

# A Study of the Effective English Teaching Strategies for the Multicultural Classroom at Mahachulalornkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus

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## Abstract

The objectives of the research aim 1) to study the effective English teaching strategies in using for the multicultural classroom, 2) to explore the Attitudes and Perceptions of different cultural students in the multicultural classroom at Mahachulalornkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai campus, and 3) to propose the guideline for the effective English teaching strategies in using for the multicultural classroom at Mahachulalornkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai campus. This research employed the mixed method, the Quantitative and the Qualitative research. For the quantitative, the sampling groups were forty-seven 4<sup>th</sup>-year B.A. students in the Faculty of Humanities of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus, including monks, novices, and laypersons. The research instrument was a five-level scale questionnaire. The results of study the of effective English teaching strategies for multicultural classrooms, including the effective English teaching strategies, Attitudes, and Perceptions were high rates. In the qualitative research, in-depth interviews were conducted by interviewing the key informants by recording the sound and transcript into the passage. In addition, nine key informants who are the lecturers of the Faculty of Humanities were interviewed. The results of the in-depth interview indicated that effective English teaching strategies for multicultural classrooms must be included, supporting students in participation, teachers being the facilitators, and adjusting pedagogies along with students' level. In the case of attitude, teachers in the multicultural classroom must be; loving-kindness, treat students equally, and be curious about students' lifestyles. The terms of perceptions of teachers in the multicultural classroom were; realization of language (mother tongue), seeking of student's history, and acknowledging educational background. Additionally, the appropriate guidelines for effective English teaching strategies for the multicultural classroom proposed that teachers must integrate any activities and exercises to form cultural acceptance, and learn from each other teachers must play the role of facilitator.

**Keywords:** Multicultural classroom; Effective English Teaching; Strategies; Attitude; Perception

## Introduction

To elicit effective English teaching strategies for the multicultural classroom, the definition of a multicultural classroom should be determined initially. A multicultural classroom is a classroom with a mixed salad of various cultural values that embrace different perspectives, beliefs, values, abilities, languages, and family backgrounds of students, (Banks, 2014). It does not matter that the educational institution administrators and teachers strive for homogeneity in the classroom, the differences are inevitable, (Saban, 2013). In history, to journey back in 1989, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the rise of globalization in the last decade of the twentieth century had enormous effects on education all over the world as cultural encounters became more frequent and immigration reached a high peak. At the end of the twentieth century, schools started seeing an important change, for most of the classrooms turned into a “small village” with “culturally and linguistically diverse students”. However, the most challenging, multicultural classroom differs from a monocultural classroom in that it has more challenges and requires teachers to possess many skills to communicate and interact more effectively with their students, (Chouari, 2016).

Significant prerequisites for being an effective multicultural teacher must be convinced of the suitable teaching strategies in the multicultural classroom in consideration of advanced English ability, appropriate attitudes, and reasonable perceptions. English language ability was considered as the first factor to be presented, not only as the medium of instruction but also as in general communication. Rationally, the English language is known as a lingua franca and an international language, (Crystal 2003), to propose the best alternative that tends to offer students an easier understanding of the teachers’ instructions, especially in a classroom of different mother tongue, different values, and particular behaviors. Therefore, the effective teacher should possess advanced English language skills. For intrinsic reasons, language can be a source of confusion and misunderstanding that can cause dissatisfaction, prejudices, and biases among students or even teachers. The attitudes of teachers are the second essential factor that needs to be properly incorporated in a multicultural classroom. As teachers are considered the heart of motivating, educating, and driving a difference in the education of students regardless of their gender, ethnicity, age, traditional beliefs, languages, accent, and exceptionality, (Karacabey, Ozdere & Bozkus, 2009). Hence, the appropriate attitude must be constantly cultivated to avoid biased treatment towards the students or vice versa, otherwise, there is the possibility of a discrepancy between instructors’ teaching strategies and the learning styles of multicultural students. Another critical factor was teachers’ perceptions. Multicultural classroom teachers should be aware of student’s cultural values, languages, and any odd behaviors in presenting the students’ cultural norms. If any teachers are devoid of awareness of the ethnicity, social influence, and linguistic diversity of students, those teachers will not be suitable for the multicultural classroom, (Crystal 2003). A worthwhile talent that teachers must possess is a dual responsibility to engage in the critical and continual process

of examining the intercultural relations among students, and consciously monitor the effect of students' learning experiences.

## Objectives

1. To study the effective English teaching strategies for the multicultural classroom.
2. To explore the attitudes and perceptions of different cultural students in the multicultural classroom at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus.
3. To propose a guideline for effective English teaching strategies for the multicultural classroom at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus.

## Methodologies

The research employed mixed methods research of quantitative and qualitative research. For quantitative research, the five-level scale questionnaire was to collect data from the students who were fourth-year students in the Faculty of Humanities at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus. The simple group was 47 students. Furthermore, qualitative research applied in-depth interviews with 9 key informants to collect the data. The key informants were the lecturers in the faculty of humanities at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus.

### Research tools

The researcher conducted the five-scale questionnaire by studying the concepts and theories of effective English teaching strategies from documents, books, academic papers, journals, and research concerns on the internet and libraries in English. In the next step researcher determined the conceptual framework and the objectives for conducting the research tools. In the last step, the researcher asked for accuracy from thesis advisors then the researcher conducted the tool.

The researcher studied the concepts and theories through documents, books, and research work concerned with approaching the conceptual framework and the objectives to conduct the interview. In the next step, the researcher required a recommendation from the thesis advisors. In the last step, the researcher created the interview that covers the whole research objectives to be applied in the data collection from the key informants to analyze the data afterward.

## The Results of the Research

The results of a study of the effective English teaching strategies for the multicultural classrooms of 4<sup>th</sup> year, B.A. Students in the Faculty of Humanities of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus were presented with each objective as follows.

## 1. The discussion of analytical results of the effective English teaching strategies used for the multicultural classroom at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai campus.

The result of effective English teaching in the strategies of active learning styles that showed the overall rate of the respondents was at a high level ( $\bar{X} = 3.95$ ). For the in-depth interview, two teachers were focused on students participating in the class, so one similar derive, as a multicultural teacher creates activities that provide a comfortable zone and safe in making mistakes. As well as the teacher has to encourage students to get involved in the lessons or persuade them to speak out in class. In a classroom where students are diverse, English should be the main medium in lecture and the appropriate learning strategies should be utilized such as active learning which is about getting feedback from students by asking questions". So, these two statements corresponded to the research of Prince (2004), Fayombo (2012), and Yabarmase (2013). Conclusively, an active learning strategy was very useful in teaching and learning in a multicultural classroom.

The lecturers gave beneficial information about collaborative learning. For instance, one statement occurred that effectively gets the students together or group, possibly putting students into two inner and outer circles and then pairing them to chat about given topics and logically, persuading students to learn from each other's experience or learn from their previous knowledge". One more trick was one of the lecturers illustrated that in a classroom where students are diverse collaborative learning strategies should be utilized. Collaborative learning concerns heterogeneous members in a group working to get to know and accept each other". In addition, in the part of the quantitative data collection, the collaborative learning strategy reached a high rate with together the total resulted number, ( $\bar{X} = 3.86$ ). So, the results were coherent with the research of Laal and Laal (2012). Collaborative learning is when the learners have the opportunity to converse with peers, present and defend ideas, exchange diverse beliefs, language, and knowledge generated from learners' cultural backgrounds, question other conceptual frameworks, and are actively engaged.

For direct strategy, this study focused on memory strategy and compensation strategies which involve the methods of persuading students to understand teachers' lessons whether using body language, synonyms, or linking previous knowledge. Some of the data had been obtained from in-depth interviews related to direct learning. Useful data completely indicated that the teacher should speak slowly and show suitable examples, adjust the accent along with the needs of students' English listening skills, or use body language to help in wordless expression. Furthermore, it was very important to adjust teaching methods every single semester following the generation gap and keep updated on generation news, wants, and needs, the opinion tends to correspond to the compensation strategy of direct strategy which the similarity was researched by Shi (2017). Moreover, the teacher should adjust speaking skills, also eye contact skills, and body language skills. Avoiding difficult words meant that using

simple words easy vocabulary, and natural pronunciation must be part of teaching as much as possible. Importantly, direct learning in the part of the questionnaire obtained a high rate the total result of the mean was ( $\bar{X}= 4.06$ ). The direct strategy helps a lot in getting both the new multicultural students and the old multicultural students understanding, and the direct strategy result was coherent with Subrayan's (2020) research.

In the indirect strategy for the multicultural classroom, metacognitive strategies and social strategies have been used in this research which is about creating confidence, knowing the language's background, and learning from mistakes. The result of the indirect strategy was from the questionnaire which holding the total mean was, ( $\bar{X}=4.04$ ), high rate. Moreover, lecturers illustrated an indirect strategy, one method was that a multicultural teacher must be aware of students' cultural education, learn their culture beforehand, and necessarily ask students about their educational background. For cultural suggestions, some students must reduce their cultural behavior, for example, "Kreng Jai" for those from Thailand. If The reduction of cultural behavior was impossible, inspire the students to put more effort. Importantly, teachers should provide the chance to participate equally. Additionally, a lecturer exposed that the classroom should provide equal opportunities in various activities. Crucially, attempt to build the students' confidence by interacting in the classroom. The research of Mesquita (2015) mentioned that indirect strategy has been considered one of the most powerful instructional strategies in eliciting cognitive efforts, problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking.

SMART Learning was concerned with the modern classroom where the subjects are supported in encouraging to achieve the learning goals in the high technological era, adapting culture based upon integrating into the present classroom, pre-class measurement, providing an atmosphere in searching resources and internet and providing sufficient technology for further self-learning. The total results in the part of the questionnaire reached ( $\bar{X}= 3.97$ ) a high rate. In the section of the interview, the lecturers gave beneficial data about SMART learning, one demonstrating that to make fun and smooth the class, the use of the projector (PPT, slide) should be applied. In addition, in this modern time, audio, and video must be used in teaching. A lecturer stated about online search, as now has been being the high-technological era hence, online would be the best choice for searching, using Wikipedia to help in researching new knowledge. The result corresponded to Lee's (2020) research which was time-bound, the environment switched every year so, the teaching strategy is supposed to adapt due to modern times which now would be "technology".

Constructivism for English teaching in the multicultural classroom, the concepts were about heterogeneous cultural members in a group learning, the authority shared among students and teachers, and teachers as facilitators. The total result rate in the part of the questionnaires was ( $\bar{X}=4.08$ ), a high rate that was coherent with the research of Jankova, (2018) and Mili, & Towers, (2022). Additionally, in the section on qualitative research the lecturers. A

lecturer showed the role of the teacher in a multicultural classroom, with students being centers and teachers being helpers. Moreover, the role of teachers was to support students improve their language skills. This agrees with the research of Hermaniar, (2019) and the theory of constructivism by Brooks (1999). Also, the lecturer stated that a multicultural teacher must create activities that provide a comfortable zone and be safe from making mistakes and a teacher must encourage students to get involved in the lessons or persuade them to speak out in the class”, which concurred with a theory of Honebein, (1996), “Seven goals for the design of constructivist learning environments”. Interestingly, in the interviewed, teacher listed the effective English teaching strategy for the multicultural classroom and constructivism was one of on the lists. The statement was “these teaching strategies should be utilized in a multicultural classroom. First, active learning is about getting feedback from students by asking questions. Second, collaborative learning concerns heterogeneous members in group work to get to know and accept each other. Last, constructivism refers to a classroom in which students as centers and teachers as facilitators”. And statement matched the research of Sriwisan, (2021).

## **2. The discussion of analytical results of attitudes and perceptions toward different cultural students in the multicultural classroom at Mahachulalornkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai campus.**

“Teachers’ attitudes drive a strong impact on the classroom’s education and social climate. At the same time, it should be noted that attitudes toward inclusivity and heterogeneity in classrooms were one of the greatest predictors of teaching effectiveness”, according to Yildirim, (2016). Therefore, this research conducted the attitudes, a teacher possibly occupied, to avoid being offensive to students, accepting students’ cultural backgrounds, showing unbiased treatment to students, agreeing with students’ cultural perspectives, and being respectful in communication. The overall rate of the attitudes was achieved a high rate which the mean was ( $\bar{X}= 3.96$ ). However, the teachers who had a less accepting attitude towards multicultural students tended to produce students with lower English scores. Meanwhile, teachers who can accept and appreciate multicultural students tend to produce better learning outcomes from these students which coincides with the research of Kustati, (2020). In the part of the interview, conclusively, the attitudes of a multicultural teacher should be possessed. The teacher should talk a lot even who is an introverted person. The teacher should engender special attitudes such as loving-kindness, etc. The teacher should be open-minded to give appropriate consultation. The teacher should be curious about student backgrounds. Specifically, a lecturer stated that multicultural teachers must try to avoid students always gathered in their ethnic circle. So, students should spread out more to other diverse students in the classroom to increase their tolerance towards multi-cultures in the classroom, this data was cohered to Reaungsri and Leepreecha, (2020).

The perceptions of the multicultural teacher were that a teacher needs to know, be aware of, and deal with the students' culture. The composition of the perceptions in the research included activities for eliminating prejudice, designing the course curricula according to multicultural education, flexibly adjusting to a new culture, avoiding viewing negatively other cultures, and being aware of students' culture and its values. All concepts were obtained at a high rate and the average mean of perceptions, ( $\bar{X}=4.11$ ) from the quantitative survey, and the concepts were related to the research of Alismail, (2016). For the data derived from the interview, all lecturers answered similarly thus in summary that the perceptions of a multicultural teacher have to realize, the teacher must know about a student. The first discovery, was language which is a major skill in disclosing human opinions and behaviors, however, different languages have different structures, so when the teacher knows students' language, they will understand more why some students make specific mistakes, corresponded to Garmon (2004), Alismail, (2016). The second point was cultural backgrounds showing the basic living of any students, different cultures having different ways of life which matched Mili and Towers (2022). The last indication was very important to perceive students' history to know the origination of student's bias, prejudice, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism. Teachers were afterward able to run the class smoothly and the classroom became a comfortable and safe zone for sharing anything whether cultures, English learning, or problem-solving, similar to Sriwisan, (2021).

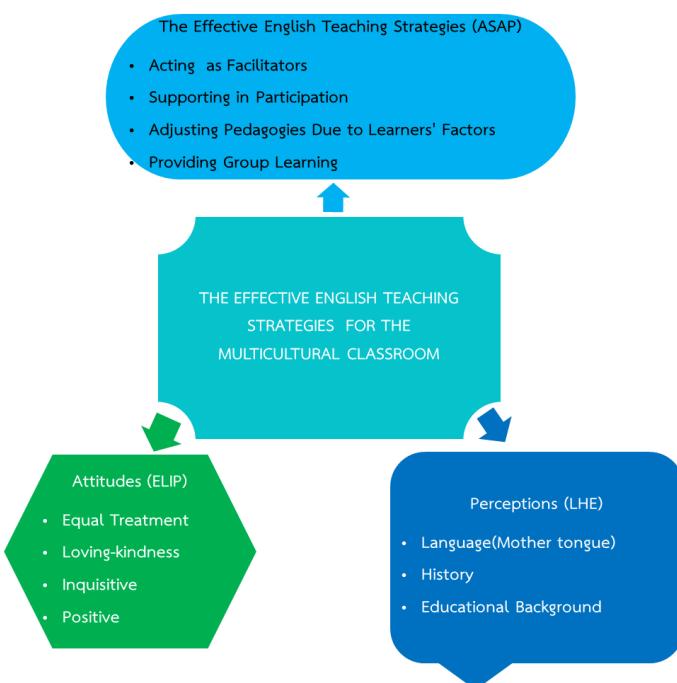
### **3. The discussion of analytical results of guidelines for effective English teaching in the multicultural classroom at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus**

The strategies had been found from interviews including. The first guideline was providing suitable online study, sufficient audio, and lesson-related video. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to speak out whether inside or outside the classroom to build students' confidence, besides that teachers would know students more about their cultures, needs, issues, and goals. In addition, integrating activities and exercises to form cultural acceptance and learn from each other must be utilized. Moreover, teachers play the role of a facilitator and students as the center of the classroom; this is supposed to be constructivism. In the multicultural classroom, making simple explanations, meant that everything in the lecture must be easy and simple including speaking slowly with clear pronunciation, usage of frequent synonyms using words instead of unfamiliar words, and trying not to use jargon or slang words which can lead students into a perplexed atmosphere. One important method was a collaborative strategy involving getting students to learn as a group where each group contains heterogeneous ethnic members because this strategy can impel them to accept each other and learn different accents of English speaking. The last guideline, culturally, listening by eyes, some students' speech and behavior do not match in meaning so a teacher could not listen only by the heart but also by paying attention with eyes and observing behavior. As

multicultural teachers must encourage students to be proud of their culture and English, and give compliments to increase their confidence.

## Body of Knowledge

The knowledges were found in the study which was able divided into three parts due to the research objectives. The effective English teaching strategies for the multicultural classroom were the four significant points mentioned, beginning with supporting students in participation by speaking, chatting, and sharing in the classroom. Secondly, was about learning from each other by assigning group work with heterogeneous cultural members. Thirdly, students were as centers and teachers as facilitators which means the duty of the teacher to suggest the path leading to survival in the multicultural classroom. The last of the effective English teaching strategies was adjusting the level of teaching due to the level of student's English skills and students' generation. In the part of the attitudes, initiative illustration was loving-kindness that can provide students feel comfortable in showing cultural value. Equal treatment was tried to avoid bias toward whoever has superior wisdom or inferior wisdom. The simple attitude was being positive concerning the avoidance of anger, and needing more patient. The final attitude was being curious about anything of students related anything about students' backgrounds. The perceptions appear in the first language (mother tongue) and the reasons that the language can shape who we are. The history was to explore the origin of stereotypes, ethnocentrism, and prejudices among each other. The last perception was educational background referring to the learning methods in the past whether multicultural classrooms or monocultural classrooms.



**Figure: 1** Body of Knowledge of the Effective English Teaching Strategies for the Multicultural Classrooms

## Conclusion

The results of the research showed effective strategies for a multicultural classroom. Lecturers gave useful strategies, for instance, the teachers must learn about students' cultural backgrounds to find out their basic English skills. Moreover, the teacher should learn from students by helping them to improve their English skills. Importantly, the teacher learns how students can survive in the class, and learn from each other, between teacher and students. The most common answers from all key informants were to treat the students as a center while the teachers act as facilitators, to evoke students' enthusiasm for class participation, and to treat students' education equally. Moreover, the challenges for multicultural classrooms and the answers are completely beneficial for the research. One of the most common answers was the diversity of students in English accents, cultural backgrounds, and cultural values.

The attitudes and perceptions were another significant point of the research. The first question attitudes talked about what kind of attitudes a multicultural teacher must have. The answers were slightly different but there was one answer that almost every teacher mentioned, being loving-kindness. Reasonably, teachers' loving-kindness could result in students feeling comfortable and safe in discussing education, living, or personal issues. The second question was the responsibility of the teacher to eliminate students' prejudice towards each other. The answer was agreed and reasonable that a teacher was not only teaching or sharing knowledge but also building good relations between class members. In the section on perceptions, the first survey method of perceptions was about anything that a multicultural teacher needs to know and be aware of about students' cultural backgrounds. The main points that a teacher needs to know exactly about cultural backgrounds are the ethnic group, mother tongue, cultural values, etc. and educational background for instance the methods of learning English, monocultural classroom or multicultural classroom, and traditionalism or constructivism, etc. The second question of perceptions was concerning whether a teacher has to be aware of students' cultural values. The lecturers agreed and the reason all teachers mentioned was that the teacher should be aware of students' cultural values to avoid conflict among each other. Meanwhile, if a teacher ignores them, students will lack the acceptance of each other. It was better to treat them equally and avoid being aggressive to students.

The appropriate guidelines for effective English teaching in a multicultural classroom were presented in the research. The first question regarded the most serious problem encountered in the multicultural classroom. The data were exposed that tended to be similar which were intercultural understanding, educational background, different cultural values, and lack of struggle of students. To solve the problem, the teacher has to create an appropriate activity dealing with intercultural communication and the best activities must expose the students to feel comfortable in learning. In the multicultural classroom, collaborative learning should be applied which is the group work containing diversity in group members. In the case

of improving English skills, lecturers must encourage students to listen to audio, speak to native speakers or classmates, read more textbooks, and write sufficient exercises. The second question pertains to the appropriate guidelines for effective English teaching strategies for the multicultural classroom. There were four exclusive strategies derived from the research consisted of acting as facilitators, supporting participation, adjusting teaching due to learners' factors, and providing group learning.

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