benson, 2006). One of the most prevailing reasons for this notion is that an individual is believed to learn better when they are in charge of their own learning (Crabbe, 1993).

Empirical studies on EIS have also been found, for example those conducted by Wong and Nunan (2011) and Yanren (2007) who observed students' EIS initiative in China. Both studies found that EIS contributes positively in the learners' success of English learning. In the EFL contexts of Japan and Indonesia, studies on EIS have also been conducted, for example, by Luk (2012) and Inayati (2015a). Focusing on tapping Japanese students' initiatives to do English independent study, Luk (2012) found that they showed some degree of independence in their English language learning, and that they expected some instruction on independent learning strategies. Continuing the study, Inayati (2015a) observed how Indonesian students conducted EIS following an explicit discussion of various independent learning strategies in class. She found that students' EIS was relatively sustainable, evidenced by the high rate of continuity even without the teachers' direct instruction.

In EIS, learners study English autonomously by making use of any English resources available anywhere, such as at home, at school, and at libraries. One place to detect EIS is libraries where visitors could access various English resources available there. The establishment of library as a space for accessing information has been into practice for centuries. Some scholars note that libraries are the place with multiple functions, namely the storage of humans' works, information source, recreation site, informal education sites, culture preservation, science and knowledge, creativity, and research area (Hermawan and Zain, 2006; Makmur 2015). The functions of libraries have been further elaborated as the agent of change, conservation of precious learning resources, a barometer of civilization development that provide a community of users with coherent access to a large and organized repository of information and knowledge (Sutarno 2006; Wiji 2007, 2015). Reacting to this sort of demand, new library designs that integrate both electronic/ digital and printed collections have occurred in various terminologies such as hybrid library, automated conventional libraries, digital libraries, and the like (Makmur 2015; Wiji 2015; Sutarno 2006a & 2006b).

The large collection of materials available in libraries is believed to allow rich exposure to knowledge, including English language. A new trend in librarianship and information management also noted a shift from traditional library to the creation and/or integration of independent learning areas within the library, which offers various facilities and resources for learners (Jackson & Shenton, 2010). Coming in various names—e.g. study centers, learning zones, learning spaces—, these spaces can be considered as 'independent learning areas' (p. 217). These special spaces usually offer more flexibility in terms of options for learning; students can learn individually or in groups, in silent area or in noise friendly areas, and with or without digital devices supports.

Very few studies have investigated how libraries support the learning of English in non-English speaking countries. Therefore, this current study was aimed to observe how libraries in EFL contexts provide English resources as a destination to conduct English Independent Study (EIS). Specifically, the target research question to project is: to what extent are libraries in Japan and Indonesia similar and different in regards to supporting EIS?

## 2. Methodology

This comparative study was conducted by doing site visits to both public and university libraries in Japan (Chiba and Kyoto) and Indonesia (Malang, East Java). This methodology was chosen in order to arrive at the answers to the research problems, which are to observe to what extent the libraries in Japan and Indonesia are similar and different in regards to supporting EIS. The data were collected through interview with the library management, direct observation of the library facilities, and surveying the library patrons' EIS activities and expectations towards the libraries. In Japan, two university libraries and one public library were studied; while in Indonesia, this current study focused on one university library and one municipal public library.

The data collected were in several language versions; Japanese, Indonesian and English. After translating all data into English, the process of data analysis was started. The data analysis was conducted in the following phases. First, clustering the data findings about the public libraries facilities in both Japan and Indonesia. Second, clustering the data findings about the university libraries' facilities in both countries. Next, the data were compared one another to investigate the similarities and differences in terms of supports towards EIS that occurred in the libraries of both countries. Departing from the findings of the study, written ideation on how English independent study should be facilitated and supported are offered for better development of library space management system.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

Analyzing the data about the similarities and differences of Japanese and Indonesian libraries has showed that, though not specifically regulated within the management policy, some forms of support towards the English Independent Study (EIS) were detected. The support mostly came in the form of the relatively high availability of various types of library collection, especially in Japanese libraries, which involve physical and digital collections of English resources. However, many areas still need improving due to the unavailability of English section, less supportive book arrangement, and the lack of language focus in the procurement system. Detailed accounts of the similarities and differences of the libraries are presented in the following sections.

The similarities of the investigated libraries are presented in terms of the availability of special English section, EIS activities conducted by library patrons, resource procurement system, and the type of library collections. The findings are summarized in the following Table 1.

**Table 1:** Similarities between Japanese and Indonesian Libraries

Descriptors	Japanese	Indonesian
Special English section	Unavailable	
English arrangement resource	Integrated along with other resources	
Detection of EIS activities	Challenging due to unavailable English section	
Procurement planning	Without special attention to English resources	
Collection types	Books and non-book; Electronic and non-electronic forms	

The trend in the investigated libraries of both countries has shown that there is no special English section provided in the libraries as the main destination of EIS users. The data obtained from interview to the library management and site-observation reveal that English collections are arranged among other non-English collections. The arrangement is based on topic or study discipline. In this case, when library patrons wish to read certain topic, they are not guided whether the resources they are accessing are written in English or local language (other languages).

The unavailability of English section has led to the challenge of library management to detect various EIS activities done by library patrons as well as in tapping the number of library patrons who access EIS resources. This sort of finding is true in all investigated libraries. However, a number of library patrons who were using English resources managed to complete the survey and the analysis of the survey results showed that the trends of activities in libraries in both countries is relatively similar. The trend is represented by miscellaneous

EIS activities: reading English books for pleasure, accessing references for exam preparation and assignments, reading English periodicals, and watching English movies.

In terms of the library resource procurement system, it was found that there was no special attention to the intended language (English). The procurement planning indeed considers the feedback and requests from the patrons, which commonly goes by the topics or themes. However, the availability of English books has never been listed as one of the consideration for procurement of library collections.

With regards to the type of collections, both books and non-book resources are available in the investigated libraries. Those resources are provided in both electronic and non-electronic forms. The cases for electronic resources in Japanese and Indonesian libraries are slightly different in terms the types of collections. In Japan, most libraries provide a relatively higher number of e-journals, English DVDs, and periodicals. The libraries subscribe numerous English newspapers from around 50 countries. EIS users, interested in reading news from around the world, can simply access it online from the library web portal available through computer and other devices. In Indonesia, most libraries also provide electronic resources; however, those resources are focused on e-books and talking books, with limited numbers of e-journals.

#### Differences

The discussion about differences is emphasized on the different trends found in the public and university libraries in Japan and Indonesia. Those differences are presented in the following Table 2, arranged by different descriptors.

**Table 2:** Differences between Japanese and Indonesian Libraries

Descriptors	Japanese	Indonesian
collection arrangement	Public: based on originating regions Univ: by topics and/or study discipline	Public and Univ: merely by topic and study fields
collection procurement	Public: delegating staff to various countries for special collections Univ: by the demand of library patrons	Public and Univ: merely by the demand of library patrons
number of EIS materials	20-40%	5-10%
collection accessibility	open online access	mostly intranet connection and very limited online ones

First, in terms of book arrangement, the Japanese public library classifies their collection based on regions where the resources are published. The resources are displayed in several sections, for example some shelves are to store resources from South East Asian countries, East Asian countries, European countries and America. Differently, the university libraries group and display their collections by topics and/or study discipline. Similar to the university libraries in Japan, both public and university in Indonesia arrange their collections by topic and study fields.

Alluding to the procurement system, uniquely, the Japanese public library regularly delegates some staff to various countries to obtain special collections not publicly available. Not only are the procured resources written in local languages of the target countries, but most resources are available also in English. However, further investigation on Japanese university libraries has shown that the resource procurement is based on the demand of library patrons, either students or faculty members. Indicating the procurement system in Indonesian libraries, the public library bases its procurement system on the demand or request of public patrons. Quite similar to that of public library, the university library in Indonesia has also applied the procurement system based on the demand of library patrons.

The trends in both public and university libraries in Japan and Indonesia also differ in terms of the number of English resources. In Japan, English collections of the libraries range from 20-40%; while the percentage shows 5-10% for English collections in Indonesian libraries. In other words, the Japanese libraries provide a relatively higher number of English resources compared to that of Indonesian libraries. In addition, the percentage of English resources in Japanese libraries is not the fixed percentage to show, but possibly beyond. This claim is supported by the fact that Japanese libraries subscribe English e-journals and online periodicals that are mostly written in English and are open for access for their patrons. This could add up the total number of EIS materials. Since Indonesian libraries under investigation subscribe limited online materials, it shows less significant contribution from the electronic resources to the number of EIS materials.

With regards to accessibility of collection by library patrons, the investigated libraries in both countries also showed different trends. The libraries in Japan generally provide open online access towards various resources such as periodicals, e-journals, and e-books. To be specific, the investigated Japanese libraries are available for inter-library loan system and one-click service library web portal. Differently, the investigated libraries in Indonesia are providing electronic and online resources, though not significant in numbers. Those libraries provided very limited e-journals but accessible only through intranet connection, while other investigated library does provide open online access but with very limited online resources in the form of e-books.

## 4. Discussion

Revisiting the previously elaborated theories about English Independent Study (EIS), effective English learners are supposed to design their own learning environment of English outside in addition to their in-class formal learning. Some relevant theories explain that English language learners are required to actively engage in a number of English exposures in addition to some tasks they get in the classroom (Crabbe 1993; Benson 2006 & Smith 2008). It is then necessary that English learning activities should be conducted outside to complement classroom English learning.

With regards to the exposure of English outside classroom, libraries have been inseparable part of students' lives. After class, they can easily visit university libraries as well as public libraries available in their surroundings. In fact, libraries, as the storage of abundant learning sources (Sutarno 2006; Wiji 2007, 2015), offer more opportunities for visitors to expose themselves into various modes of learning activities, not to mention EIS. In reality, this current study has revealed that the investigated libraries in Japan have higher number of English resources compared to that of Indonesian libraries. Nevertheless, viewing from the total collections in those libraries, the English resources are still low in percentage, which disadvantaged EIS users.

Other than the urgency of providing more English resources in the libraries, by theories, the availability of English learning space inside the library is becoming another concern for library development. The current paradigm shift of the provision of independent learning spaces in libraries is believed to offer a wide variety of independent activities for visitors (Jackson & Shenton, 2010); one of which is accessing EIS materials. Executing the ideas of independent spaces for learning, from the perspective of EIS, it is necessary that library has specific English section.

With regards to accessibility of resources, technology development have required libraries to upgrade the way they serve their resources to include, not only printed or offline collections, but also online materials accessible anywhere. This notion has been supported by some references stating that libraries nowadays are challenged to provide more advanced services by integrating technology, from manual and conventional to digital (Makmur 2015; Wiji 2015). The investigation of this current study has revealed that most libraries in Japan are more adaptive to this kind of mode of library access. One of the major challenges of Indonesian libraries, both public and university, is the limited online access.

#### 4.1. Suggestions for Best Practices

Highlighting the number of collections of English written resources in libraries both in Japan and Indonesia, the findings of this current study has shown that the English resources are comparatively lower in number. Therefore, to support EIS better, procurement of English-based materials (English magazines, updated audio-visual materials, periodicals, and e-books) should also become one of the emphases.

Another issue of concern is related to the integration display management of EIS collection. Ideally, the full support of EIS is represented through establishing a specific section in which all English resources are stored. However, it is not always feasible that all libraries under investigation develop specific English section that might be too robust changes on the current system of library management. The following suggestion offers another scenario. English resources could still be displayed using the current system (integrated collection by topics), but they are specially tagged to show that they are English-based materials to access by EIS users. Special tagging could be executed, for example, by means of distinctive color of book identification.

Finally, going beyond EIS, improving the use of IT in the library system in Indonesia is one of the lessons learned from the current investigation. Libraries are to adapt to the development of information technology, for example through the use of One Click Service system, in which the access to a number of resources is easy in a single click of computer system. Another manifestation of IT-based libraries is the integrated Inter-Library Loan (ILL) system, which allows library patrons to access the desired English resources not available in a single library.

### 5. Conclusion

Some similarities and differences between the two investigated libraries are found. The similarities covered the unavailability of special English section as the main destination of EIS users, the integrated arrangement of English resources into other resources, challenges in detecting various EIS activities, procurement planning without special attention to English resources, and the same types of collections. The differences of the investigated libraries in both countries were the arrangement of collections—by country region for Japanese public library, and by topics for university libraries in both countries and public library in Indonesia—, the procurement of collections—by delegating staff to various countries of book origin for Japanese public library, and by visitor requests for university libraries in both countries and public library in Indonesia—, and the number and accessibility of EIS materials—which was relatively higher for Japanese libraries.

This current study investigates limited number of libraries in Japan and Indonesia. The libraries under investigation represent the regional level libraries (not in the capital nor big cities). In addition, the qualitative design used resulted in non-generalizable findings, yet they are introducing an insight of how libraries in non-English speaking countries support their patrons to conduct EIS activities. Further studies are expected to investigate broader scope of libraries so as to arrive at greater insights of library management system to support EIS.

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