

Strengthening the Role of English as an International Language through Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Context of the Transformation Period of Thailand 4.0

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Abstract

Knowledge of English is one of the most important dynamic factors, indicating success in the development of human resources

การเสริมสร้างบทบาทภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ
ผ่านความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมในบริบท
ของยุคการเปลี่ยนแปลงของประเทศไทย 4.0

according to the Thailand 4.0 economic model launched as a National Strategy by the Thai government (Buasuwan, 2018). Preparing Thai students for its conditions is essential, and teachers as primary knowledge facilitators are vital actors enabling this success. This article aims to raise an awareness of native and non-native English speaking teachers regarding the role of English as an international language (EIL) as a vital instrument in intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and to propose some pedagogical implications based on the integration of EIL and ICC concepts in English classes which could help equip both teachers and students with the knowledge about the varieties of English used globally. Thus, it is hoped that the preparation suggested in the article will equip native and non-native English teachers as autonomous practitioners who are capable of both re-conceptualizing the practical purposes for English in the Thailand 4.0 model and implementing the changes that suit the teaching context.

Keywords: English as an international language, Global English, Language pluricentricity, Intercultural communicative competence, Thailand 4.0

Introduction

English is increasingly significant as a means of communication worldwide. This fact underlines the important role of English as an international language (EIL). Regarding its role in the globalization era, the status of English is shifted from being a standard language used by a norm of English-speaking countries into an international language used by a wide variety of speakers globally (Llurda, 2017). In regard to its status, English is one of the most important dynamic factors indicating success in developing human resources following the Thailand 4.0 scheme announced in the National Strategy of the Thai government (Buasuwan, 2018). As Thailand 4.0 scheme aims at developing the country to a high-income or “Valued Based Economy”, English competency is considered crucial for Thais to compete with others (Barr et al., 2020).

English has played a pivotal role in Thai education since King Rama V in 1871 (Darasawang, 2007). It is important as the first foreign language which is a mandatory course at all educational levels (Padermprach, 2017). Despite 12 years of learning English since kindergarten or primary school, the English proficiency of some Thai students is lower than that of the people in some other Asian countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, India, and the Philippines (Wiriyachitra, 2002, as cited in Noom-Ura, 2013). This is consistent with the results of Thailand’s TOEFL scores, which are the lowest when compared to those of Thailand’s regional

neighbors (Khaopa, 2013). Furthermore, it is found that English proficiency is one of the weaknesses of Thai graduates (Marukatat, 2012). The results of the proficiency test reveal some failures or problems of teaching and learning English in Thailand.

There may be many factors leading to failure in teaching and learning English. These challenges include class size, Thai teachers' lack of pedagogical experience, low English proficiency and insufficient education, accents of English native speakers, mismatches between teaching and learning styles, students' low motivation due to unnecessary use in daily life, and students' lack of opportunity of language use, textbooks, the ineffective education curriculum and policy, and the dominance of the English language examination (Baker, 2012; Bancha, 2010, Padermprach, 2017).

In addition to the aforementioned factors, it is inevitable to raise the issue of inadequate knowledge of EIL and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) of Thai learners, which are another cause of unsuccessful communication. Following the changing status of English from English as a foreign language (EFL) to EIL, native English models should not be the linguistic reference norm (Kirkpatrick 2018; Si 2019). However, English instruction still focuses on native-speaking model English or English as a native speaker language (ENL) in Thailand (Kuo, 2006) because native speaker-based pedagogy has been adopted and

publicly announced to be used in education by the Thai government (Basic Education Core Curriculum, 2008). Seidlhofer (2001) argued that “the daily practices of most of the millions of teachers of English worldwide seemed to remain untouched by ELF developments” (p. 134). Lack of awareness of the roles of English as lingua franca (ELF) or EIL can cause difficulties for Thai learners who are only familiar with standard English (Nuamthanom-Kimura & Kanprachar, 2015).

In international communication, relying only on linguistic competence including syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation is inadequate. According to Acar (2007), “communication is inseparable from culture” (p.13). Foreign language learning does not only include linguistic competence, but also the knowledge of the target language culture (Nuamthanom-Kimura & Kanprachar, 2015). In communicating with people from multicultural backgrounds, it is common to encounter difficulties or miscommunication. Studies also reveal that a lack of consideration in integrating intercultural communication or sociocultural knowledge can cause frustration and failure as a result of mismatches between the teachers’ and learners’ roles and expectations (Padermprach, 2017; Xiao, 2006). Some of the problems found reveal that teachers need good knowledge of intercultural communication (Padermprach, 2017), resulting in a better quality of teaching and in a proper match between teaching and learning English. To minimize the

challenges, integrating culture in English language instruction is vital as the knowledge of intercultural communicative competence can facilitate people from different backgrounds or languages to interact successfully (Funghomchoei & Kardkarnklai, 2016; Vo, 2017).

Even though cultures of native English and non-native English speakers have been indicated in the Thai curriculum, a lack of integration of cultures into English courses is found (Sitthitikul, & Prapinwong, 2020). The Basic Education Core curriculum specifies that students are required to learn English culture (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2008). Under the area of Language and Culture, “Thai learners should be able to compare and explain similarities and differences between the lifestyles and culture of native speakers and those of Thais” (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2008, p. 273). This shows that teaching English involves Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) development which includes both linguistic and cultural competence. However, there is no performance indicator in the curriculum that specifies the interrelationship between language and culture; as a result, teachers often teach language and culture separately in their syllabi and their classroom teaching practices (Sitthitikul, & Prapinwong, 2020). Thus, the foreign language curriculum should be designed to combine cultural and linguistic components to enable language

learners to become effective communicators (Karabinar & Guler, 2013).

Another issue involves the notion of native speakerism and ownership of the English language. The standards indicate that learners appreciate the relationship between the language and culture of a native speaker. This issue is related to the meaning of native speakerism and whose linguistic and cultural version we should adopt as there is an issue of awareness of teaching varieties of English that has been raised in many parts of the world (Ahn, 2014; Bernaisch, 2012). This occurrence causes the argument of a paradigm shift from EFL perspectives to ELF which serves the communicative needs of the global and local contexts (Nomnian, 2013; Suwannasom, 2016). Therefore, the multilingual model of English or EIL should be promoted to reduce the emphasis on a native/non-native dichotomy (Suwannasom, 2016).

In the transforming era to Thailand 4.0, English instruction is considered one of the key factors driving the agricultural farming country into a high-income nation (Barr et al., 2020). Thailand 4.0 refers to a policy vision for the economic development of Thailand or the government's economic development model of a "Value-Based Economy" or technology-based economy (Kohpaiboon, 2020). Thailand 4.0 is related to the fourth industrial revolution as Thailand has launched economic policies of Thailand 1.0 focusing on agriculture, Thailand 2.0 with an emphasis on light manufacturing,

and Thailand 3.0 aiming to promote heavy industry (Jones & Pimdee, 2017). Thailand 4.0 is characterized as a digitized integrated business and social system and advanced infrastructure. These policies range from industrial policies for structural transformation, incentives and support for ICT adoption, programs to re-skill and re-train workers, and the state of e-government. In short, Thailand 4.0 agenda is an economic model based on creativity, innovation, new technology, and high-quality services (Bussi & Khatiwada, 2017). Regarding this requirement, it is essential for education to be up to international standards (Luanpasitsakul & Intarak, 2021).

Thailand 4.0 consists of four main objectives. The first objective is related to economic prosperity. It aims to build a value-based economy that is powered by the invention, technology, and creativity. The second objective is to promote social well-being which lessens social inequality. Third, it involves developing human values which aim to make Thais become competent in skills and knowledge of the 21st century and Thailand 4.0. One of the emphasizing skills is communication skills in the foreign language or English in particular. The final objective is pertaining to environmental protection with the aim to develop the nation into a habitable society with a low-carbon and a good climate (Royal Thai Embassy, Washington D.C.).

According to the Thailand 4.0 policy, one of the characteristics of Thai graduates that will drive the nation to become internationalized is to possess characteristics of 21st-century knowledge and skills (Luanpasitsakul & Intarak, 2021). English is one of the characteristics of Thailand 4.0 (Rochanasak et al., 2019) as English is one of the soft-skills that are pivotal for Thailand 4.0 and global competitiveness (Macaro et al., 2018). Following only the English of native English speakers; thus, is inadequate, and EIL instruction should be provided to prepare Thai learners to familiarize themselves with Global Englishes (Franceschi & Vettorel, 2017). In addition, the demand underpins the significantly related roles of the awareness of cultural differences to promote successful communication (Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnklai, 2016). As a result, it is essential for English teachers to be aware of its significance and to equip students with intercultural communicative competence (Siriparnich & Yusoff, 2018; Soe, 2018; Vo, 2017).

This article thus suggests some implications focusing on integrating the concepts of EIL and ICC in English classrooms to enhance effective communication and to serve Thailand 4.0 purposes. This paper is first going to 1) describe the concepts of EFL and EIL and intercultural communication, then 2) how intercultural communicative competence is related to EIL in Thailand 4.0, and finally to 3) propose some pedagogical implications based on the integration of EIL and ICC concepts.

2. English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

To understand the circumstances of English instruction in Thailand, it is important to understand how EIL differs from EFL. In Thailand, English is viewed as a foreign language because Thai is used as an official language throughout the country, and Thailand is categorized as one of the countries in the expanding circle according to Kachru (1990). However, regarding the important role of English, it is the sole foreign language requiring all Thai students to study at every educational level (Ministry of Education, 2001 as cited in Bancha, 2010). As English is not an official language used in the country, it is undoubtedly that many Thai students do not have opportunities to use it in daily life. This factor is one of the critical causes of failure in learning English in Thailand (Wiriyachitra, 2002 in Noom-Ura, 2013).

According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008), English is taught as a foreign language following the native speaker norms. English education in Thailand follows the native English speaking norm or native speaker based pedagogies that are Britishized or Americanized (Prabjandee, 2020; Rajprasit & Marlina, 2019). English teachers are obligated to follow the government's policies and curriculum, it is inevitable that they embrace the native English language teaching model, which has been established and deemed appropriate (Jindapitak, 2019).

Furthermore, the purpose of English instruction is to achieve native speaking ability, which encourages Thai students to speak English as they are expected to achieve the native speakers' competence. These conceptions have influenced how Thai teachers practice and have led Thai students to believe that British or American English is the only acceptable standard English (Kalra & Thanavisuth, 2018). Furthermore, these conceptions have formed teachers' and students' beliefs of the ideal native-like pronunciation or accent (Sung, 2013; Takagishi, 2012), and some even view that other non-native English speaking accents are considered low prestige (Li, 2009). Attaining a native like competence goal is very difficult and only a few can do it (Cook, 2002 in Bancha, 2019). This is another factor causing a lack of confidence in Thai students' English speaking (Bancha, 2010).

In contrast to EFL, Matsuda (2017) conceptualized EIL as “English performs in international, multilingual contexts, to which each speaker brings a variety of English that they are most familiar with, along with their own cultural frame of reference, and employs various strategies to communicate effectively” (p. xii). English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) therefore refers to English used by any speakers of different first languages as a means of communication. These two terms of EIL and ELF were used interchangeably in this article.

Regarding its definitions, the fundamental goal of EIL is to facilitate intercultural dialogues among English users, not to reach native-like interactions. English is mostly used by non-native English speakers. It does not belong to native English speakers, but rather to all English users. As suggested by Jenkins (2006), accents do not lead to interactional issues, interlocutors with different accents can make mutual understandings with communicative strategies. Therefore, the ultimate goal of EIL instruction is not to produce native-like English speakers, but to become multilingual users (Franceschi & Vettorel, 2017; Jenkins, 2011). Moreover, mistakes in EIL are viewed as the product of poor communication skills rather than errors or a lack of language skills (Jenkins, 2011).

Most importantly, EIL underlines the concept of native English which should not be the major focus or goal of English language teaching (ELT). Native English Speaking (NES) norms could be utilized as a reference, but not as ELT goals (Franceschi & Vettorel, 2017). English should be related to learners' contexts (Baker, 2016; Byram et al., 2016). Content and materials for instruction, thus, should reflect or relate to learners' real-life situations and multicultural contexts (Alptekins, 2002; Jindapitak & Boonsuk, 2018).

Concisely, Jenkins (2011) summarizes the distinctive features between EIL and EFL. First, EIL is a part of the global Englishes paradigm, in which all Englishes are viewed as unique. In contrast, EFL is a part of the modern foreign language paradigm, in which learning English is the same as learning other foreign languages, and the goal of learning is to reach the native-English-speaker-like. Second, while differences from native English norm is considered a legitimate variation in EIL, they are always considered errors in EFL. Third, regarding deficit perspectives, EIL considers it as “contact and evolution” whereas EFL views it as “interference and fossilization”. Fourth, code-switching is acceptable as “bilinguals’ pragmatic strategies”, but it is considered “gaps in knowledge” in EFL.

Several academics have proposed several ideas for promoting language pluricentricity (see Charles, 2007; Swan, 2012; Wang & Jenkins, 2016). Dewey (2012, p. 163) advises educators to emphasize the environment and socio-cultural context of World Englishes, to increase exposure to varieties of English around the world, to engage language learners in critical discussion about English diversity, to pay less attention to ENL as norms and not to punish learners who make mistakes, and to emphasize communication. Similarly, Kirkpatrick (2012) proposes four pedagogical goals: 1) shifting from native speaker competence idealization to varieties of English, 2) promoting content related

to regional and local cultural contexts rather than native English speakers' culture, 3) increasing critical discussion relating to learners' cultures and interests, and 4) adding listening materials engaging a variety of learners.

















Despite the fact that English has been shifted to EIL, which is used by the majority of non-native English speakers, ELT in Thailand emphasizes primarily native English speakers and English standard norms, which is insufficient to educate English learners for global English. To prepare English learners for World Englishes and desirable English skills, it is essential to reconsider integrating the concept of EIL into ELT. How to integrate the concept of EIL in English classes will be discussed after ICC section.

3. Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Communicating interculturally is crucial in a diverse society, and particularly in the society of Thailand 4.0 (Fourth Industrial Revolution). It has been defined as the era in which the concept of "Value-Based Economy," emphasizes innovation, technology, creativity, and trade in services (Start Up in Thailand, 2020). This economic model has driven the country towards global competition. Under this circumstance, possessing strong foreign languages skills is essential for the Thailand 4.0 era as a means to serve the government's 4.0 policy (Rochanasak et al., 2019). In this manner,

Thailand 4.0 is a significant reason for interconnectedness within the context of cultural diversity through numerous channels and platforms, which can be a great support in enhancing EIL through the intercultural Thailand 4.0 model.

Intercultural challenges have arisen in the Thailand 4.0 model. There are two primary pillars for Thailand 4.0; (1) building strength from the inside: innovation-driven processes, entrepreneur-focused positions, and community-driven propositions; and (2) creating a greater bond with the rest of the world, i.e. better connect with the regional and global economy (Kankaew, 2019). In order to reach the success of the Thailand 4.0's policy, it needs human capital with 21st century knowledge and skills as crucial components for the success of the policy. Casner-Lotto and Barrington (2006) describe these 21st century skills as a skill set that is important not only for education but also for work and other aspects of life. In addition, NECTEC (2020) defines 21st-Century skills as a new form of education that are not meant for examination, but require both knowledge and adroitness in order to be used in life. As the World Economic Forum (WEF) has concretized the 21st skill set below:

21 st -Century Skill		
Fundamental Literacies	Competencies	Charactor Qualities
 Literacy	 Critical Thinking / Problem Solving	 Curiosity
 1234 Numeracy	 Creativity	 Initiative
 Scientific Literacy	 Communication	 Persistence / Grit
 ICT Literacy	 Collaboration	 Adaptability
 Financial Literacy		 Leadership
 Cultural and Civic Literacy		 Social and Cultural Awareness
Source: World Economic Forum, New Vision for Education modified by MITT		

Cited from <https://www.nectec.or.th/news/news-pr-news/21st-centuryskills.html>

The chart shows that there are three main 21st Century Skill sets that are essential for human competence; particularly in the Thailand 4.0 model. For instance, cultural and civic literacy in the Fundamental Literacies, 4Cs in the Competencies category as well as in the last category that consists of adaptability, social and cultural awareness, characteristics which are obviously related to intercultural communication. Accordingly, intercultural communicative competence is necessary in leading the Thailand 4.0 model toward success.

The concept of intercultural communication was first introduced in 1954 by G. Trager and E.T. Hall in the research of “Culture and Communication: Model of Analysis”. The “intercultural

communication” in this study is defined as an ideal goal of individuals that should pursue their desires in order to adjust and adapt to the outside world around them more effectively (Makhmudov, 2020). After Trager & Hall (1954), definitions of intercultural communication have been spelled out by many scholars. In general, it refers to the exchange of information and the process of interaction between people who share different cultural backgrounds in communication (Jackson, 2014; Klyukanov, 2020; Samovar et al., 2012). Therefore, intercultural communication can be simply referred to as how culture affects communication and results in different communicative behaviors of each cultural group.

According to Martin & Nakayama (2021), intercultural communication emphasizes differences among cultural groups. The concept of intercultural communication has been studied through many theoretical models. One of the most influential and widely known models is the five cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede (1980) and Hofstede and Bond (1988), which demonstrates significant impact on communicative behaviour for all cultures in the multicultural world. The model represents the differences between countries: individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and long-term orientation (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede and Bond, 1988).

Additionally, in 2010, the indulgence-restraint dimension was added as the final dimension within the theme of happiness (National Culture, 2022). Besides, Hall (1977) divided cultures into high-context cultures and low-context cultures. This model provides knowledge and understanding about learning in cultures by comparing communication style and behavior of each cultural group. This cultural model leads to a better understanding of interactions in each communication setting. Accordingly, differences between cultural groups greatly encourage people to learn and understand cultural patterns, communicative behaviour, thoughts, beliefs, norms, and values that people cherish.

Indicatively, cultural differences in communication styles can be understood discernibly through the dimensions of cultural difference between high – and low – context cultures. Both language and nonverbal communication are combined in communication styles. People in high-context cultures tend to use an indirect style of verbal expression. Information is delivered through gestures, the use of space, and even silence; people place a large emphasis on nonverbal codes. In contrast, communication of low-context cultures, tends to be direct and explicit. Much information is conveyed in words rather than in nonverbal cues. People in these cultures feel uncomfortable with

silence (Hall, 1977). Pointedly, Samovar & Porter (2001) indicate that “when cultures differ, communication practices also differ” (p. 31). This reflects the recognition of the influence of culture on communicative behavior. Hence, the study of intercultural communication provides people with the necessary knowledge and dynamic skills for handling cultural differences effectively and efficiently (Liu et al., 2015). Significantly, intercultural settings also pave the way for people to understand and gain knowledge from the exchange of experience and perspective between people in communication.

Regarding the context of foreign language education, culture plays a significant role as an inseparable part of the language (Byram, 1997). In learning a foreign or second language, knowing and understanding the target culture helps in enhancing language competence. Zhou & Griffiths (2011) assert that it is generally accepted that learning a foreign language or a second language does not imply academic study alone. Instead, language learning focuses on learning how to communicate more appropriately. Accordingly, language is a key element in intercultural communication, either in a face to face or in an online situation, as more people are on the move and changes happen rapidly in technological connectivity (Martin & Nakayama, 2021).

Apart from intercultural communication, knowledge of ICC is also essential in effective communication. Gardner (1962) stresses

the importance of ICC as “it involves knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures” (p. 243). Byram & Zarate (1997) view ICC as a concept that involves key components as “knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others’ values, beliefs, and behaviors, and relativizing one’s self. Linguistic competence plays a key role” (p. 34). Pointedly, ICC deliberates language teaching and places importance on the ability to interact with people of different countries and cultures in a foreign language (Byram, 1997). Furthermore, Wilberschied (2015) defines ICC as the ability to “manage interactions of a greater variety and complexity as a result of self-study, foreign language proficiency, and analysis of one’s own culture and that of those who speak the target language” (p. 3). The concept of ICC, therefore, can be described as an individual’s ability, competence, skill and attitude in communicating interculturally by using effective and appropriate interaction towards people from different cultural backgrounds in intercultural and multilingual contexts.

In conclusion, under the Thailand 4.0 model that requires human capital with 21st Century skills, the knowledge of and competency in intercultural communication is pivotal, both to the teachers who promote and foster intercultural studies by having appropriate pedagogies, and to the students who become

active practitioners of this knowledge in their lives by performing well in both local and international contexts.

4. Integration of EIL and ICC in ELT in Thailand 4.0

It is common that adopting the concept of English in Thailand 4.0 can be a challenge because it requires an alteration in traditional thinking and conventional action (Wittayasin, 2017). Basically, the integration of EIL and ICC concepts in ELT in Thailand 4.0 can pose some challenges to both students and teachers who have adopted and followed the standard ENL for a long time. Thai students are familiar with and have been cultivated through the ideal norm of British or American English, especially in regard to pronunciation as found in the study conducted by Kalra & Thanavisuth (2018) showing that Thai university students still overvalue a native-like accent. Regarding teachers who are key facilitators, adjusting their perceptions is one of the major challenges. Besides their perceptions, Thai teachers find integrating ICC knowledge in English classes problematic as they do not know what activities can be used to promote students' ICC in English classes (Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak, 2017). Without their awareness-raising, teachers' instructional practices remain the same (Borg & Sanchez, 2020), and equipping them with the knowledge of EIL and ICC is crucial.

Even though adopting EIL in ELT is still problematic and debatable (Jenkins, 2005, 2011), and there are no educational policies regarding EIL announced by the Thai Ministry of Education (Baker, 2012), this article supports the continuation of the introduction of native English norm with the integration of EIL and ICC concepts. The following describes how the concept of EIL and ICC can be put into actual practice in English language teaching to promote English in Thailand 4.0.

The first instance is related to the implementation of authentic materials. To illustrate, a study by Hino and Oda (2015) implemented authentic real-time materials to teach English to Japanese university students and the study shows positive results in English learning. Studies (such as Matsuda, 2002; Song, 2013; Ugurlu & Songül, 2020) show that most commercial textbooks reflected a mono-cultural approach or contained contents relevant to native English-speaking countries which are only about Anglo-European characters and texts. Implementing authentic online updated materials relating to local and global contexts, such as English in news, magazines, websites, and radio shows can foster students' understanding of how English speakers from outside the inner circle (native English speakers) use the language and familiarize them with real World Englishes, and it makes Thai learners able to explain issues related to their nation. In the

meantime, pointing out how cultures of particular contexts are reflected or embedded in the situations could enable learners to have a clear understanding of the interrelated connection between the language and cultures. Cultural awareness and language learning can give greater proficiency to learners (Byram, 1997).

The second example is pertaining to choosing topics related to real life. For example, Bowen et al. (2014) had students read the authentic materials relating to advice columns from the Internet and had them listen to the real radio show to raise students' awareness of how speakers of non-inner-circle countries use English and familiarize themselves with real World Englishes. Students can practice interacting in English using authentic contents related to their life of cultures and cultures of the target language such as greetings, forms of address, thanking, negotiating, etc. Teachers may ask students to create role-play situations or teachers may provide some debatable issues for them to analyze and discuss to see their attitudes of EIL or how they deal with communicative problems through conversations. This promotes the awareness of EIL and allows teachers to examine linguistic competence and ICC at the same time.

Apart from topics related to their life, topics of current issues relating to information technology, innovation, and business technology should be incorporated into EIL classes. As one of the

purposes of Thailand 4.0 is to drive the economy of the country through innovation, technology, and creativity, having students read, listen, speak, and write about the aforementioned issues of Thailand and other countries will prepare them to be able to understand and use proper English vocabulary and terms in their life and future careers in the period of Thailand 4.0 effectively. To illustrate this point, teachers may have students read a passage about the digital business of other countries and international business etiquette that students should know to equip them to work or deal with business people in other countries. Fostering these contents can promote global English, ICC knowledge, and preparation of Thai learners for Thailand 4.0 at the same time. ICC knowledge helps enhance mutual understanding between different cultures; consequently, it makes them aware of the similarities or differences between their own culture and others'. Then Thai learners will be more aware of potential mistakes or inappropriateness of verbal or non-verbal languages when communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds in the transforming era of Thailand 4.0.

The third implication engages accents, pronunciation, and intonation. Introducing a variety of English accents, especially one of the ASEAN countries is recommended. Instead of having students practice listening to English by American, British, Australian, and New Zealand only, teachers may have students

listen to English spoken by Indians and Chinese whose population is a majority of the world population. Besides, the English used by people in ASEAN countries should be used as supplementary audio materials that EIL teachers implement in classes as one of the main aims of Thailand 4.0 is to promote the economy with ASEAN countries, especially the project of Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) that connects the economy of mainland Southeast Asia, and the Asia Pacific region, Indian Ocean Rim and beyond (Department of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 2020). The implementation of authentic listening and speaking materials created by non-native English speakers (such as broadcasts, advertisements, and TV shows) helps students to be familiar with a variation of English.

Besides the accent, what teachers always emphasize in class is pronunciation. Teachers may introduce the sounds or core features that can lead to miscommunication. For instance, many Thai students have difficulties producing this sound / ʃ / in shop, shopping, and shoes, and they tend to pronounce them with / tʃ / in chop and champ. However, it does not affect the intelligibility between interlocutors in communication. Apart from pronunciation, intonation might be another aspect that teachers may point out. For instance, Singaporean English has different intonation from English intonation, but it is easy to understand (Lim, 2000, as cited in Nordquist, 2020). As a result, teachers and

students should be aware that some pronunciation issues (such as stressed or unstressed syllables) or intonation can be overlooked as long as they do not affect international intelligibility or communication breakdown (Jenkins, 2005). Unlike the aforementioned examples, some problematic sounds should be focused on, such as juice /dʒuːs/ which many Thai students pronounce as /dʒui/ and swap /swɒp/ which is pronounced as /swæp/. Without preparation, it will be difficult for students to understand other World Englishes which eventually cause a lack of confidence in communication.

The fourth implication involves teaching grammar. Studies by Kirkpatrick (2008, 2010) observed English grammatical features used by non-native English speakers in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These features include the omission of articles, of -s or -es in plural forms, of -s in verbs of the third singular subjects (he, she, it), of modal verbs, and time expression, and the incorrect use of prepositions, of question tags and of subject-verb agreement. His studies show that interlocutors of non-native English speakers avoid complicated grammatical structures which mean their goal is to achieve mutual understandings even though their English does not meet the standard of the English native speaker norm. In a classroom, teachers may introduce the grammar following the norm English as it is necessary for students to know it for international standardized

proficiency tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS, and TOEIC; however, both teachers and students should be aware that minor grammatical errors can be ignored as long as they do not affect international intelligibility of communication breakdown (Jenkins, 2005).

The fifth implication involves the assessment. Byram (2000) recommends ways of assessment such as using online portfolios and self-assessment. What teachers can do is to ask students to reflect their opinions on diaries, portfolios, or essays. Assessment of teachers' awareness of EIL and ICC may be carried out in the same way. Self-reflection can show how people think or evaluate themselves and indirectly make them aware of how they perceive things. With this assessment, teachers can examine if students can use English to express their opinions or attitudes towards ICC based on EIL concepts. Apart from the assessment methods, assessment rubrics need to be discussed. It seems impractical not to take English native norm at all as grammar knowledge tested following ENL (Jenkins, 2011). Teachers, therefore, may consider lowering some scores for the mistakes that cause intelligibility and ignore minor mistakes if they do not cause miscommunication.

The final implication concerns a provision of a variety of language tasks. In order to promote internationalization for Thailand 4.0 and foster intercultural communicative competence in EIL classes, teachers may employ different speaking activities such

as comparison method, cultural capsule, and role play (Reid, 2015) which could promote awareness of their local cultures and global cultures and promote their confidence of the target language used in communication. The comparison method is used to develop socio-cultural knowledge, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and non-verbal competencies for learners (Reid, 2015). An instance of this method is that teachers may choose topics that are related to students' life including school routine, courses, length of classes, school uniform, assignments, and behaviors in the classroom. Then the teachers may have students work in groups to discuss by comparing practices in their country and other countries. Similar to the previous method, the cultural capsule technique is implemented to encourage students to be aware of cultural differences between two cultures. For instance, teachers may have students work in teams and then compare the main meal of their country with other countries'.

Another method is role-playing. It is considered a very effective approach for learning English or foreign languages as it allows learners to practice real-life situations. Teachers may have students acts in different roles, such as businessman and clients who are negotiating for their e-commerce. After students have done the role-play, teachers may extend the activities by having them discuss or share their opinions focusing on cultures of their

local country and other countries or digital business and normal business.

Nevertheless, there are many other approaches that have been implemented in teaching culture in English classes apart from the techniques mentioned above. These can be a great means to help learners to know themselves and their own culture well; meanwhile, the techniques also equip learners to understand and be aware of cultural differences and promote themselves to be more effective intercultural communicators. Furthermore, developing the competence of intercultural communication for learners is considered a life-long learning process, which is related to the process of gaining knowledge and learning new skills throughout learners' lives which is also one of the skills that are required of Thai graduates in Thailand 4.0. The implementation in learning and teaching should be designed and focused on lifelong learning activities. This can definitely help students become successful intercultural communicators and life-long learners, which are suitable for global candidates for Thailand 4.0 era.

5. Conclusion

EIL and ICC are key elements promoting Thai learners to become competent as required in Thailand 4.0. To encourage

Thai learners to become internationalized and competent in the global competitiveness and Thailand 4.0, it is essential to teach them EIL and ICC. In international communication, it is common for English users to express themselves differently, and to have some language/communication features that most people would consider normal could be offensive and disrespectful for others. Thus, being aware of different cultural features is pivotal because the knowledge of ICC can help prevent miscommunication and problems that might occur. Apart from the knowledge of ICC, the awareness of EIL in the present world will help prepare students to be able to communicate effectively and cope well with people from other parts of the world, especially in the transformation of Thailand 4.0. For all these reasons, it is obvious that the integration of EIL and the knowledge of ICC are essential for Thai graduates to deal with global competitiveness in Thailand 4.0 era.

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