

การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาสากล: กระบวนทัศน์ ในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่เหมาะสมกับบริบทของไทย

Teaching EIL: More Proper English Language Teaching Paradigm in Thai Context

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บทความนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อนำเสนอสถานภาพของภาษาอังกฤษในยุคโลกาภิวัตน์ ปัจจุบันนี้ภาษาอังกฤษได้เปลี่ยนสถานภาพเป็น “ภาษาสากล” หรือ “ภาษาโลก” เนื่องจากการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษนั้นได้แพร่หลายไปทั่วโลก ไม่จำกัดเฉพาะในกลุ่มของเจ้าของภาษาเท่านั้น กระบวนทัศน์การเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ใช้ในประเทศไทยซึ่งเป็นหนึ่งในประเทศที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศยังยึดติดกับมาตรฐานและบรรทัดฐานของเจ้าของภาษาอย่างเคร่งครัด ด้วยเหตุดังกล่าวจึงทำให้ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนชาวไทยไม่เป็นที่น่าพอใจ ไม่สามารถเพิ่มระดับความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อให้บรรลุเป้าหมายทั้งในระดับชาติและนานาชาติได้ ดังนั้นกระบวนทัศน์แนวใหม่ในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ ที่เรียกว่า “การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาสากล” จึงจะเข้ามาแทนที่การสอนภาษาอังกฤษตามกระบวนทัศน์เดิม เนื่องจากแนวคิดหลักของ กระบวนทัศน์ใหม่นี้สอดคล้องและเหมาะสมกับสถานการณ์ปัจจุบันของประเทศไทยมากกว่า โดยที่กระบวนทัศน์ดังกล่าวลดค่านิยมของความเป็นเจ้าของภาษาลง และส่งเสริมความมั่นใจของผู้พูดภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา ในตอนท้ายของบทความนี้ได้เสนอแนะให้กระบวนทัศน์นี้ ได้รับการบรรจุในหลักสูตรการสอนภาษาอังกฤษของคณะศึกษาศาสตร์/ครุศาสตร์ ในมหาวิทยาลัยของประเทศไทย เพื่อสนับสนุนให้ครูผู้สอน และผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษชาวไทยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการสื่อสารอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพและมั่นใจยิ่งขึ้น

Abstract

This article aims to present the status of English language in the global context. English, at present, is called ‘International language’ or ‘Global Language’ since it is freely employed by non-native English speakers. The teaching paradigm, EFL, in countries of Expanding Circle, particularly Thailand, is indicated in this paper. The traditional paradigm used in Thailand is not proper enough. That is because it is strictly dominated by native speakers’ value; therefore, it cannot increase the

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level of English competence of Thai learners to meet the national and international purpose. The more current teaching paradigm, EIL, is introduced to replace the EFL. The concept of EIL is more proper for Thai learners under the circumstance of globalized society since it is able to lessen the pressure of 'nativeness' and increase confidence of non-native speakers. Thus, as it is mentioned in the last part of the article, EIL should be more promoted in English teacher education in Thai universities in for Thai English teachers and learners to be able to use communicative English more effectively.

Introduction

The wide spread of English and its influences on various aspects in our daily life are reaching globally such as international business, education, entertainment, science and technology, etc. The importance of English is more obvious as it has been used in all regions of the world. Therefore, English does not belong to the countries in the Inner circle of the three concentric circles of World Englishes, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. It also belongs to the countries in the Outer circle, such as India, the Philippines, and Singapore, and those in the Expanding circle, including China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Taiwan (Kachru, 1985). Varieties of English are employed in the wide-ranging regions according to different social, historical, religious, cultural and language background (Murata and Jenkins, 2009).

The use of English in Asia is rather different from that is used in the countries in the Inner Circle and is unique from the countries in other regions. That means Englishes used in Asia are adapted and adopted in various spheres of Asian ways for intra- and international communication (Murata & Jenkins, 2009). English used among non-native speakers is English as a

Lingua Franca (ELF), a means of communication in English between speakers who have different first languages (Jenkins, 2009). In spite of English as a Lingua Franca, seemingly most countries in Asia are in expanding circle, English is used in form of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). English speakers in these countries are non-native speakers that English is not a local medium of communication and it is used in educational institutes (Kachru, 1985; Mac Kay, 2003). As it was mentioned that English plays an important role in education issue, teaching and learning English is added in the curriculum of the educational institutes all over the world, including in Asia and Southeast Asia region.

With the large number of English speakers in countries of Expanding circle, English language teaching professionals are increasing as well. In most non-native English speaking countries, Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is widely accepted. For EFL, native English, Standard British and American English, are the only acceptable norms to serve as targets for Expanding Circle learners (Murata and Jenkins, 2009). In Thailand, similar to other Expanding circle countries, English Language Teaching (ELT) in Thai schools has been driven by the

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) paradigm for very long time. Though, the four skills of communicative English; listening, speaking, reading and writing are far from satisfactory (Wiriyachitra, 2001). That is because Thai teachers and learners have been mostly rooted in native speakers' norms. Although, the faculty of education in several educational institutes in Thailand has provided the curriculum of English language teaching, the English performance of Thai learners is still limited (Pongsiriwet, 2002). According Chomsky, he presented that only a native speaker is an ideal speaker-listener who perfectly knows the language (Chomsky, 1965). This can retain the progress of Thai English speaking learners.

However, some scholars and English teaching professionals regard ELF (English as a lingua franca) or EIL, (English as an international language, as it is sometimes called) have the different perspectives between EFL and ELF. They believe ELF or EIL can solve the problem of native-speaker ideological paradigm since these paradigms, ELF and EIL, do not emphasize on English native speakers' norms. On the contrary, they focus on English which is used between varieties of English speakers who come from different cultural and national background (Sharifian, 2009). Therefore, the implication of English language depends on the standard of various groups of English speakers. When ELF or EIL is regarded, English speakers no longer set the linguistic agenda and do not expect the non-native participants in the interaction to defer to native speakers' norms (Seidlhofer 2004;

Jenkins 2007; Murata & Jenkins, 2009). As a result, ELF or EIL should be promoted to Teacher Education in Thailand so that Thai English teachers can have not only linguistic knowledge but also English language competence in the context of native and non-native speakers' norms.

The Use of English around the world

As English, these days, is employed dramatically all over the world. It is no longer limitedly used in only English-speaking countries. It is used dominantly in various aspects, such as international affairs, finance and economics, advertisements and mass media, education, etc (Crystal, 1997). Therefore, English, now, travels very rapidly across the world. Not surprisingly, English does not belong to only a minority group of people who have English as an L1. As Kachru (1985) mentions that the native speakers have become a minority and have lost the exclusive privilege to control English standardization. The use of English around the world is categorized into three groups. Kachru (1986) and Sharifian (2009) state that English around the world, presently, is used in countries of three concentric circles: Inner-Circle, Outer-Circle, and Expanding –Circle countries. In Inner-Circle countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, English is employed as the mother tongue. The multi-lingual countries, e.g., India, Singapore, and the Philippines, which are located in the Outer-circle, use English as a second language. The largest circle which consists of countries in Expanding Circle, namely

China, Japan, Korea and Egypt, English is taught and learned as a foreign language.

According to the trend of “World Englishes” concept, it, more or less, can affect English teaching pedagogies in countries all over the world. Teaching and learning English might rather focus more on different contexts than rules of Standard English, particularly, in Asia where varieties of English occur and English is mainly taught as a foreign language.

The Use of English in Asia

When ‘Asia ’is mentioned, the concept of Asia is ever-expanding (Pennycook, 2009). It consists of various parts of the continent such as, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. These wide-ranging regions with their different social, historical, religious, cultural and language backgrounds have adapted and adopted English for using in Asian ways of life (Jenkins, 2009) such as China English, Hong Kong English and Japanese English (Bolton, 2002; Stanlaw, 2004; Adamson, 2004).

As Kachru (1986) mentions, Englishes are used in all three concentric circles. In Asia, English is used as a second language (ESL) and as a foreign language (EFL). India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and the Philippines, English is used as a second language (ESL). Regarding ESL, there are varieties that arose in countries where English was introduced in the colonial era in either face-to-face communication or via the education of a country. Therefore, English play a main role in government and education (Mesthira & Bhatt, 2010).

On the other hand, most countries in Asia use English as a foreign language such as China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, countries of the Middle East, etc. EFL typically refers to the English used in country in which its influence has been external. EFL speakers tend to use English for international, rather than for intra-national purposes (Mesthira & Bhatt, 2010).

The Characteristics of and the Relation among EFL, ELF and EIL

McKay (2003) states that EFL speakers are ‘norm dependent’. That means EFL speakers still follow a crystallised norms of ENL (English as a native language) speakers, namely grammar rules, pronunciation, accent, etc. EFL paradigm purposes to follow native speakers’ norms and cultures. The goal for the learners is to use Standard English with correctness and appropriateness according to native speakers’ directions (Boriboon, 2011). However, English is used and spread all over the world; there are varieties of English employed by different English speakers. Therefore, the other terminologies are created; ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) and EIL (English as an International Language). The term ELF, or sometimes called EIL, is used to describe communicative interactions among non-native speakers of English who use English as their chosen communication tool in international and intercultural settings without or less ‘native’ speakers of English as the interactants (Jenkins, 2007). That is because ELF or EIL indicates the significance of varieties of English to learners.

The learners are encouraged to experience “World Englishes” belonging to other English speakers around the world (Boriboon, 2011).

It can be said that the concept of World Englishes (WE), the terminology presented by Kachru (1985), is obviously connected to that of ELF or EIL. Both World Englishes and ELF or EIL are naturally more centrifugal and diversifying, since they are not bothered by native-speaker (NS) English norms. It enables people with different mother tongues and Englishes to communicate internationally and inter-culturally through English (Murata & Jenkins, 2009).

Situation and Challenges of ELT in Thai Context

For the reason that Thailand is one of the expanding-circle countries, English is known and acknowledged as a foreign language. The state of teaching and learning English in Thailand mostly found in schools and education institutes is in the form of EFL paradigm. As a matter of fact, learning and teaching English in Thailand has had a very long history. English has played an important role in Thai education, country economic and technological development. To serve the demands of the changing world, Thai government realizes that English competency is necessary for Thai students. Due to the arrival of Association of Southeast Asian Nations Economic Community (ACE), and English is decided to be used as the lingua franca, the improvement of English Education in Thailand is promoted (Nicholetti, 2015). Therefore, English language is considered as fundamental knowledge for basic education of Thailand (Foley, 2005; Nomnian, 2013). However,

the English proficiency of Thai students is quite low and still far behind that of students in other neighbouring countries (Kanoksilapatham, 2014; Noom-Ura, 2013).

Thai Education is controlled by the Ministry of Education, and the National Education Commission, which coordinate all higher education in the country (NIO, 1997). The national education system has the following basic framework: six-year elementary, three-year lower secondary, three-year upper secondary, and four-year universities. Nowadays, six-year elementary schooling becomes compulsory. However, since 1987 lower secondary school education has been made to be the goal of a nine-year compulsory education in Thailand (NIO, 1997). Moreover, textbooks for all subjects used all over Thailand are edited, printed and supplied by the education ministry commission.

As part of broader educational reform, in the early 1990s, the education ministry invited EFL experts in bilingualism from the UK and the US to form the CRC (Curriculum Reform Committee). They recommended that English education should start as early as possible. Based on this recommendation, in 1995 the education ministry decided that an extra four years of English education would be added starting from first grade, rather than fifth. From then on, English has played an important role in Thai Education as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education levels. CRC suggested that the elementary school system should lead from an initial focus on listening and speaking. Then, in secondary level, reading

and writing would be introduced to the secondary students. At the same time, the national curricular reforms shift away from rote memorization to communicative methods, student-centered learning and the development of critical thinking skills. Practical communication, life-long learning and learner-centredness should be more promoted to encourage students' English proficiency (Darasawang, 2007). The English language curriculum focused on English language competency of Thai students for international communication, knowledgeable acquisition, further education and future career.

The teaching guidelines for the new curriculum were developed for primary and secondary education by a mainly British team that focused on the communicative approach. Next, a new team influenced by the American education system was drafted to develop the curriculum standards. This produced a rough outline of the Course of Study, which stated that courses should include the four C's: Communication (focus on listening/speaking); Culture (knowledge of and sensitivity to others); Connections (linkage of other subject content); and Community (project work and application outside the classroom).

However, even though English has been teaching in Thailand for very long time, and English language teaching and learning has been reformed, English language competence of Thai students is still questionable. From previous studies, some ultimate causes of difficulties in English language teaching in Thailand are indicated. For example, Thai students have an insufficiency of speaking English in everyday

life due to 'shyness'. English accuracy such as linguistics, and grammar is more emphasized than English fluency. Moreover, Thai students are poorly motivated and have a lack of their own learning. Apart from these, teachers have insufficient English language skills and cultural knowledge, and they are unqualified and poorly trained. (Wiryachitra, 2001; Mackenzie, 2002; ONEC, 2003; Dhanasobhon, 2006).

Generally, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has a main principle which focuses on encouraging learners to entirely get involved in classroom lessons with their full potential (Saengboon, 2006). The concepts of English language instruction appearing in academic documents in Thailand aim to develop the English competence of Thai learners with learner-centred approach. Nevertheless, because of EFL teaching paradigm, it is apparent that most of Thai English teachers and educators still strictly obtain the Standard English of the original native speakers (Boriboon, 2011; Foley 2005). It is criticized that the development of communicative English with native speakers' norms is utopian, unrealistic and constraining. For being autonomous learners, teachers and learners should control and direct their English language learning and teaching by themselves (Alptekin, 2002). Hence, the communicative competence of Thai English learners is not in a decent progress.

Importantly, most of Thai English teachers, according to EFL paradigm, are forced to follow and believe that the best way to teach English is Western teaching methods. From the study of

Methitham (2014), it found that Western teaching methods decreased their instructions and devalued their teaching experience. That is because they applied the teaching methods and materials without realizing the real Thai context. Apart from that, Thai English teachers typically train and teach their students to perform with the norms of native speakers (Jindapitak & Teo, 2011, 2012; Methitham, 2011).

With the challenges presented earlier, it can be concluded that ELT in Thailand which is driven by the EFL paradigm has not prepared Thai students for the fast-changing world because English curriculum in education institutes in Thailand cannot meet the needs for English use in the real circumstances and contexts (Wiriyachitra, 2001). With fully real EFL paradigm, English language learners can realize only English native speakers' norms and cultures; it is not related to the real situations which the learners have to use English to communicate with various English speakers. That causes Thai English learners feel shy and lose their faces when they use English incorrectly in their own ways. It can be seen that, these days, very a few Thai English learners can only approach and develop their "native-like" competency (Boriboon, 2011). To have more consideration on real context and real-world situations, and to overcome learners' 'shyness', English Language Teaching in Thailand with EFL paradigm should be adapted or replaced by the new one. The current well-known paradigm, EIL, can be the alternative for ELT in Thai context.

EIL Paradigm for Thai ELT

"Standard English", which is assumed to belong to British and American standards, is now becoming "New Englishes". Thus, the English aspects from the two standards, such as lexis, grammar, and pragmatic have been transmitted and developed to varieties of English. Moreover, the attitudes towards teaching and learning can be identified into two ballots; to encourage learners to preserve their own identities; to realize that all varieties of English are linguistically equal but socially unequal (Rattanaphumma, 2007). Consequently, English teaching paradigm is supposed to be transformed from the traditional way to the more current one, terming of promoting the learners to be aware of and to understand the diversity of English, as well as increasing the learners' confidence of English use.

It is recognized that English language teaching in Thailand has been continuously stuck with EFL paradigm, which follows the native speakers' values. In order to serve the national and international demands, it may be the right time for Thai English educators and learners to adapt a newer paradigm, EIL, for English education in Thailand.

Presently, English is considered as an 'international language'. It means English is a medium that is used to communicate globally and inter-culturally (Boriboon, 2011). Besides, the number of English users is gradually increasing all over the world. Apart from this, English is used by varieties of English speakers for different

purposes. Recently, a number of English language educators criticized and questioned the principles and hypotheses of EFL paradigm. From their perspectives, they state that the EFL and EIL might not completely differentiate from each other. They also insist that the process of change from the EFL to EIL paradigm might be considered to happen on the continuum line. That means English teachers might use the teaching paradigm which is in between the EFL and EIL for their lessons (Telebinezhad & Aliakbari, 2002; Boriboon, 2011).

English learners in Thailand, presently, are under the circumstances of using English with varieties of English speakers and different purposes as well. As in Foley (2005)'s study, it reveals that English in Thailand does not only become a subject that needs to be taught in school, but it is also a communicative tool for social and practical use. It is a necessity for learners to have a good English knowledge and understanding of various types of English, because it can make the learners better communicators (Rattanaphumma, 2007; Modiano, 2009). Moreover, to overcome the English language barrier, Thai English learners and speakers should be encouraged to identify their uniqueness in their English language competency. According to Rattanaphumma (2007), she states that the demand for native norms cannot be the highest target of English language teaching in Expanding–Circle countries because the English speakers have their own local cultures and original language that differ from British and American English. Varieties of English used by different English speakers can extend and distinguish their own identities, and fit

to their own contexts. Furthermore, it is believed that varieties of English can benefit learners' communicative competence when they confront the diversity of English language users (Matsuda, 2003). Like in other Expanding–Circle countries, the attitude towards English language teaching in Thailand can be promoted by either native or non-native English varieties, but localized norms should be maintained.

Apart from the mentioned reasons, since the ultimate goal of Thailand's Basic Core Curriculum focuses on national unity, acquired knowledge and skills of youth and children, and morality to serve a foundation of 'Thai-ness' and universal values (UNESCO, 2011), learning standards and goals are purposed to achieve to that aim. Besides, the Proposals for the Second Decade of Education Reform (2009–2018) originated by the Office of the Education Council (2009) presents the aim to promote the development of education at all levels, in terms of studying and using a foreign language as a second language and those of neighbouring ASEAN countries as a third language (Nomnian, 2013). In order to achieve the goals of the Thai Government, EIL paradigm is more appropriate for Thai learners. Supported by several studies, they state that EFL paradigm is unsuitable with the communication in the globalized society and is likely to against the process of Thai national education reform. Therefore, EIL becomes a new ideology which is able to improve English language teaching in Thailand since the concept of this paradigm emphasizes the particular English. On the contrary, it promotes English

as 'a lingua franca' or a medium for international communication among English speakers from different nations and various cultures (Sharifian, 2009). Hence, it should be employed as an idealized approach to inform teaching and learning English. EIL can also minimize the contrastive gap between native and non-native speakers by raising learners' awareness of English in a global context, regarding English in Thai socio-cultural, economic, and political features (Todd, 2006; Boriboon, 2011; Jindapitak & Teo, 2011). That makes Thai English speakers feel less worried of making non-native pronunciation and incorrect grammatical English; they also realize the equality of diverse types of English.

In sum, in order to enhance the English proficiency of Thai learners to achieve the national and international goals, English Language Teaching paradigm should be adapted and improved to a more current and effective one. In the circumstances of Thailand, in terms of being a country in the Expanding centric circle, English language teaching is dominated by EFL teaching paradigm. With this paradigm, according to the several studies of English education in Thailand, they have found that Thai English learners' competency is still unsatisfied, comparing to those of other students in neighbouring countries. Actually, the EFL paradigm aims to encourage students to use communicative English correctly and appropriately. However, it may not proper for Thai learners. That is because EFL is conceptually dominated by 'nativeness' which is hardly possible for Thai English learners to be successful. In addition to this, EFL paradigm

does not serve the English use in Thai context. That means English from the lessons cannot be used in the students' daily lives. Therefore, EIL is presented to replace the traditional one, EFL. EIL paradigm is more suitable with the globalized context. The ideology of EIL enhances learners to understand different patterns of English and inter-cultural communication among various English speakers. Additionally, teachers and students are motivated to realize their identities and uniqueness through their own English, without tying up with native speakers' norms. The speakers gain more confidence in using English in their own way. At the same time, EIL paradigm enhances teachers and learners' awareness of the equality of diverse English and to make a better understanding of the world with multi-cultural society.

Implication

To improve the quality of English language of Thai students, the urgent need to be raised is English Teachers' awareness of EIL or ELF paradigm. One of the best ways to reach to this achievement is that English education in Thailand needs to get an improvement. English teacher education provided by universities in Thailand has to add this teaching paradigm along with EFL and CLT approach in their curriculum. The value of the necessity of Standard English is supposed to be changed. Thai teachers of English language should be trained to get to know more about EIL. They should change their traditional beliefs; 'native norms' are not the most important goal for the learners to achieve. On the contrary, they need to use English in order to show their identities with confidence.

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