Global Englishes, Intercultural Communication and ELT in Thailand

Will Baker

Centre for Global Englishes
Overview

- Global Englishes and ELF
- English in ASEAN
- English in Thailand
- Implications for policy & practice
## Global languages

### Languages ranking by size (L1 speakers in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Languages on the internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-native English speakers
- Approx. 2 billion (Crystal, 2012)

http://www.internetworldstats.com

www.ethnologue.com
Official English speaking countries

English proficiency

http://www.ef.co.uk/epi/ef-epi-ranking/
Global Englishes

- An ‘umbrella term’ for research covering the linguistic and sociocultural dimensions of global uses and users of English
  - World Englishes (WE)
  - English as an international language (EIL)
  - English as a lingua franca (ELF)
World Englishes

- World Englishes – Codified and ‘officially’ recognised varieties of English
  - Englishes of the Anglophone countries – US, UK, Australia etc… - prestigious and commodified
  - Indigenised varieties of English (post-colonial Englishes) – Indian English, Nigerian English, Singaporean English
  - More traditional approach to global Englishes
Kachru’s (1990) Concentric Circles model

- **Outer circle**: e.g. USA, UK, 320–380 million
- **Inner circle**: e.g. India, Singapore, 150–300 million
- **Expanding circle**: e.g. China, Russia, 100–1000 million
World Englishes in Asia

Figure 1: Three concentric circles of Asian Englishes (adapted from Kachru, 2005: 14).

THE EXPANDING CIRCLE
e.g. China, Thailand, Indonesia

THE OUTER CIRCLE
e.g. India, Singapore, Philippines

THE INNER CIRCLE
e.g. Australia and New Zealand
World Englishes

- “Everyone has car”
- Indian English
- “Filipino is only one of the subject”
- Philippine English
- “At night most of us will go to mosque and we have to pray”
- Singapore English
- “There's about five minutes left”
- Spoken British English
English as an international language (EIL)

- An international variety of English for global communication (Crystal, 2003)

- More recently no single variety but non-native English from a varieties perspective “once it is (tacitly) decided that English is used, more than one variety of English is often represented in such situations because each speaker brings a variety that he or she is most familiar with” (Matsuda and Friedrich 2012: 18).
English as a lingua franca (ELF)

- Seidlhofer - “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often only option” (2011: 7).

- Jenkins – “English as a Multilingua Franca,… Multilingual communication in which English is available as a contact language of choice, but is not necessarily chosen.” (2015: 73)

ELF

- Definitions include NES but they are the minority and are “less likely to constitute the linguistic reference norm” (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7)

- ELF is not a variety of English
  - “it [ELF] is not a variety of English but a variable way of using it: English that functions as a lingua franca. The absolutely crucial question, of course, remains how that ‘English’ that functions as a lingua franca is conceptualised and how it functions” (Seidlhofer, 2011: 77)
English and ASEAN
English in Asia


- There may be as many as 812 million users of English in the region - Bolton (2008)

- Spolsky (2012: xiii) ‘the future of English as a global language will depend, it now seems, on what happens to it in Asia’.
ASEAN

- ASEAN Charter 2009. Article 34 of the Charter reads “The working language of ASEAN shall be English”.

- ASEAN Secretary General, Le Luong Ming:
  - “with the diversity in ASEAN reflected in our diverse races, histories, cultures and belief systems, English is an indispensable tool to bring our community closer together” (ASEAN 2013 cited in Kirkpatrick, 2017).
Table 1. MOI and introduction of English in ASEAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Medium of instruction</th>
<th>Year of introduction of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>Malay and English</td>
<td>Primary 1 (Primary 4 MOI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Khmer</td>
<td>Primary 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>Secondary 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Primary 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Malay and English</td>
<td>Primary 1 as MOI&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Burmese</td>
<td>Primary 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Filipino and English</td>
<td>Primary 1 as MOI&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Primary 1 as MOI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Primary 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Primary 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kirkpatrick 2010: 63 adapted.

<sup>a</sup> In 2012, Malaysia reintroduced Malay as the medium of instruction for the teaching of maths and science from primary 1.

<sup>b</sup> In 2013 the Philippines introduced a system of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) whereby 19 languages are to be used as medium of instruction in the first three years of primary school.
how can the promotion of English as the sole working language of ASEAN and as the first language of education, after the respective national languages, be married with or complementary to the need to respect the diversity of the languages, cultures and belief systems of the region?
– Kirkpatrick (2017: 8)
English as a lingua franca in ASEAN

- Approaching English as lingua franca in a multilingual environment including various L1s and national languages (which may not be the same as the L1)

- Multilingual models of English as a lingua franca (not monolingual, Anglophone, native English).
ASEAN ELF Lexicogrammatical features (from Kirkpatrick, 2010)

- the flexible use of definite and indefinite articles, e.g. *I know when we touch money issue it can be very controversial*

- absence of plural marking on nouns of measurement, e.g. *One three time or four time a years* (and note the use of the non-standard - s on *years*)

- morpheme-final consonant cluster deletion, e.g. *I check’ the placard*

- non-marking of past tense forms, e.g. *I couldn’t see, that’s why I just sit and take a rest*

- use of prepositions in different contexts, e.g. *and the second purpose is to seek for a discussion*

- copula absence or deletion, e.g. *once this blueprint adopted*
### ASEAN ELF – Phonological features (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Example(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reduction of consonant clusters</td>
<td>first – firs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dental fricative /θ/ as [t]</td>
<td>many thing [tɪŋ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merging of long and short vowel sounds</td>
<td>[ɪː] and [ɪ] to [ɪ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduced initial aspiration</td>
<td>they will teach [dɪːtf]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of reduced vowels</td>
<td>officially [ˈɒfɪʃəlɪ], to [tuː] visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stressed pronouns</td>
<td>and HE has been in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heavy end-stress</td>
<td>the incidental WAY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English in Thailand
Linguistic landscape of Thailand

- **Monolingualism** - assumption that all Thai citizens speak Thai (National Identity Board 2000; Keyuravong 2010)

- **Multilingualism** - estimated to be over 70 minority languages and related varieties, including Chinese, Lao, Malay, Khmer and Mon (Simpson and Thammasathien 2007; Darasawang and Watson Todd 2012; Premsrirat 2014).

- **Standard Thai vs regional ‘dialects’** - ‘Northern’ Thai (e.g. Kham Muang), ‘Southern’ Thai (e.g. Pak Tai), North Eastern Thai (e.g. Isarn). For a sizeable minority in Thailand, (between one in ten and one in fifteen) ‘standard’ Thai functions as an L2 (Warotamasikkhadit and Person 2011).
English in Thailand

- English is the defacto ‘preferred’ L2 in Thailand – although strong resistance to making it an official L2

- Due to its status as a foreign rather than official Thai language there has been little desire to developed a standardised local version of “Thai English”

- English is viewed as the language of development and globalisation to connect economically, culturally and politically with the rest of the region and world

- Given its range of uses, predominantly with other L2 users of English it is typically characterised as a lingua franca (e.g. Baker, 2012; Baker and Jarunthawatchai, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2010)
English in Thailand

- But also extensive internal roles –
  - Used locally as a lingua franca with non-Thai speakers in business, tourism and academia
  - education – L2 and EMI, gatekeeping examinations
  - Media and social media
  - linguistic landscape
Phillip (French/Belgian), Nami (Thai) – Conversation in a café in Bangkok

- Phillip: oh ah just when I was waiting for you right there are like outside there is like this podium and girls dancing singing
- NAMI: where outside of MBK it’s a cos play right
- P: I don’t think so
- N: Japanese cos play
- P: I don’t think so
- N: oh it’s not (cos play)
- P: no it isn’t cause my friend my student would be there they’re are crazy about cos play
- N: yes, yeah my roommate too

(from Baker, 2009)
киефи - Cowboy - IPhone

Like · Share · Saturday at 17:15 · Woraluck likes this.

Symeon: I'm not so sure for the purpose of this video...but it makes me laugh...What does he say?
Saturday at 17:42 · Edited · Like · 1

Toh: give me one pls.
Saturday at 17:42 · Like · 1

Ken: Symeon This guy names himself 'cowboy'. He is trying to mimic one of the most famous Thai band named 'Carabao'. The word 'Carabao' means 'water buffalo' in Tagalog language widely used in Philippine. Moreover, 'buffalo' is closely pronounced like 'fine' so 'I'm fine' has the close meaning to 'You are a buffalo' in Thai. That's the reason why you can see a lot of buffaloes in the music video.
Despite this prominent place accorded to English and its long-established role in Thailand, there is still a perception that English proficiency in Thailand is poor.
ASEAN and English in Thailand

Where is Thailand in English Proficiency?

Source: EF EPI English Proficiency Index
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>55.54</td>
<td>High Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>54.44</td>
<td>Moderate Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>54.19</td>
<td>Moderate Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>54.17</td>
<td>Moderate Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>48.93</td>
<td>Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>48.05</td>
<td>Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>47.62</td>
<td>Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>47.35</td>
<td>Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>45.79</td>
<td>Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>44.78</td>
<td>Very Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>44.32</td>
<td>Very Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>39.41</td>
<td>Very Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>31.74</td>
<td>Very Low Proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are many reasons to be suspicious of such test scores as a measure of English proficiency.

- they are typically based on a narrow monolingual native speaker model of English rather than multilingual users (Baker 2012; Jenkins and Leung 2014; McNamara 2014);
- they might offer a glimpse of English proficiency levels of those involved in the tests but may not portray an accurate indication of English language of Thai citizens overall (indeed Kaur et. al. (2016) report on tourists in Thailand generally being very satisfied with the level of English proficiency);
- they do not account for the role of individuals taking the test multiple times, as is often the case in Thailand.
English language policy and practice perceptions

- Supposedly poor proficiency often blamed on English language policy and practice in education.

- Mr Surin Pitsuwan, former ASEAN secretary-general:
  - “efforts to bring about reforms since 1999 have not borne fruit due to political interference and bureaucratic resistance”.
  - “Thai youths are lagging behind in this increasingly important tool of communication in ASEAN” (Bangkok Post 2013).
English language and education policy
National Education Act, 1999

- The learning process is primarily student-centred with emphasis on learners’ interests, aptitudes, individual differences and training of thinking process (section 28).

- An emphasis on the value of local knowledge and wisdom and a desire to incorporate this into education (sections 7 and 23).

- The English language is never actually mentioned in the National Education Act of 1999.

- However, in practice English retained its status as the de facto primary foreign language for Thai students and its role was actually expanded as a result of the Act and the following 2002 curriculum (Wongsothorn et al. 2003).
One significant change in English language education was the transformation, in policy at least, of the passive classrooms into learner-centred classes.

Linked to this, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) gained more prominent status in ELT and teachers widely implemented this approach in teaching as they thought its principles corresponded to the Act (see e.g. Darasawang 2007; Wongsothorn Hiranburana, and Chinnawongs, 2003).
Such ambitious reforms to education policy have not necessarily been smooth in practice. Issues include:

- the ability of often inadequately trained teachers to deliver such a potentially demanding approach as CLT
- the appropriateness and relevance of CLT itself in Thai settings - an over-reliance on outside approaches and especially Anglophone models of English and education
- centralised, top-down planning,
- inadequate funding and resources,
- a divide between urban and rural provision,
- overburdened teachers, large class sizes
**Current English language policy**

- English is the only compulsory foreign language at school and it is also a compulsory language in higher education, with graduation dependent on passing English exams. (OBEC 2008; Commission of Higher Education 2016)

- The rationale for the prominent status of English has typically matched the ideology of English as a language of development and globalisation.

- Most recently there is a shift towards English as an ASEAN language and a recognition of multilingualism (2010 draft National Language Policy, Commission of Higher Education 2016 see Baker & Jarunthawatcha, 2017).
English language policy into practice - issues

- However, while English may be advantageous according to such ideologies, there are a number of issues in giving English such importance.
  - At primary level for the many whose L1 is not standard Thai, English adds an additional language, and potential learning barrier, to the mix and this has become an especially acute issue given the increasing popularity of bilingual English-Thai programmes (Darasawang and Watson Todd 2012; Kaur et al. 2016).
  - It is also of concern that the concentration on English education is likely to be at the expense of other subjects. This is particularly problematic for students and settings where English has little use or relevance (Draper 2012).
English language policy - issues

- Similarly, in higher education we may also question the relevance of English to all university students, especially given that it is compulsory to pass English courses before graduation. The use of English examinations as a gatekeeper to university entrance is likely to act as a barrier to many who may have little need of English.

- Furthermore, at both school and tertiary level the emphasis on English as a gatekeeper is likely to exacerbate differences between well-funded urban schools and often comparatively poorly funded rural schools, as well as between those who can afford extra private English tuition, and those who cannot (Hayes 2010; Baker 2012).
Conclusions
English in ASEAN and Thailand

- English functions as an Asian language and is the lingua franca of ASEAN

- ELF - “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often only option” (Seidlhofer 2011: 7).

- More recently emphasis on ELF in multilingual settings used for intercultural communication

- An alternative approach to English that is more focused on users in ASEAN than Anglophone native speaker models
English language and education policy

- Much education policy in Thailand is commensurable with Global Englishes approaches in its emphasis on English use in ASEAN, global communication and local knowledge and values.

- However, there is also tension with continuing influences of Anglophone models of English (particularly in examinations) and importing of outside approaches and materials (and even teachers).

- Concerns with an overemphasis on English at the expense of other languages and subjects as well as uneven resources.
Teaching implications

- Locally relevant materials, approaches and models of English that reflect the multilingual and multicultural settings in which English is typically used in Thailand, ASEAN and beyond.

- Post-methods, post-normative, multilingual and interculturally aware approaches. However, the details of what this entails must always be locally decided.
Thank You!

Any questions?

w.baker@soton.ac.uk
Discussion tasks
Discussion tasks

- English is the defacto ‘preferred’ L2 in Thailand – although there is strong resistance to making it an official L2
  - Do you think English should be an official L2 in Thailand? Why/why not?

- In English as a lingua franca (ELF) research English is seen as the property of all who use it. This means that in many contexts the Anglophone native English speaker is irrelevant as a point of reference and model for linguistic and communicative norms.
  - Do you agree with this approach to English? Why/why not?
Discussion tasks

- Despite the prominent place accorded to English and its long-established role in Thailand, there is still a perception that English proficiency in Thailand is poor for example,
  - Mr Surin Pitsuwan, former ASEAN secretary-general (Bangkok Post 2013): “Thai youths are lagging behind in this increasingly important tool of communication in ASEAN”
  - In the EF English proficiency index Thailand is rated as ‘very low proficiency’

- Do you agree with these assessments? If yes, why? If no, why not?
Discussion tasks

- A number of reasons have been identified for difficulties in reforming English education and also concerns about over-extending English education.
  - the ability of often inadequately trained teachers to deliver such a potentially demanding approach as CLT
  - the appropriateness and relevance of CLT itself in Thai settings - an over-reliance on outside approaches and especially Anglophone models of English and education
  - centralised, top-down planning,
  - inadequate funding and resources
  - a divide between urban and rural provision
  - overburdened teachers, large class sizes
  - the concentration on English is likely to be at the expense of other subjects
  - the use of English exams as a requirement both to enter university and to graduate is of questionable relevance to many students who may have no need of English

- Do you agree with these points? Why/why not? Do you have any similar experiences?