

การพิจารณาลักษณะที่ใช้จริงของภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษากลางใหม่ ในชั้นเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

บทบาทของภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษากลาง ได้แผ่ขยายหน้าที่เหนือพรมแดนทางภูมิศาสตร์ สังคม และเชื้อชาติตั้งแต่สะพานที่ทำหน้าที่เชื่อมโยงกลุ่มคนจากหลากหลายวัฒนธรรมและภาษา เข้าด้วยกัน ในช่วงหลายทศวรรษที่ผ่านมา ต้นแบบการสอนภาษาอังกฤษแบบเดียวที่ได้รับการยอมรับในระดับสากลและได้รับการสนับสนุนจากทั่วโลกมาเป็นระยะเวลาอันยาวนานคือ การสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ยึดมาตรฐานแบบอังกฤษและแบบอเมริกัน แต่ในศตวรรษที่ 21 ปรากฏการณ์ของภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษากลางได้จุดประกายแนวคิดใหม่ที่ว่า จำเป็นหรือไม่ที่การสอนหรือการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในปัจจุบันจะต้องสอนและใช้ภาษาอังกฤษตามมาตรฐานของเจ้าของภาษา หรือจะอนุญาตให้สามารถสอนและใช้ภาษาอังกฤษแบบอื่นๆ ที่มีใช้กันอย่างแพร่หลายทั่วโลกในการเรียนการสอนได้ ผลงานวิจัยระบุว่า แนวคิดของการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ยึดตามมาตรฐานของเจ้าของภาษากำลังมีแนวโน้มที่จะลดลง โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเมื่อการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษากลางในการสื่อสารในระดับสากลเป็นที่ยอมรับ ดังนั้น จากปรากฏการณ์ข้างต้นได้จุดประกายให้คณะนักวิจัยศึกษาลักษณะบางอย่างของการบูรณาการภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษากลางในการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนของไทยใหม่

คำสำคัญ: ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษากลาง แนวคิดภาษากลาง การสอนภาษาอังกฤษ

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Reconsidering the Practical Aspects of ELF in Thai ELT Classroom

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Abstract

The role of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has been expanding its functions and scopes beyond geographical, social and racial boundaries in the form of a bridge to connect multilingual and multicultural groups of people. English language teaching (ELT) of standard varieties of British and American English has been accepted and promoted, within the last decades, as the only internationally acceptable pedagogical model in ELT contexts worldwide for a long time. In the 21st century, however, the phenomenon of ELF has shaded a new light on the issue of whether English should be taught and used based on the mainstream English or other Englishes. Research has suggested that the notion of teaching and learning English through native speaker norms may gradually be de-emphasized in international communication. In this light, therefore, this article reconsiders some practical aspects of integrating ELF in the Thai ELT classroom.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), A Lingua Franca Approach, English Language Teaching (ELT)

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Introduction

English is globally perceived to be the language of modernization, knowledge, and globalization (Baker, 2008; Graddol, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010). Many Asian countries perceive English as a valuable language for both intranational and international communication. It is not solely viewed as a global language but as a working language of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Some ASEAN countries, (e.g. Singapore, Malaysia, and Philippines) are now using English as a means to teach various compulsory subjects within their national teaching curricula - and attempt to increase their people's standard English proficiency level by allocating large budgets to train English teachers (Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Nunan, 2003). This current situation has now made it incumbent for most ASEAN nations to take English language teaching and learning more seriously.

Thailand, one of the ASEAN member countries, considers English to be the most important foreign language (Wiriyachitra, 2004; Wongsothorn et al., 2003). It is widely used for educational purposes, academic advancements, career opportunities, traveling, technological access and economic success (Chalapati, 2007; Keyuravong, 2010; Masavisut et al., 1986). The Thai government has clearly stated that the development of English skills is one of the most important factors for developing the ability of Thai people to cope with globalization (Nakhon, 2013; Wiriyachitra, 2004; Wongsothorn et al., 2003). To enhance Thailand's competitiveness and accessibility in the global village, the Thai government has made several attempts to improve English language teaching (ELT) in different ways (Darasawang and Watson Todd, 2012).

Regarding the Thai ELT context, particularly in the classrooms, most educational stakeholders in Thailand, as Boriboon (2011) argues, still believe that the most suitable model for English language teaching is the native English-

speaking teachers (NESTs). They are considered as good, correct, standard, beautiful, natural, and authentic. These descriptions are in contrast to how the English utilized by non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) are viewed. They are considered as being inferior or second class (Jindapitak & Teo, 2012). Accordingly, English in Thailand has generally been taught and learnt based on the native speaker norms (Boriboon, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Methitham, 2011). The majority of Thai students have constantly reiterated (through the educational stakeholders) that native speakers of English (NSE) are the people who can use English perfectly. They are perceived as ideal English users representing a better investment than NNESTs or local Thai English teachers. Consequently, the students are taught and trained to act or express ideas in the same way as NSE (Buripakdi, 2012; Jindapitak & Teo, 2011; Methitham, 2011).

Convinced by this idea, Thai students automatically marginalize and perceive the use of English by non-NSE as incorrect, imperfect, and unacceptable (Patil, 2006). The main point here is not to oppose that students should not learn or use English based on the native speaker norms. But it can be seen that teaching and learning English by adhering strictly to native speaker norms without realizing that the teaching contexts are different usually results to unexpected outcomes. Canagarajah (2005) proposes that it is impractical and unrealistic only to pay attention to the dominant English-speaking countries while the trend in international communication is for English to be used as a lingua franca. These concepts form a backdrop for this paper to reconsider and discuss English as a lingua franca (ELF), teaching English in Thailand as ELF, learning goals in ELF contexts, contents of ELF curriculum in context including teaching and learning materials, teaching techniques, and evaluation of English language proficiency.

English as a lingua franca (ELF)

The current concept of ELF is reviewed in this section in order to grasp a clearer understanding of why ELF has become the trend in international communication. Justifications posited by researchers regarding why it should be allowed in ELT classroom are also discussed. Graddol (2006) and Seidlhofer (2011) mention that the major role of English in today's world is as a lingua franca. Jenkins (2009, p. 143) defines "ELF as a contact language used amongst speakers with different first languages; ELF is used in contexts where speakers of different first languages need a common language to communicate with one another". Seidlhofer (2001, p. 134), additionally, proposes that the ELF concept goes beyond the traditional native norm and nation-bounded varieties. The ELF users, "skillfully co-construct English for their own purposes by treating the language as a shared communicative resource within which they have the freedom to accommodate to each other, code-switch, and create innovative forms that differ from the norms of native English and do not require sanctioning by native English speakers" (Jenkins, 2011, p. 931). Seidlhofer (2011, p. 88) conclusion that ELF "is indeed the process of language dynamics whereby the language is adapted and altered to suit changed circumstances of its use also corroborates Jenkins (2011) notion. From this standpoint, the appropriation of the language as a lingua franca is based not on what is proper English (in reference to standard or native-speaker norms), but on what is appropriate English for the new communicative context.

In an ELF context, moreover, Seidhofer (2011) adds that English language (from the Inner Circle countries⁷) cannot be used properly as a linguistic reference point because the majority of those who use English are non-native English speakers. The result is that the model of English native speakers, especially in English for international communication and teaching English phonology, based on native norms may no longer be sufficient in some contexts, particularly in ASEAN, where some of them use English as second language (the Outer Circle) or as a foreign language (the Expanding Circle). For ASEAN, English is used as a communication tool. Baker (2009) observed that ELF is used as the main tool for communication within ASEAN countries for the purpose of trade and tourism. On his part, Kirkpatrick (2010) found that English in ELF context is not based on the native speaking model, but on their educational and linguistic backgrounds. In terms of the specific features of English used in the ASEAN community. He further posited that most Asian people are likely to produce the same phonological and syntactic features of English, the avoidance of reduced vowels and the use of non-standard form. Here are some of the examples provided by Kirkpatrick (2010b: 8) as non-standard grammatical forms employed in ASEAN English as a lingua franca⁸.

⁷ According to Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of English model (1985, 1992), the Inner Circle refers to those societies where English is the language of native speakers. The Outer Circle refers to the institutionalized non-native varieties or English as a second language. The Expanding Circle refers to areas where English is an international language and where English is used as a foreign language. The three circles were intended to represent (1) the types of spread of English worldwide (2) the patterns of acquisition, and (3) the functional domains in which English is used internationally in diverse cultural contexts.

⁸ more examples can be found in Kirkpatrick 2008

- 1) the flexible use of definite and indefinite articles (*I know when we touch money issue it can be very controversial*);
- 2) absence of plural marking on nouns of measurements (*One three time or four time a years*) (and note the use of the non-standard "-s" on years);
- 3) non-marking of past tense forms (*I couldn't see, that's why I just sit and take the rest*);
- 4) use of preposition in different contexts (*and the second purpose is the seek and see for discussion*)

Apart from non-standard grammatical forms, Graddol (1997) noted that communicative strategies play a significant role in increasing intercultural communication competence among non-native English speakers. Kirkpatrick (2008) reported that most ASEAN member countries employ the strategies of "paraphrase" and "let it pass" in order to reach their communication goals and prevent communication breakdown. Furthermore, Buddharat's (2016) finding on communication strategies also tallies with Graddol's (1997) and Kirkpatrick's (2008) in which strategic competence play a remarkable role in increasing intercultural communication, specifically in ELF context. She explained that residents of Ban Khiriwong, a well-known tourist attraction site in Southern Thailand utilized several strategies: code-switching, code-mixing, paralinguistic, materials, drawing, etc. when communicating with foreign visitors such as:

“We use many ways to communicate with foreigners: easy English, Standard Thai, and Southern Thai.”

“I’ll talk and offer to help them with English. I use whatever I can think of: hands, draw pictures or maps, write down words. I don’t care about grammar.”

“I greet visitors in English, talk to them using only key words because the tourists also use only key words”

“To communicate, I used an English-Thai dictionary and they used an English-French dictionary”.

“English is more easily understood by foreign visitors. But I think one language is not enough. Foreigners are the same as us; they use English, basic Thai and hands.”

In addition to communication strategies, ignorance to use non-standard English form is another issue found to be emerging in ELF context. Kirkpatrick (2010a) claimed that employing non-standard English form does not only emerge in other varieties of English across the globe but also in ASEAN context. This evidence is also found in Buddharat (2016, p. 225) who reported that local villagers in the tourism context prefer to use English based on their background and experiences rather than on what they learned from their teachers. For example, one of the local guides mentioned that there is no need to teach Standard English to them as most applied linguists expect them to learn in order to achieve as closely as possible native-speaker-like accuracy.

“I talk to all foreigners, I don’t care what is right or wrong, I just talk ... I think foreigners like me. They like the way I talk; they laugh, smile and seem happy. But when I talk like what I was taught or from the books or from the CDs, they just nod their heads. I can see that they are happier when we have to struggle to understand each other. ... Let it be, we will survive. Nobody here speaks good English, even [foreign] tourists.”

What is interesting here is that the villager feels like his strategic competence in English is both sufficient for his needs and it is more fun when talking to foreigners than focusing on accuracy in the form of Standard English. The above examples confirm that English in Thailand is commonly used as an ELF to achieve the communicative goal. Thus, it raises the question of whether ELF should be allowed in the Thai ELT context in the 21st century.

Teaching English in Thailand as English as a lingua franca

In English classes of Thailand ELT context, English seems not to prepare students to use English in the real world of multilingualism or multidialectism. Generally, ELT and learning in Thailand are based on traditional theories in which theorists are from Western countries (Boriboon, 2011; Methitham, 2011). To deal with this issue, the implementation of the conceptual and operational frameworks of ELF may need to be taken into account even though moving teaching and learning styles from the norm of native standard to ELF seems to be apprehensive. How ELF can be designed into curriculum and taught in the context of Thailand is another focus of this paper. According to the review, one of the most applicable approaches for ELF classroom context is the “Lingua

Franca” approach (Kirkpatrick, 2012, 2014) due to its reflection of how English is employed in reality. In this approach, Kirkpatrick (2012, p. 40) proposes four points:

- 1) the goal of the approach is not for learners to acquire native speaker proficiency and to sound like native speakers, but to enable them to use English successfully in lingua franca contexts; they will naturally sound like multilinguals;
- 2) the content of the curriculum needs to include topics of regional and local cultures that are relevant for lingua franca users in these contexts; it is a cross cultural course based on ASEAN/Asian cultures and literatures where intercultural competence is developed;
- 3) the curriculum must therefore be designed to allow students to be able to engage critically in discussions about their own cultures and cultural values and interests in English;
- 4) the curriculum needs to include listening materials that familiarize students with the speech styles and pronunciation of their fellow Asian multilingual users of English as a lingua franca.

In this paper, the four aforementioned points are consolidated into two significant topics for discussion. The learning goals of ELF users (move from English native speakers’ norm to multilinguals) and ELF curriculum (materials design, teaching techniques, and evaluation of English language proficiency) to see the possibilities of how the approach can be applied to the ELF classroom in the near future. These two significant points are discussed in the following sections.

Learning goals in ELF contexts

Since English in Thailand and some ASEAN contexts has been recognized as a lingua franca, Kirkpatrick (ibid) proposes that ELT in ELF contexts should be reexamined and reconsidered in order to strengthen and improve learning goals. This notion is also agreed upon by other scholars, such as Baker (2011, 2012b, 2012c), Dewey (2013a, 2013b) and McKay (2006). Kirkpatrick (2014) and McKay (ibid) posit that the goal of ELT should not only be to follow the mainstream English (i.e. American or British English) but should also shift from the NSE models to bilingual or multilingual speakers. Regarding this particular point, Blair (2015: 99) suggests that in order to understand how English is being employed in reality, ELT should be removed from the concepts of “nativeness, ownership and idealized pedagogical norms...” to be like the language use in multilingual contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2012). To support this view, in addition, different scholars including Jenkins (2006, 2009a, 2009b), Galloway and Rose (2015), McKay (2009), and Seidlhofer (2011) demonstrate that ELT’s goal for ELF’s learners should not be focused on traditional ELT. For clarification, the benefits of native speaker models from the Inner Circle countries that are perceived as benchmarks and targets for teachers and students in teaching and learning English need to be questioned. To this essential point, McKay (2009: 238) states that “reliance on a native speaker model as the pedagogical target must be set aside”.

However, to implement this practical goal into ELT in ELF context in Thailand, the Thai stakeholders may encounter some problematic perception towards the nativeness of grammatical correctness, native-like accent, intercultural communication skills and communication strategies. Boriboon (2011), Braine (2010), Jindapitak and Teo, (2013), and Kirkpatrick (2010a) have

identified perceptions in the English language teaching profession that NESTs are the ideal model. Their speech is held up as the gold standard of grammatical correctness and perfect pronunciation (cf. Wang, 2012), and they are valued as repositories of cultural information. Conversely, NNESTs seem to be positioned as deficient speakers of the language, with imperfect grammatical and pragmatic knowledge, poor pronunciation, and inferior knowledge about foreign cultures (Mahboob et al., 2004). Hence, one way to implement this practical goal into ELT in Thai ELF context more effectively is for people to be sensitized and have a more positive attitude towards the use of ELF. Different scholars have suggested different ways on how to change the attitude of teachers and learners regarding teaching English through ELF framework. This can be done through sensitizing policymakers, curriculum designers, teachers and students with core concepts of ELF by offering or including training in education programs (Blair, 2015; Dewey, 2015; Matsuda, 2012; Pitzl, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). Seidlhofer (ibid) suggests that the education programs should contain theoretical issues, for example, language awareness, investigation on communication strategies, intercultural communication and language variation. It is also essential for participants in education programs to prepare and train pre-service and in-service English language teachers to be aware of the problematic notion of the native speaker model and possibilities of using ELF in ELT context.

Contents of curriculum in ELF contexts

Obviously, ELF has a significant influence on ELT and learning. Therefore, what to include or exclude in ELT and learning curriculum should be revised. Since ELF is considered to be different from the NES model, teaching English through ELF's framework becomes more appropriate in Thailand than ELT and

learning curricula in ELF contexts should emphasize more on local varieties of English and focus on regional discourses rather than those associated with Inner Circle group of people. To teach and learn English in ELF contexts more effectively, consequently, ELF curriculums as demonstrated by Kirkpatrick (2012: 40) above can be used as guidelines for policy makers, curriculum designers, teachers and trainers, to design ELF curriculum for the context of Thailand. What Kirkpatrick (2012:ibid) proposed is coherent to different educational scholars (Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Galloway & Rose, 2015; McKay, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2011) who conducted studies in different contexts, either in the Inner, Outer, and Expanding teaching contexts. From the perspectives of these scholars, what to reconsider in relation to ELT and learning curriculum in ELF contexts are teaching and learning materials; teaching strategy; and English language proficiency evaluation. To verify, these three main points are presented in details below.

Teaching and learning materials in ELF context

To implement ELF teaching and learning materials in Thailand can be difficult since most textbooks, reference works and supplementary materials used in Thailand are exclusively produced by English and American publishing companies, such as Pearson, McGraw-Hill, Macmillan, Cambridge, Oxford and Longman (Dewey, 2015; Jenkins, 2007; McKay, 2002; Methitham, 2009). Hence, the idea of native speakers as linguistically superior teachers has been extensively authorized by educationalists and local practitioners and promoted through ELT conferences, training programs, and teaching materials (Leung, 2005). Concerning this view, Dewey (2015) and Boriboon (2011) mention that many ELT materials, teaching theories, and research-supported originate from the linguistics organizations of these two countries. Because of the idealization

of the native speaker of English, these countries are believed to be the centres of ELT, countries that have authority to determine and control the direction of ELT. This seems to contradict to the framework of teaching English in ELF context.

From the ELF perspective, however, teachers should be aware that by integrating ELF principles into their teaching practices does not necessarily imply that they need to change their traditional teaching roles and all their existing beliefs concerning their pedagogy, teaching materials, language syllabus and curriculum. On the other hand, they could modify their new teaching principles to improve their teaching practices and make sure that they are practical and appropriate for the contexts in which they teach. To this notion, Baker (2008) and Cook (1999) illustrate that linguistic resources that are exposed to students should reflect their real-life purposes. One clear example regarding this particular issue is an extract of a student's assignment, studying English at one of the most prestigious universities in Thailand. A friend to the researchers who was working as a lecturer assigned his students to write a short report about English. An interesting expression mentioned by a student in relation to ELT in Thailand was that:

“I was born in “Gangsom” culture not that “hamburger one, so I prefer to learn the language in Gangsom style which is familiar to me rather than those original forms which I'm not accustomed to”.

From what the student demonstrated, Gangsom is traditional Thai yellow curry, which is originally found in the southern part of Thailand, while the hamburger is a type of fast food that originally comes from the western countries. It can be clearly seen that, from this quotation, the student prefers

his/her teachers to teach English by connecting English teaching contents to their culture or what they are familiar with. The above quotation implies that it is significant to pay attention to where learners are born and how they are raised. In other words, Thai students should be taught how to value themselves and other Asian interlocutors. They should recognize and able to describe how their cultures are different from others or how “Gangsom” is different from Hamburger, Pizza or McDonald. Thus, employing local teaching and learning materials that can be found throughout the country as part of the teaching and learning practices or activities; and creating ELT books which contain more contents on cultural background of the students will not only provide the students with opportunities to use more practical English but also increase their awareness and inspiration towards using ELF.

What the students perceived above corroborate the notion illustrated by Baker (2008), Cook (1999), and Wilang and Teo (2012). In Thailand, they suggest that Thai English teachers and students should explore cultural diversity in teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and compare them with their Thai culture. They need to be aware of how English is embedded and plays a role in the context in which they teach as Graddol (2006: 87) notes that “[...] the way English is taught and assessed should reflect the needs and aspirations of the ever-growing number of non-native speakers who use English to communicate with other non-natives”. To support this, Widdowson (1994: 386) states that language taught in the classroom should be “specially designed for pedagogic purposes so that it can be made real in the context of the students’ own world”. Thus, it can be said that every English teacher should incorporate into their teaching instructional teaching and learning materials rooted in local as well as international contexts that are familiar and relevant to their students’

lives (Alptekin, 2002). To this notion, what teaching and learning materials should be employed, will be based on their contexts of teaching. As a result, the cultures that traditionally are associated as British or American cultures should not be placed as the main core of teaching and learning, but the cultures of ASEAN (Kirkpatrick, 2008, 2014).

Teaching techniques in ELF context

Another significant notion that should be mentioned here and considered by Thai educational stakeholders is what teaching strategy to employ when teaching ELF. In the following, consequently, some teaching strategies regarding teaching English in ELF contexts are discussed.

Experiencing Thai English learners to different English accents

It is undeniable that Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) are the most preferred accents by English learners including Thai learners. However, a study conducted by Jenkins (2009a) illustrates that non-native accents are considered by non-native speakers of English to be more understandable than RP and GA accents. To clarify, since the number of NSE are smaller compared to the number of NNSE, additionally, teachers and students no longer need to teach and learn English in order to sound like NSE. Therefore, teaching students to pronounce their English like NSE might not be practical in ELF contexts. They should not be forced to speak or use English in the same manner as NSE but they should have their own right to use English in the way they prefer in order to keep their own identity. To this particular issue, some teachers may perceive that it is not easy to teach every English accent to students in ELT classrooms because the numbers of available accents are many. Nevertheless, they should attempt to introduce their students to

experience the accents that are available to them, especially the accent from ASEAN speakers who are likely to become their immediate future interlocutors after they have completed their education (Kirkpatrick, 2008). As proposed by Kirkpatrick (2008), providing students to be familiar with different speech styles of their Asian interlocutors especially in their speaking and listening classes is needed. Thus, the teachers should include different listening conversations, talks, movies, and videos that contain ASEAN member countries such as an English conversation between Malaysian and Vietnamese or Thais and other Asian speakers, as part of their teaching and learning activities. Sharifian (2011) stated that utilizing social networking sites including Facebook and YouTube, assigning students to observe how people in ELF context use English and discuss in the class, and asking students to work as their part time jobs or to do internships where English is employed as a lingua franca during their university break, are useful techniques to expose students to be familiar with a variety of English accents.

Taking as an example, Prince of Songkla University (Pattani Campus), there are a great number of international students and lecturers from more than 24 nationalities, such as, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Saudi Arabia, and Korea. In addition, the foreign students and lecturers participate, occasionally, in some English classes in order to share their life experiences or to run English activities together with in English. By so doing, it offers the students better opportunities to prepare themselves for the future by familiarising themselves with different varieties of English. They further experience communicating with native or non-native interlocutors in the real workplace, and observe how English is utilized within their region. More so, they can realise that the English used by NSE is not the only acceptable English

pattern, but that; there are different varieties of English that are acceptable by different groups of English users. From this stand point, it is not an exaggeration to say that if we prefer to understand the use of English in today's world, "ELF must be one of the central concerns in this line of research" (Mauranen, 2006: 147). As pointed out by Galloway and Rose, 2015, McKenzie (2010) and Sewell (2013), correspondingly, it would be advantageous to expose the students to a range of native and nonnative variety of Englishes, rather than a single or a restricted range of English in the ELT classroom.

Focusing more on communication, not grammar

It can be clearly seen throughout Thailand that teaching English structure plays a key role in ELT. This can be supported by a study conducted by Simpson's (2011) who demonstrated that English grammar and reading comprehension are perceived as the core teaching among the majority of Thai English teachers. This traditional teaching method has become one of the big problems among Thai English learners (Kongkerd, 2013) especially when they are asked to speak English. By paying too much attention on English grammar, the students have no confidence to communicate in English. They are too shy and afraid of speaking by using incorrect grammar. To increase confidence among Thai learners regarding English speaking, Thai English teachers who teach English in ELF context should focus more on communication, not native grammar accuracy. When teaching Listening and Speaking class, for example, instead of asking and forcing students to speak like a native speaker, teachers should encourage students to speak English by employing their own accent. Also, when students are asked to discuss or share their ideas on a particular issue, using incorrect grammar structures should not be perceived as broken English as long as it does not cause communication breakdown.

To increase communication competence of ELF learners, different scholars propose different communication strategies. One of them is to allow or encourage students to use different communication strategies to achieve their learning goals. Some communication strategies commonly used by university students are: 1) risk avoidance techniques, time gaining strategies, and needed assistance in developing risk-taking techniques, such as, social-affective, fluency-oriented, help seeking, and circumlocution strategies (Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009). In addition, Buddharat (2016) posited that in real life situation of language use, ELF users use code-changing, approximating, translating from their first language into English, employing simple key words, utilizing visual aids to accompany conversation, and using demonstration, authentic materials and hands-on experience when communicating in English. These communication strategies will be very helpful techniques for ELF trainers and users to achieve their communicative goals. Thus, to promote ELF in ELT classrooms in Thailand, it is strongly recommended that standard grammar and correctness of native accent should be reduced; however, enhancing communication in the classrooms so that the students will be more confident in using English with other interlocutors.

Evaluation of English language proficiency in ELF context

How to evaluate English language proficiency of teachers, students, and other ELF users in Thailand is considered as one of the crucial points to discuss within this article. Due to the use of English in Thailand as a lingua franca, utilizing the norms of NSE as the main criteria to assess ELT learning and language ability of Thai English teachers and students (considered NNSE) may be impractical and need to be re-conceptualized and reconstructed (Jenkins 2003, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010b, 2014). Accordingly, ELT teaching and learning and

language abilities of the ELF users should not only be assessed through the phonological and syntactic norms derived from monolingual speakers of English. In contrast, they should have the right to design their own criteria to evaluate what is suitable based on their own teaching and learning environments. Canagarajah (2007, p. 936) points out that "As we realize that norms are heterogeneous, variable, changing, and, therefore, interactively established in each context, we have to move away from a reliance on discrete-item tests on formal grammatical competence and develop instruments that are more sensitive to performance and pragmatics". Assessment should "focus on one's strategies of negotiation, situated performance, communicative repertoire and language awareness". In addition, considering how they employ English with other speakers both inside and outside teaching and learning environments is also useful as a means of assessing their language competence. To this point, however, it might take time since most textbooks, reference works and supplementary materials used in Thailand are exclusively produced by English and American publishing companies (Dewey, 2015; Jenkins, 2007; McKay, 2002; Methitham, 2009). Therefore, further extensive studies to explore more practical strategies and criteria are still needed in order to provide a clearer picture of this particular phenomenon.

Conclusion

Because of the changing role of English in this 21st century, English teachers should be aware and recognize what is happening outside their countries for the purposes of language teaching, language planning and predicting language change. It can be clearly seen that English has been widely used and changed in order to make it more appropriate in the different contexts of users. In terms

of ELT, although the NES model still plays a significant role in English education, to use English more effectively, users' context or environment needs to be taken into account.

Since the role of English has shifted to ELF and English is mostly used by ELF users within English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, how English should be taught, learnt, and used should be reconsidered to make it more appropriate and practical. By considering a lingua franca approach proposed by Kirkpatrick (2012, 2014), teachers and learners can find more appropriate strategies for how to teach, how to learn, and how to use English in a more socially and contextually sensitive way based on their needs and within their own contexts. In terms of ELF learners, they can be aware that the English that they have learnt in the class might not always be the same as the English they are going to face in their daily life situations or in the real workplace. This line of thought concurs with Seidlhofer (2011) who states how an understanding of ELF could lead to a change in our thinking about English and the way it is generally taught and learnt. As a consequence, the English teachers will be able to shift from the unpleasant periphery to a position of authority (in their own right) and can develop or establish more appropriate teaching and learning materials and classroom teaching and learning environments for their students. To this view, instead of teaching English through native speaker norms, teachers should consider and attempt to learn how to adjust or adopt their teaching and learning materials, teaching strategies, and how to evaluate English proficiency to suit the context they teach. To reach a native like competence, furthermore, is no longer the target of teaching and learning English in the context of ASEAN including Thailand as Kirkpatrick (2010a) proposes that in multilingual societies such as ASEAN,

"insisting on a single target norm is considered as inappropriate, impractical, and unnecessary". On his part, Widdowson (2003) supports that teaching a foreign language (English) should not focus on specific goals or norms, but on skills development and how to communicate appropriately and effectively either in local, national or international contexts. This means that teachers should have full authority to choose the ways in which they prefer to teach, students should be able to choose how they prefer to learn, and they should both be able to choose the communication strategies that they prefer to employ.

It can be concluded here that ELF attempts to inform educational stakeholders (policy makers, teachers, and students, in particular) that employing the English native speaker models as the core models in ELT and learning in ELF contexts including Thailand is not appropriate and less practical. In order to implement internationally acceptable English in ELT classrooms rather than a particular native variety of English belonging to particular countries, therefore, the goals and the curricula of ELT and learning, especially when the teaching and learning of English is taking place in ELF contexts, should be revised.

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