Global Englishes, Intercultural Communication and ELT in Thailand

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Overview

- Global Englishes and Intercultural communication
- Intercultural education
- Global Englishes, Intercultural communication and ELT
- Putting it into practice
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)

- For ASEAN and Thailand ELF is the most relevant characterisation of English

- Use of ELF is by definition intercultural communication (people who do not share linguaculture)
Intercultural communication

- Intercultural communication – communication where cultural and linguistic differences are be perceived as relevant to the interaction by participants and/or researchers (Zhu Hua 2014; Baker 2015)

- “the study of distinct cultural or other groups in interaction with each other” (Scollon and Scollon, 2001: 539)

- It is not the comparison of distinct bounded national cultures (e.g. how Thais communicate vs. how English communicate)

- A critical approach:
  - “set aside any a priori notions of group membership and identity and… ask instead how and under what circumstances concepts such as culture are produced by participants as relevant categories … [w]ho has introduced culture as a relevant category, for what purposes, and with what consequences?”. (Scollon and Scollon, 2001: 544- 545)
# Cross-cultural vs Intercultural Communication

(Scollon & Scollon, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-cultural communication studies</th>
<th>Intercultural communication studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The study of the communicative practices of distinct cultural groups independent from interaction (e.g. Chinese communicative practices)</td>
<td>The study of the communicative practices of distinct cultural or other groups in interaction with each other. (e.g. Italians communicating with English)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultures are seen as separable entities</td>
<td>Cultures are not bounded entities with national borders, but fluid dynamic with blurred boundaries</td>
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<td>Cultures are viewed as relatively homogeneous</td>
<td>Cultures are heterogeneous, containing a great deal of variety among its members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultures are viewed at a national level</td>
<td>National cultures are one of many discourse communities which can be drawn upon in communication, others include gender, generation, profession, ethnicity etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>A priori assumption about cultural groupings</td>
<td>No a priori assumptions about the discourse communities, cultural or otherwise, that will be drawn on in conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experimental and quantitative research</td>
<td>Qualitative research using naturalistic recordings of instances of intercultural communication</td>
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An intercultural story
A young English teacher from the UK is in his first teaching job in a language school in Thailand.

He enters his classroom to find 25 students. The maximum class size is supposed to be 15, they do not really all fit in the room and it is very cramped, making classroom activities difficult.

He teaches the class, but as soon as it is finished goes to see the manager of the school who is Thai. He explains the situation to the manager and the problems the extra students are causing. Throughout this the manager listens with a smile on his face saying nothing. At the end of the teacher’s explanation the manager grins, but says nothing, and walks away.

The young teacher is now rather confused and upset. The manager appears not to be taking his problem seriously. He did not acknowledge his problem or make any offer to remedy it. In fact, the teacher thinks, his response was quite dismissive and the grin and smile on the manager’s face reinforced this impression for him.
The next day the teacher returns to the class with some reluctance.

However, on entering the class he is surprised to find 15 students there and the correct furniture arrangements. A new class has been started in the next room with the other 10 students.

All of the teacher’s concerns from the previous day have been addressed, leaving him rather confused.

A colleague explains that a smile and a grin is a very normal response to a problem for Thai people, not a sign of condescension or dismissiveness. Furthermore, listening in silence is also an appropriate communicative response when someone is complaining.

The English teacher has just learnt an important lesson in intercultural communication. If he is going to get along as an English teacher in Thailand, he is going to have to adjust his expectations of how communication proceeds and not presume the sort of responses he is familiar with from the UK.
Interpretation

- An example of miscommunication in intercultural communication. The participants have different expectations about how a particular interaction should proceed which leads to misunderstanding on the part of the English teacher.

- We could explain this by examining the different expectations in the UK and Thailand for complaining/conflict and the role of smiles and silence in communication in each of these cultures.
Interpretation

- In following such an analysis we have already made a number of assumptions.
  - There is a **cultural difference** that gives rise to a ‘problem’ to be solved. The communication was actually reasonably successful. The teacher’s concerns were clearly understood and addressed by the manager.
  - We have equated cultural difference with **nationality**, a British teacher and a Thai manager. Individuals identify with many different cultural, or other, groupings, with nationality being just one of them. In this example the participants’ identities as employee and manager are as relevant as being British or Thai.
Interpretation

- **Identity** and **power relationships**. As a manager and employee what are the expectations in this scenario, how much does the manager need to address the problems of his employee?

  - **Linguistic issues** - The manager’s proficiency in English is not particularly high and this may have influenced his responses. The employee has almost no ability to communicate in Thai. Linguistic choices are significant and cannot be ignored. The use of English added another dimension to the power relationships. Had the conversation proceeded in Thai it might have been very different.

  - This is an **intercultural interaction** - both participants were aware of this. In IC expect **flexibility, adaptation and negotiation** in the participants’ communicative practices.

  - People **do not have fixed communicative practices** in IC (or any communication). We typically expect difference and potential for misunderstanding but also new or alternative communicative practices and cultural references.
Intercultural education
Culture in language teaching

- Although culture has long been part of language education, the previous few decades have seen a rise in the attention paid to intercultural communication and culture in language education theory, policy and research...However, this engagement with the intercultural has predominantly remained at a superficial level (Baker, 2015: 175)
What is the link between language and culture in language teaching?

- 4 scenarios
  - Language taught as culturally neutral
  - Language represents the local culture (classroom, school, community, nation)
  - Language represents a ‘target culture’ e.g. the US or UK
  - Language as a means of intercultural communication with no fixed cultural associations
Culture in language teaching

Culture and language (however the relationship is interpreted) are closely linked - “language is key to understanding culture, and culture is an indispensable part of studying language” (Zhu Hua, 2014: 219)

“language learning is fundamentally engagement in intercultural communication and that the addition of a new language to a person’s linguistic repertoire positions that person differently in relation to the world in which they live.” (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013: 6)

Language teaching will thus inevitably have a cultural dimension

- But where a language is not associated with any one particular geographical or national entity (as is the case with English), what culture(s) is the language linked to?
- How should we decide on the cultural content and intercultural processes to include in the language classroom?
Overview of core approaches

- Language teaching as a cultural process that can be used to educate learners for intercultural communication and intercultural citizenship
- Culture for pedagogy as:
  - Attitudes (affective dimension)
  - Skills (behavioural dimension)
  - Knowledge and awareness (cognitive dimension) (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009:79)
- A move away from national cultures
  - Third places and the cultural faultline (Kramsch 1993; 2009)
  - The local and the global / transcultural flows (Risager 2007; Pennycook 2007)
- Intercultural communicative competence and critical cultural awareness – expansion of communicative competence
- Intercultural speaker/Intercultural citizenship
From communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence

- Communicative competence is a static representation of communication and a reification of language - misrepresents the fluid, hybrid and adaptable nature of linguistic resources in intercultural communication and marginalises the sociocultural dimensions of communication which are as important, if not more important, than linguistic dimension

- Extending communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence – recognising the intercultural dimension of L2 use (especially English)
Michael Byram (1997) – Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence

- Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) - 5 savoirs

**Knowledge**
- Of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (savoirs)

**Skills**
- Interpret and relate (savoir comprendre)

**Education**
- Political education
- Critical cultural awareness (savoir s’engager)

**Attitudes**
- Relativising the self
- Valuing other (savoir être)

**Skills**
- Discover and/or interact (savor apprendre/faire)
Intercultural communicative competence and awareness

- **Critical cultural awareness** as “An ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 1997: 53)

- However, is not well suited to ELF where no clear other culture/country correlation to language

- **Intercultural awareness** is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in communication. (Baker 2015)
Intercultural citizenship education

- Conceptualisations of intercultural citizenship incorporate elements of intercultural competence and a sense of global connectivity and responsibility.

- Intercultural / global citizenship is typically conceived as the extension of citizenship beyond national borders and recognition of the global scale of social relations, the need to respect and value diversity and participation in and responsibility to communities at multiple levels from the local to the global (Byram 2008; Killick, 2013). Intercultural citizenship education aims to facilitate intercultural learning experiences and engagement with others leading to change both in the individual’s behaviour and self-perceptions as well as in their behaviour and perceptions towards others (Byram 2008; Byram et al. 2017).
Global Englishes, Intercultural communication and ELT
Those of us concerned with that branch of applied linguistics that concentrates on language in education are engaged in a long, complex, and infinitely rewarding study. But we shall betray the richness, creativity, and diversity of our subject matter if we imply that definitive solutions to practical problems are easy to arrive at, or that human motivation and behaviour can be reduced to a limited set of predictable dimensions.

Brumfit (2001: 187)
Implications for ELT

- “in a world of multiple Englishes, ELT needs to readdress the subject matter of its pedagogical mission. We suggest that the ways in which English is traditionally conceived, and is currently being reconceived, have fundamental implications for the theory and practice of language learning and teaching.” – (Hall et al 2013: 16)

- “currently the predominant focus in ELT is on the teaching of a fixed linguistic code based on a narrow interpretation of the already limited notion of communicative competence. ..In ELT English is still principally associated both linguistically and culturally with the Anglophone world and within this a very narrow section of that world (typically white, middle class, male and monolingual). Yet, such knowledge and skills are unlikely to equip learners of English for the variable demands of intercultural communication through ELF.” (Baker 2015: 243)
Implications for ELT

- Reconceptualising teacher knowledge -
  - language - moving from norm based Anglophone models to variable ELF approaches (Hall et al 2013; Dewey 2012; 2015)
  - Communication - from communicative competence based on native speakers to intercultural communication and intercultural competence/awareness of multilingual and multicultural speakers (Byram 1997; 2008 Kumaravadivelu 2008; Holliday 2011; Baker 2012; 2015)
Implications for ELT

- **Post-methods** (Kumaravadivelu 2008) and **post-normative** (Dewey 2012) approaches
  - increased flexibility
  - localisation
  - a focus on ‘process’ rather than ‘product’
  - critical pedagogy
Post- normative approach (Dewey 2012)

- What are the contextual conditions of language use required by the learners?
- Is a normative approach suitable for the context of learning/use?
- What model(s) of English are (most) relevant?
- What set(s) of norms are (most) appropriate?
- What is the relative level of importance that should be attached to these models and norms?
- What additional pragmatic strategies will be contextually useful?
Intercultural awareness in the classroom (Baker 2015)

1. Exploring the complexity of local cultures

2. Exploring cultural representations in language learning materials

3. Exploring cultural representations in the media and arts both online and in more ‘traditional’ mediums

4. Making use of cultural informants

5. Engaging in intercultural communication both face to face and electronically
The five principles are:

1. The native speaker is not the linguistic target. The goal is mutual intelligibility and the ability to use English successfully in multilingual contexts.

2. The native speaker’s culture is not the cultural target. The goal is (ASEAN-focused) intercultural competence.

3. Well-trained local multilinguals provide the most appropriate English language teachers.

4. Lingua franca environments provide excellent English language learning environments for lingua franca speakers.

5. Assessment must be relevant to and appropriate for the lingua franca approach and curriculum.
Implications for ELT

- Pressures and limitations
  - stakeholder perceptions (standard language ideology, restricted views of language and language teaching)
  - Simplicity vs complexity in pedagogic content - but this has always been an issue for teachers (Brumfit 2001)
  - vested interest in status quo (publishers, exam boards, commercial language schools)
  - examinations (narrow range of linguistic features are typically tested)
Implications for ELT – Empirical studies

- Changing perceptions of teachers and students –
  - growing awareness of global role of English and subsequent variability in its use
  - movement away from Anglocentric perspectives
  - openness to going beyond linguistic competence


- Further studies still need – especially in relation to classroom practices and in settings in ASEAN and Thailand
Putting it into practice: Using online learning objects to develop intercultural awareness in ELT: a critical examination in a Thai higher education setting
The study - aims

- To develop a short online course in intercultural communication for users of ELF in Thailand

- To produce insights concerning the use of new technologies in online courses to help develop intercultural awareness among English language learners, equipping them for the demands of English as a global lingua franca

- To survey participants’ attitudes towards and evaluations of such a course - in relation to mode of delivery (e-learning) and content (global Englishes, intercultural awareness)
Setting

- Materials (online course) developed in e-languages at the University of Southampton, UK

- Delivery of course at Silpakorn University, Thailand with main tutor from University of Southampton and additional tutoring and support from both institutions

- Academic contexts have emerged as a fruitful site for ELF studies (for example VOICE, ELFA)

- Thailand is a setting in which the role of English is often characterised as a lingua franca (Foley, 2007; Baker, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2011)
Participants

- 30 undergraduate English major students
- Average age 21, 25 female/5 male
- All Thai L1 speakers
- Average of around 15 years studying English – all reasonably proficient English users
- 6 English instructors – 4 Thai and 2 British
- Researcher from outside institution but previously worked in this institution
Methodology

- Case study of programme
- Qualitative and quantitative data
- Development of course and materials
- Participants’ and teachers’ attitudes and evaluations of the course
  - Participation in the course
  - Questionnaires
  - Interviews
Course

10 week course in intercultural communication, intercultural awareness and Global Englishes - predominantly independent learning

10 topics with interactive learning tasks, discussion tasks, chat sessions

1. Defining culture
2. Intercultural communication
3. Cultural stereotypes and generalisations in communication
4. The individual and culture
5. English as a global language
6. Exploring my own culture
7. Intercultural communication and the Internet
8. Comparing cultures: Politeness
9. Globalisation and transcultural global flows
10. Intercultural Awareness
Course

- **English as a global language and different varieties of Englishes**
- **Explicit discussion of the manner in which English can be related to many different cultural contexts**
- **Range of cultures represented in the materials as well as hybrid and transcultural communicative practices**
- **Viewing language learning as intercultural communication and the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with this**
Student response and evaluation

- How would you rate the course content overall?
- How would you rate the weekly activities?
- How would you rate the discussion forums?
- How would you rate the chat room sessions?
- How would you rate the teaching and learning?
- I liked doing this course online.
- I would prefer to do this course face to face (not online).
- How would you rate the support and guidance?
- How would you rate your progress and achievement?
- How would you rate the course overall?
Interviews

- **Pai:** good er it’s like I have travelled the world @ in er you know in an hour

- **Or:** I like the chat se- session better because um we can er have a real intercultural communication . and I feel like we can share the opinions face to face

- **Anya:** I think it’s useful...to do this course makes me to be aware of er the relation of culture and language especially er . the people who use English to communicate with other people

**But**

- **Yam:** I do think that err it will be better if we learn if we learn like about the British English or the American English I don’t really think that we we should learn something different than that
Teacher response and evaluation

- How would you rate the course content overall?
- How would you rate the weekly activities?
- How would you rate the discussion forums?
- How would you rate the chat room sessions?
- How would you rate the teaching and learning?
- I think students will benefit from doing this course online.
- I think students would benefit more from doing this course face to face (not online).
- How would you rate the support and guidance?
- How would you rate the course overall?
- I would recommend this course to my students to do as an independent study outside of class.
- I would use this course as part of my classroom teaching.
Teacher response and evaluation

- **Nun:** learning about this is very useful especially when they go to study abroad or have a job in the future

- **Niti:** I think we need to be more aware of the variety of English these days it’s there’s no such standard as you know it has to be Oxford accent British or American or Australia … so um I think there there is um an awareness it’s an awareness that we need to have

- **No:** I think we should cover all kinds of English because we cannot predict what English the student will face in the future so we have to prepare for all kinds of English

But

- **James:** It is always a good thing for the students to have access to knowledge in any form, but this is so far removed from my teaching methodology that I cannot see that it would become part of my teaching.
Attitudes towards Global Englishes and ELF - Reasons for studying English

- I'll need it for my future career.
- It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people from many different cultures.
- It will allow me to meet and converse with native speakers of English.
- It will allow me to travel to many different countries and to learn about different cultures.
- It will allow me to have a fun and enjoyable experience.
- It will make me a more knowledgeable person.
- It will allow me to get good grades at university.
- Other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of the English language.

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<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Questionnaire 1</th>
<th>Questionnaire 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'll need it for my future career.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of the English language.</td>
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Attitudes towards Global Englishes and ELF – Ranking factors that help in intercultural communication through English

[Bar charts showing ranking factors]
Attitudes towards Global Englishes and ELF - Attitudes towards different types of English

- Standard English is spoken by the native speaking countries (e.g. England, the United States, Australia).
- Standard English is spoken by those countries colonized by native English speaking countries (e.g. Singapore, India, Hong Kong).
- Standard English is spoken by any country that uses English (e.g. Thailand, Mexico, China).
- There is no Standard English.

Questionnaire 1 vs. Questionnaire 2
Interview data:

- **Pan:** because like everybody use English now so it’s not just the British and the American’s anymore um and that will open up like a window for us for business doing business in the future

- **Aim:** Nowadays English becomes like the official language in many countries not only in the UK or the US and each country have their own culture so even though they are using English they have some things that something that are different from in the US or in the UK so if we got to learn all of them I think we will. I think we it can make us like open up our mind like better

- **Tip:** Nowadays English is truly global language and people in many nationalities in the world use English to communicate and I think it’s interesting. to to learn about English much more than in English in the UK or in the United States

- **No:** I think it’s ok. because English has plural now I mean World EnglishES is not- English has a plural
Attitudes towards Global Englishes and ELF

But:

- **Nun**: Singapore they have their own English and something I think it is ok it’s part of the way they communicate yeah ... I don’t feel bad about them but sometime it just not quite nice or beautiful as beautiful as err the native speaker

- **Yam**: English is from basically from the UK right and then to the US so are they are like the what to say the origins of English so if we basically talk about English in Asian countries then it might give a weird feeling to me
Attitudes towards Global Englishes and ELF

Discussion board comments

▪ **Ann** - We don't have to speak like the Native speaker because we are not them. We are born in our country so it is **ok for us to have Thai accent** in English.

▪ **Jan** - I agree with (Ann). They can choose **any accent they like or remain their own**.

▪ **But**

▪ **Pat** - In my opinion, I think it's good to sound like native speaker. However, it's the issue of **prestige**, we mostly think that if we have **the native accent**, we look more honourable.

▪ **Nit** - Standard English isn't an important thing to be considered as a factor of speaking. Even in native speaker country, there are different accent, grammar and words as well. However, for academic writing or public speaking, it's needed to consider about grammatical correct.
Attitudes towards intercultural communication
Attitudes towards intercultural communication

- **Chit:** I think I can know the different perceptions of culture include in Thailand culture so you can see that there are many different things about peoples thoughts towards their cultures of our culture or foreign culture... your course made us to clarify about our culture first... about the language and about the culture that is something that concerned together... and we can compare our culture with others.

- **More:** I have never heard of er intercultural awareness ... lead me to think about the stereotype of Thailand and the generalisation of cultures in the world and about the. about. um about our my country our Thai culture.

- **Gai:** I learn that people should be open minded when they communicate to each other because we will raise from um different background and it’s not like people from certain country will be the same because um family background are not the same they don’t go to the same school so um we must be really open when we communicate with people even people in my own er country er we use the Thai language but everybody’s different.

- **Nit (teacher):** I think by learning other cultures they then. sort of have to have to think and look at other cultures and then there it’s like when their comparing their starting to to look back at their culture as well I think.
Summary and conclusions

- In answer to research questions - materials based on Global Englishes/ ELF perspective are possible
- Generally positive attitudes to an English course that adopts an Global Englishes/ ELF perspective
- High level of awareness of varieties of English and use as a global language
- Some evidence of increase in intercultural awareness - although positive attitudes towards intercultural communication existed before course
Summary and conclusions

- But some ambiguity
  - ‘native’ English is still regarded as standard and ‘native speaker ideology’ is still present

- Not clear if students have understood hybridity and fluidity of ELF uses and intercultural communication or interpreted it as one of many distinct varieties

- Small scale study

- Brief course – focus on knowledge and attitudes (i.e. little actual intercultural communication)
Conclusions
Intercultural communication

- Intercultural communication – communication where cultural and linguistic differences are be perceived as relevant to the interaction by participants and/or researchers

- A critical approach – “[w]ho has introduced culture as a relevant category, for what purposes, and with what consequences?”. (Scollon and Scollon, 2001: 544-545)
“language learning is fundamentally engagement in intercultural communication and that the addition of a new language to a person’s linguistic repertoire positions that person differently in relation to the world in which they live.” (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013: 6)
Intercultural education

- Reconceptualising teacher knowledge –
  - Language – moving from norm based Anglophone models to variable ELF approaches (Hall et al 2013; Dewey 2012; 2015)
  - Communication – from communicative competence based on native speakers to intercultural communication and intercultural competence/awareness of multilingual and multicultural speakers (Byram 1997; 2008; Kumaravadivelu 2008; Holliday 2011; Baker 2012; 2015)
Intercultural education

- **Post-methods** (Kumaravadivelu 2008) and **post-normative** (Dewey 2012) approaches
  - increased flexibility
  - localisation
  - a focus on ‘process’ rather than ‘product’
  - critical pedagogy

- ASEAN and a lingua franca approach to the teaching of English (Kirkpatrick, 2017)
  - Focus on multilingualism, ASEAN cultures, local teachers and lingua franca settings
References

References

References

Thank You!

Any questions?

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Discussion tasks
Discussion tasks

- Post- normative approach (Dewey 2012)
Discussion tasks

- **Intercultural awareness (Baker 2015)**
  - Exploring the complexity of local cultures
  - Exploring cultural representations in language learning materials
  - Exploring cultural representations in the media and arts both online and in more ‘traditional’ mediums
  - Making use of cultural informants
  - Engaging in intercultural communication both face to face and electronically
Discussion tasks

- **ASEAN and a lingua franca approach to the teaching of English (Kirkpatrick, 2017)**
  - The native speaker is not the linguistic target. The goal is mutual intelligibility and the ability to use English successfully in multilingual contexts.
  - The native speaker’s culture is not the cultural target. The goal is (ASEAN-focused) intercultural competence.
  - Well-trained local multilinguals provide the most appropriate English language teachers.
  - Lingua franca environments provide excellent English language learning environments for lingua franca speakers.
  - Assessment must be relevant to and appropriate for the lingua franca approach and curriculum.