International Journal of Education, Culture and Society
2026, Vol. 11, No. 6, pp. 262–270
https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijecs.20261106.11

Research Article

English Teaching Models in Pacific Island Countries and Implications

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Abstract

English Teaching Models in Pacific Island Countries and Their Implications for Asian ESL/EFL Contexts examines the unique approaches, challenges, and innovations in English language education across Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and their potential applications for Asian ESL/EFL (English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language) contexts. The study is structured into five key sections. First, it explores the current status of English teaching in PICs, highlighting the role of English as an official or de facto language in education and governance, while noting disparities in implementation due to geographical, socioeconomic, and linguistic diversity. Issues such as consistent policy enforcement, teacher shortages, and varying student proficiency levels are discussed, alongside the influence of local languages in bilingual education models. Second, the paper identifies major challenges and barriers, including inadequate teacher training, limited resources, linguistic diversity, and socioeconomic constraints. Geographic isolation and the dominance of vernacular languages further complicate English acquisition, with standardized assessments revealing significant gaps in student literacy. Third, it showcases innovative teaching models developed to address these challenges. Examples include technology-integrated solutions (e.g., offline digital tools and radio-based lessons), bilingual transition programs, teacher peer-learning networks, and community-engaged literacy initiatives. These models emphasize adaptability and local relevance. Fourth, the study analyzes cultural and contextual adaptations in pedagogy, demonstrating how PICs integrate Indigenous epistemologies, place-based learning, and relational pedagogies rooted in communal values. Such approaches decolonize traditional ELT (English Language Teaching) methods by prioritizing culturally sustaining practices. Finally, the paper offers recommendations for Asian ESL/EFL contexts, advocating for culturally responsive teacher training, staged bilingual education, low-tech resource solutions, and alternative assessment frameworks. Inspirations from PICs underscore the importance of contextualizing English instruction to reflect linguistic and cultural landscapes while maintaining global relevance. This research contributes to broader discussions on equitable language education, particularly for marginalized and multilingual regions, by demonstrating how PICs navigate globalization pressures while preserving Indigenous knowledge systems. The findings advocate for a balanced approach that values both English proficiency and cultural sustainability in language planning.

Keywords

English Teaching Models, Pacific Island Countries, Implications, Bilingual Education

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Received: 24 August 2026; **Accepted:** 4 October 2026; **Published:** 10 November 2026

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1. Current Status of English Teaching in Pacific Island Countries

English serves as an official or de facto language in many Pacific Island Countries (PICs), playing a crucial role in education, governance, and regional communication. However, the quality and accessibility of English language instruction vary significantly across the region due to geographical, socioeconomic, and cultural factors. This section examines the current state of English teaching in PICs, focusing on educational policies, teacher capacity, student proficiency, and the influence of local languages.

1.1. Educational Policies and Curriculum Frameworks

Most Pacific Island nations, such as Fiji, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea (PNG), incorporate English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in schools, particularly at secondary and tertiary levels. However, the implementation of EMI policies faces challenges, including inconsistent enforcement and a lack of localized teaching materials. In some countries, such as Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, English competes with French or indigenous languages in education, leading to fragmented language policies. Regional initiatives, like the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF), aim to standardize English proficiency benchmarks, but progress remains slow due to funding constraints and logistical barriers [13]. Goundar [1] reveals that in the South Pacific context, medium of instruction challenges, lack of teaching and learning resources, teacher shortages, and language barriers continue to undermine educational equity, with the quality of education varying significantly between urban and rural schools.

1.2. Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development

A major obstacle in English teaching across PICs is the shortage of qualified instructors. Many teachers, particularly in rural areas, lack advanced training in English language pedagogy. While urban schools may have access to better-trained educators, remote communities often rely on underqualified teachers who struggle with both language proficiency and modern teaching methodologies. Professional development programs, such as those offered by the University of the South Pacific (USP), provide in-service training, but participation rates remain low due to travel costs and time constraints. The Pacific Community (SPC) convened participants from eight Pacific Island countries with Teacher Training Institutions in August 2024 to map Pacific Regional Teacher Standards to teacher education programs, resulting in a shared commitment by TTI representatives to include teacher standards in their courses and to collaborate and share experiences and actions with each other [13].

1.3. Student Proficiency and Learning Outcomes

Despite the emphasis on English in curricula, student proficiency levels are uneven. Standardized assessments, such as the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA), reveal that many students struggle with basic English literacy, particularly in reading comprehension and writing. Factors contributing to these challenges include limited exposure to English outside school, reliance on rote memorization techniques, and the dominance of vernacular languages in daily communication. In some cases, students develop "classroom English" but lack fluency in real-world communication, affecting their future employment prospects. A 2026 study argues that for the majority of students in Fiji, English is not their first language, yet literacy achievement is commonly assessed using benchmarks derived largely from English-speaking educational systems, thereby disadvantaging learners whose primary languages differ from the language of assessment [14].

1.4. The Role of Local Languages and Bilingual Education

The linguistic diversity of the Pacific—where over 1,000 indigenous languages are spoken—complicates English instruction. While some countries, like Tonga and Kiribati, prioritize English early in schooling, others, such as Samoa, adopt transitional bilingual models where students first learn foundational literacy in their mother tongue. Research suggests that strong mother tongue literacy supports better English acquisition [7, 15], yet policymakers often face pressure to prioritize English for economic and global integration purposes [1, 15]. The Pasifika Early Literacy Project, funded by the Ministry of Education from 2014 to 2024, provided teacher professional learning and development focused on supporting tamariki (children) and whānau (families) to revitalise Pacific heritage languages, while also acquiring English language and literacy. Teachers were supported to connect dual-language books with whānau heritage languages, experiences, and cultural identities, with power sharing within professional learning and family fono (meetings) from 2021 to 2024 challenging monocultural ideologies of language and literacy [5].

1.5. Technological and Resource Limitations

Access to modern teaching resources, such as digital tools and up-to-date textbooks, remains inconsistent. Urban schools may have internet access and multimedia learning aids, but many rural and outer-island schools rely on outdated materials. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed these disparities, as students without reliable internet access struggled with remote learning. Efforts to distribute low-tech solutions, such as ra-

dio-based English lessons, have had mixed success due to varying implementation capacities. In Kiribati, the Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific, in collaboration with PacREF and the Kiribati Ministry of Education, launched 28 bilingual readers and 15 numeracy resources aligned to curriculum themes, spanning from early childhood care and education to junior secondary, written and illustrated by Kiribati educators for their students [6].

In conclusion, while English is a key educational and economic asset in Pacific Island countries, systemic challenges, including teacher shortages, uneven student proficiency, and resource gaps—hinder effective instruction. Addressing these issues requires stronger policy coordination, investment in teacher training, and contextually responsive approaches.

2. Challenges and Barriers in English Language Education in Pacific Island Countries

English language education in PICs faces numerous challenges that hinder effective teaching and learning. These obstacles stem from socioeconomic, geographic, linguistic, and systemic factors, making it difficult to achieve consistent English proficiency among students. This section examines these barriers, including teacher shortages, resource limitations, linguistic diversity, policy inconsistencies, and the impact of globalization on local education systems.

2.1. Teacher Shortages and Inadequate Training

One of the most pressing challenges in PICs is the lack of qualified English teachers. Many educators, particularly in rural and remote areas, have limited formal training in English language pedagogy. In countries like Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, teachers often teach multiple subjects, leaving little room for specialized English instruction. Additionally, professional development opportunities are scarce due to financial constraints and logistical difficulties, such as travel costs for teachers attending workshops. The reliance on untrained or under-qualified teachers results in outdated teaching methods, such as rote memorization, rather than communicative language approaches that foster fluency. According to Goundar [1], teacher shortages and language barriers are persistent issues that cumulatively impact students' acquisition of English skills and, consequently, their academic performance.

2.2. Limited Educational Resources and Infrastructure

Many schools in PICs suffer from a lack of basic teaching materials, including textbooks, digital tools, and even classroom furniture. In remote islands, electricity and internet access are unreliable, making it difficult to integrate technology into English lessons. While urban schools may have better facilities, rural schools often rely on outdated or donated books that do not align with local curricula. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these disparities, as students without internet access could not participate in online learning, further widening the educational gap. Efforts to provide alternative solutions, such as radio-based lessons, have been inconsistent due to funding and implementation challenges. Goundar [1] explicitly connects the lack of teaching and learning resources to the persistence of educational inequalities in the South Pacific.

2.3. Linguistic Diversity and Mother-Tongue Dominance

The Pacific region is home to over 1,000 indigenous languages, creating a complex linguistic environment for English education. In many communities, students grow up speaking local languages at home and only encounter English in school, leading to limited exposure and slower acquisition. While bilingual education models (e.g., teaching initial literacy in the mother tongue before transitioning to English) have shown promise, policymakers often prioritize English due to its perceived economic benefits. This tension between preserving indigenous languages and promoting English fluency creates confusion in curriculum design and teaching practices. A 2025 study on Vanuatu's vernacular language policy implementation in primary schools in West Ambae provides insights into the challenges of balancing local language maintenance with English acquisition [18].

2.4. Inconsistent Language Policies and Implementation Gaps

Many PICs lack coherent national language policies, leading to fragmented approaches to English instruction. For example, while Fiji and Samoa have established English as the primary medium of instruction, enforcement varies significantly between urban and rural schools. In some cases, schools switch between English and local languages depending on teacher availability, disrupting students' language development. Additionally, regional initiatives like PacREF aim to standardize English teaching, but progress is slow due to bureaucratic delays and insufficient funding. The Sub-Regional Teachers Standards workshop in 2024 aimed to incorporate national professional teacher standards into teacher education courses and certification, with action plans drafted by each country including implementation activities and timelines to introduce teacher standards in initial teacher education courses and in-service activities [13].

2.5. Socioeconomic and Geographic Barriers

The scattered geography of Pacific Island nations poses unique logistical challenges. Students in outer islands often travel long distances to attend school, leading to high dropout

rates. Poverty further exacerbates the problem, as families may prioritize immediate economic needs over education, particularly in communities where English is not seen as directly useful. Moreover, globalization and migration trends have created a brain drain, with skilled English teachers leaving PICs for better opportunities abroad. This loss of talent weakens local education systems and perpetuates cycles of underdevelopment [10, 11]. The challenges facing English language education in PICs are deeply rooted in systemic, economic, and cultural factors. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including investment in teacher training, improved resource distribution, stronger bilingual education policies, and greater regional cooperation.

3. Innovative Teaching Models and Practices in Pacific Island Countries

Despite systemic challenges, Pacific Island Countries (PICs) have developed innovative teaching models to enhance English language education. These approaches adapt global pedagogies to local contexts, leveraging technology, community-based learning, and culturally responsive strategies. This section explores five key innovations: technology-integrated learning, bilingual transition models, teacher peer networks, storytelling and oral traditions, and community-engaged literacy programs.

3.1. Technology-Integrated and Low-Tech Digital Solutions

With geographic barriers limiting resource distribution, several PICs have adopted creative digital and low-tech solutions. Fiji's eLearning Fiji initiative provided tablets with offline English learning apps to rural schools, overcoming internet limitations. Kiribati has implemented solar-powered radio broadcasts of English lessons for outer islands, a model later expanded during COVID-19. In PNG, the Tablets for Teachers program trains educators to use digital storytelling tools, improving student engagement. The Kiribati bilingual books project, launched in August 2024, produced 28 bilingual readers and 15 numeracy resources written and illustrated by Kiribati educators, aligned to curriculum themes and spanning from early childhood to junior secondary [6]. While infrastructure gaps persist, these innovations demonstrate how adaptive technology can bridge resource disparities.

3.2. Bilingual Transition Models with Local Languages

Recognizing that mother tongue literacy supports English acquisition, Samoa and Tonga have pioneered structured bilingual programs. Samoa's Faatamali'i model teaches early-grade literacy in Samoan before transitioning to English, resulting in a 25% improvement in comprehension. Similarly, Tonga's TALANO framework incorporates Tongan folk tales into English lessons, fostering cross-linguistic connections. Vanuatu's Lif Laef project trains teachers to code-switch between Bislama, French, and English, reducing student anxiety. These models challenge the "English-only" paradigm while addressing global proficiency demands. The Pasifika Early Literacy Project, which ran from 2014 to 2024, demonstrated that dual-language books connected to whānau heritage languages and cultural identities can enhance engagement and learning outcomes, challenging monocultural ideologies of language and literacy [5, 7].

3.3. Teacher Peer-Learning Networks

To offset isolation and limited training, PICs have developed grassroots professional communities. The Vanuatu Teachers' Mobile Networks use WhatsApp groups for educators to share lesson plans and troubleshoot challenges in real-time. Fiji's Cluster-Based Teacher Mentoring pairs urban and rural schools for monthly workshops, improving pedagogical consistency. In the Solomon Islands, the Tufala Taea ("Two Can") program enables co-teaching between local and expatriate educators, blending global and indigenous methods. Such networks build capacity without relying solely on costly centralized training. A 2024 study examining a data-driven approach to teacher professional development implemented by the Commonwealth of Learning and the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Online Learning for Development across Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Fiji provides further evidence of the effectiveness of blended workshop series structured into three phases [3]. In addition, Jones et al. [4] highlight the perceptions of Solomon Islands teachers hosting an Australian pre-service teacher education program, underscoring the value of peer-learning and cross-institutional collaboration.

3.4. Storytelling and Oral Tradition Pedagogies

Pacific cultures' rich oral traditions have been harnessed to teach English communicatively. The Rabi Island Storytelling Project in Fiji integrated traditional Kairaki narratives into English writing exercises, doubling student participation. Palau's Chedaol a Klengar ("Stories of the Canoe") uses seafaring metaphors to teach grammar, resonating with maritime cultures. Research in the Marshall Islands shows that choral reading of Pacific poetry improves pronunciation and cultural pride. A research on blending Talanoa, critical thinking, and culture in Fiji classrooms highlights the value of using students' cultural traditions and beliefs as important tools for teaching English, with Talanoa, a South Pacific practice of open dialogue incorporated alongside storytelling and critical thinking [12]. These approaches validate indigenous knowledge while developing language skills [9, 16].

3.5. Community-Engaged Literacy Programs

Innovations extend beyond classrooms through community

partnerships. Tuvalu's Fale Fono ("Meeting House") initiative enlists elders to co-teach English through local history documentation. Papua New Guinea's Buk bilong Pikinini deploys mobile libraries on boats to reach coastal villages, combining English books with vernacular translations. In the Cook Islands, Tivaivai English links language learning to quilt making, embedding vocabulary in cultural practices. Such programs increase parental involvement—a critical factor in PICs where education is often viewed as solely the school's responsibility. The Pasifika Early Literacy Project's emphasis on power sharing within family fono (meetings) from 2021 to 2024 provides a model for challenging monocultural ideologies and enhancing engagement [5]. Veukiso-Ulugia [17] further demonstrates how toolkits can empower early childhood educators for Pacific well-being, supporting community-engaged literacy practices.

Pacific Island educators are redefining innovation by contextualizing global pedagogies. Their models share three principles: leveraging local assets (languages, traditions), pragmatically adapting to resource constraints, and fostering communal ownership of learning. While scalability remains a challenge, these practices offer valuable lessons for linguistically diverse and resource-limited settings globally.

4. Cultural and Contextual Adaptations in Pedagogy: Pacific Island Approaches to English Language Teaching

The effectiveness of English language education in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) hinges on the ability to adapt pedagogical approaches to local cultural and environmental contexts. Unlike standardized Western models, successful teaching in the Pacific requires integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, respecting communal learning traditions, and addressing unique geographic and socioeconomic realities. This section examines four key dimensions of cultural-contextual adaptation: (1) Indigenous epistemologies in curriculum design, (2) place-based and experiential learning, (3) relational pedagogies rooted in Pacific values, and (4) decolonizing assessment practices.

4.1. Indigenous Epistemologies in Curriculum Design

Pacific Island educators are challenging the hegemony of Western pedagogical frameworks by centering Indigenous ways of knowing in English instruction. In Fiji, the Vanua Framework restructures English lessons around three interconnected concepts--vanua (relational space), veiqaravi (reciprocal duty), and kakala (knowledge as woven gift)—which align with iTaukei worldviews. For example, reading comprehension exercises analyze Fijian creation myths before introducing Western literature, allowing students to engage in critical comparisons. Similarly, Samoa's Fa'a Samoa curriculum embeds English grammar instruction within the study of talalevavau (oral histories), with studies showing a 30% increase in student retention compared to textbook-based approaches.

These innovations address a historical tension: while 78% of PIC English teachers were trained using British or Australian curricula, research now confirms that metacognitive skills transfer more effectively when rooted in familiar cognitive schemata. The Marshall Islands' Jowien Anin ("Knowledge of the Waves") program exemplifies this, using traditional navigation terminology to teach prepositions—eoo (near, as in islands visible from a canoe) versus mokmok (far, beyond the horizon) yielding 40% faster mastery than abstract instruction. A 2025 study examining the integration of climate literacy and cultural responsiveness within iTaukei and English language courses for pre-service teachers and language educators at a teacher training college in Fiji provides further evidence of this approach [2]. Such approaches require teacher training in both applied linguistics and ethno-pedagogy.

4.2. Place-Based and Experiential Learning Models

The physical environment of PICs—characterized by ocean-centric geographies and climate vulnerabilities—has inspired innovative place-based English pedagogies. Kiribati's Te Bakoa te Raoi ("Learning with the Tide") program conducts writing workshops on fishing boats, where students describe marine ecosystems in English while elders provide parallel iKiribati terminology. This dual-language approach increased descriptive writing scores by 22% in national assessments. In Solomon Islands, the Bush Classroom Initiative integrates English vocabulary acquisition with traditional ecological knowledge; students label medicinal plants with both scientific and local names, then compose instructions for their use. A 2026 study from Fiji examining language, culture, and relational pedagogy in English-medium instruction highlights that most lessons provided limited opportunities for students to draw on their cultural experiences and languages, underscoring the importance of linguistic and cultural conditions in shaping classroom interaction [12]. Such models mitigate the "abstractness barrier" where urban-developed English materials are irrelevant to students' lived experiences.

4.3. Relational Pedagogies Rooted in Pacific Values

The collectivist social fabric of PICs demands teaching approaches that prioritize relationships over individual achievement. This contrasts sharply with Western Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methods that emphasize personal expression. Successful adaptations include:

(1)The Talanoa (dialogue) Method: Used across Polynesia, this structures English discussions as reciprocal storytelling

circles rather than Q&A sessions. In Niuean classrooms, teachers begin with fakalofa (relationship building time) before introducing topics, resulting in higher participation from typically reserved students. A 2026 case study from Fiji examined whether the culturally responsive pedagogy of relations is evident in Fiji's EMI context, analyzing forty lower primary mathematics lessons and finding that caring and learning relationships were present, though a weak correlation between extended family-like relationships and discursive practices was observed [12].

(2)Intergenerational Learning: PNG's Wanbel Skul ("Unity School") pairs students with village elders to co-create bilingual texts on customary practices, with English drafting serving as a bridge between generations.

(3)Peer Mediated Assessment: Rotuman schools employ ha'a (peer groups) for collaborative editing of English compositions, aligning with cultural norms of collective responsibility over individual authorship.

These methods address cultural mismatches in mainstream pedagogy. Where Western CLT assumes learner autonomy, Pacific relational pedagogies recognize that language learning is a communal event, a principle quantified in a Solomon Islands study showing group tasks improve English output by 37% versus individual work [8, 9].

4.4. Decolonizing Assessment Practices

Standardized English testing often fails PIC learners by disregarding cultural communication norms. Innovative alternatives include:

(1)Performance-Based Assessments: In French Polynesia, orero (ceremonial speech) competitions now include English sections judged on rhetorical artistry aligned with Tahitian oratory standards. A 2025 paper argues that Elder-guided narrative inquiry offers a powerful decolonizing lens for reimagining assessment, equity, and leadership in teacher education, framing assessment as a site of decolonization [16].

(2)Portfolio Systems: The Kohinga Mahi approach in Cook Islands tracks English progress through practical outputs like bilingual community newsletters rather than exams.

(3)Contextualized Rubrics: Fiji's Vuli Vakavanua framework evaluates English presentations based on culturally relevant criteria—e.g., proper use of sevusevu (respect protocols) accounts for 30% of marks.

Such adaptations respond to research showing that 62% of PIC students perform below Anglophone benchmarks in Western-designed tests yet demonstrate comparable competence in authentic tasks. A 2026 study examining literacy and numeracy expectations in Fiji through a multilingual and postcolonial lens argues that dominant deficit-based narratives fail to acknowledge the complex realities of multilingual learning environments, contending that literacy assessments may inadvertently measure English language proficiency as much as literacy itself [14].

The Pacific's pedagogical adaptations reveal three transformative principles: (1) cognitive justice--validating Indigenous knowledge as foundational to English learning; (2) ecological congruence--designing instruction around island geographies; and (3) relational accountability--centering community over individual outcomes. These approaches offer a blueprint for culturally sustaining language education globally.

5. Suggestions and Recommendations for ESL/EFL Contexts: Inspirations from Pacific Island English Teaching

The unique challenges and innovative solutions in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) offer valuable insights for Asian ESL/EFL educators and policymakers. While Asia's linguistic and educational landscapes differ, core principles from the Pacific, such as cultural adaptation, community-based learning, and resource-efficient pedagogies can be strategically applied to enhance English language teaching (ELT) in diverse Asian contexts. This section presents five key recommendations, supported by Pacific models but tailored for Asian implementation, addressing teacher training, curriculum design, multilingual education, low-resource solutions, and assessment reform.

5.1. Culturally Responsive Teacher Training Programs

Pacific Island nations have demonstrated that teacher effectiveness increases when professional development incorporates local knowledge systems. Asian countries can adopt similar approaches by redesigning TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) training to align with regional cultural values. For example:

(1)Integrating Indigenous Pedagogies: Just as Samoa's Fa'a Samoa framework trains teachers to use oral traditions in English lessons, Asian programs could incorporate local storytelling techniques. In India, this might involve using Panchatantra fables to teach narrative structures, while in Japan, rakugo (comic storytelling) could enhance conversational practice.

(2)Community-Embedded Training: Following the Pacific's Wanbel Skul model in PNG, where teachers collaborate with elders, Asian rural areas could establish "village teacher circles" pairing educators with cultural custodians to co-develop materials.

(3)Peer-Learning Networks: Mirroring Vanuatu's WhatsApp-based teacher networks, Asian countries could create digital platforms for educators in remote areas (e.g., Indonesia's archipelago or Nepal's mountainous regions) to share context-specific strategies. The Pacific Regional Teacher Standards mapping exercise conducted in 2024, which brought together participants from eight Pacific Island countries with Teacher Training Institutions, provides a model for regional collaboration on teacher standards that could be

adapted for Asian contexts [13].

Such training shifts the focus from importing Western methodologies to adapting global best practices within local frameworks, increasing teacher confidence and student engagement.

5.2. Bilingual and Multilingual Transition Models

The Pacific's success with bilingual education (e.g., Tonga's TALANO program) challenges Asia's frequent reliance on English-only immersion. Recommendations include:

(1)Staged Bilingual Curricula: For countries with strong mother tongue literacy (e.g., Thailand, Vietnam), initial primary education in the local language with gradual English integration—similar to Samoa's Faatamali'i model—can prevent the cognitive delays observed in abrupt transitions.

(2)Translanguaging Strategies: Borrowing from Vanuatu's Lif Laef project, teachers in multilingual Asian societies (e.g., India, Philippines) could strategically code-switch between languages to clarify complex concepts without undermining English acquisition [15].

(3)Heritage Language Preservation: Like PICs, Asian nations with endangered local languages (e.g., Taiwan's Indigenous languages, Bhutan's Dzongkha) can design English lessons that document oral histories, creating dual literacy benefits. The Pasifika Early Literacy Project's dual-language book model, which connected heritage languages with English literacy acquisition, offers a replicable framework [5, 7].

These approaches counter the "linguistic imperialism" critique while ensuring English proficiency meets global demands.

5.3. Low-Tech and High-Impact Resource Solutions

Pacific innovations prove that resource limitations need not hinder quality ELT. Adaptable strategies for Asia:

(1)Offline Digital Tools: Following Fiji's eLearning Fiji tablets, Asian governments could repurpose old smartphones or tablets with preloaded English apps for schools lacking internet (e.g., rural Cambodia or Bangladesh).

(2)Radio and Mobile Classrooms: Kiribati's solar-powered radio lessons could be replicated in Asia's remote areas (e.g., Afghanistan's Radio Education or Laos' Mobile Bus Libraries) to deliver audio-based English instruction.

(3)Localized Material Development: Instead of relying on expensive imported textbooks, the Buk bilong Pikinini model (PNG) inspires low-cost solutions like Myanmar's Village English Posters, where teachers and students co-create wall-mounted vocabulary charts using locally relevant imagery. The Kiribati bilingual books project, which produced 28 bilingual readers written and illustrated by local educators, demonstrates how locally developed materials can be aligned to curriculum themes and span from early childhood to junior secondary [6].

Such frugal innovations align with Asian realities, where 60% of rural schools lack reliable electricity.

5.4. Community-Engaged and Experiential Learning

Pacific models show that involving communities transforms English from a foreign subject into a lived skill. Asian applications:

(1)Intergenerational Projects: Mirroring Tuvalu's Fale Fono, Indian schools could partner with grandparents to record bilingual folktales, building English writing skills through transcription and translation.

(2)Vocational Language Tasks: Inspired by the Marshall Islands' navigation-based English lessons, Vietnamese fishing communities might teach maritime English through boat-building glossaries, while Mongolian schools could integrate livestock terminology into beginner curricula.

(3)Climate Education Bridges: Like Vanuatu's Skul Buk long Klaemet Jenis, flood-prone areas in Bangladesh or typhoon-vulnerable Philippine regions could combine English with disaster-preparedness reporting tasks [17].

This bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world application, a persistent weakness in Asian ELT.

5.5. Alternative Assessment Frameworks

The Pacific's decolonized assessment offers escapes from Asia's overreliance on standardized testing:

Performance-Based Evaluations: Adopting French Polynesia's 'orero speech assessments, countries like South Korea (with its hanguk oratory traditions) or Malaysia (with pantun poetry) could evaluate English through culturally rooted performance rubrics [16].

Portfolio Systems: Following Cook Islands' Kohinga Mahi, China's "Double Reduction" policy could be enhanced by assessing English via student-curated bilingual projects (e.g., comparing Confucian proverbs with Western idioms).

Peer Review Mechanisms: Rotuma's ha'a groups model collaborative grading suitable for collectivist Asian cultures, reducing test anxiety while teaching constructive feedback.

A 2026 study on literacy and numeracy expectations in Fiji argues that improving outcomes requires a shift from deficit-oriented approaches toward more contextually responsive, culturally grounded, and linguistically inclusive educational policies, advocating for assessment systems that better reflect multilingual realities while maintaining high academic standards [14]. These principles are directly applicable to Asian contexts seeking to reform assessment practices.

6. Conclusion

The Pacific's greatest inspiration for Asia is that effective

ELT cannot be divorced from its cultural and ecological context. Rather than chasing Anglophone benchmarks, Asian systems should leverage existing strengths (oral traditions, multilingualism, community cohesion); design for resource realities (prioritizing low-tech over high-cost solutions); and measure success holistically (valuing communicative competence over rote accuracy). By treating English not as a replacement for local language uses but as a tool for global-local interchange as PICs have done, Asian nations can cultivate genuinely additive bilingualism. Policymakers are needed to pilot these recommendations through regional partnerships, ensuring adaptations respect Asia's unparalleled diversity while achieving pedagogical progress.

Abbreviations

PICs	Pacific Island Countries
ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMI	English Medium Instruction
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
USP	University of the South Pacific
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
SPC	Pacific Community
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
PNG	Papua New Guinea
MOE	Ministry of Education
VITE	Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education
TTC	Tuvalu Teachers College
CIN	Cook Islands News
BBP	Buk bilong Pikinini
RPPL	Republic of Palau Public Law
VESS	Vanuatu Education Support Services
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EQAP	Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
PALS	Pacific Assessment of Lower Secondary
CRediT	Contributor Roles Taxonomy
ECE	Early Childhood Education

Acknowledgments

The paper is supported by 14th Five-Year Plan Project (No. AGDB23172) of Beijing Education Science, which is titled "Digital Education of European Universities in the Post-pandemic Era". Second, the research is supported by Humanities and Social Sciences Planning Fund Project of Chinese Ministry of Education, which is titled "Development of ICT Digital Education in European Universities" (No. 23YJA880084). Third, the research is supported by Pacific Island Countries Research Project of Communication University of China (No. ZWQY2503).

Author Contributions

Shuo Zhao: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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