

Raising the interculturally-oriented ELF awareness of EFL teachers in Thai universities

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Introduction



Acronym soup

- TESOL
- EFL
- ELF
- ASEAN
- IC



Outline

Part I: ASEAN and Thai policy documents

Part II: The EFL and ELF paradigms

Part III: The existing classroom orientation

Part IV: From analysis to teacher education possibilities

What is ASEAN?



- The Association of South East Asian Nations (the ASEAN region)
- Founded in 1967
- “regional cooperation in Southeast Asia in the spirit of equality and partnership and thereby contribute towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region” (the ASEAN Vision 2020)
- Motto: "One Vision, One Identity, One Community."



Part I: ASEAN Policy documents

“To promote an ASEAN identity through the fostering of greater awareness of the diverse culture and heritage of the region”

(Article 1, Paragraph 14, ASEAN Charter).

“Respect for the different cultures, languages and religions of the peoples of ASEAN, while emphasizing their common values in the spirit of unity in diversity”

(Article 2, Paragraph (I), ASEAN Charter).

ASEAN direction in terms of language and communication

“The working language of ASEAN shall be English.”

(Article 34, ASEAN Charter)

xviii. Support the citizens of Member States to become *proficient in the English language*, so that the citizens of the ASEAN region are able to communicate directly with one another and participate in the broader international community

(Actions for Advancing and prioritising education, The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint)

The Strategies of Thai Higher Education for the Preparation for the ASEAN Community in 2015

“ประสบการณ์การศึกษาในสภาพแวดล้อมนานาชาติและทักษะในการติดต่อสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรมเป็นคุณลักษณะที่พึงประสงค์ของบัณฑิตในตลาดแรงงานในประเทศและระหว่างประเทศ”

“experience obtained studying in an international environment and **cross-cultural communication skills** are the desirable graduate attributes in national and international labour markets” (p. 17).

“The future employment in ASEAN will require the graduates to have additional skills apart from their professional skill such as **English and other languages used in ASEAN** and **inter-cultural skill**” (p. 2).

Part II: The EFL and ELF paradigms

TESOL Paradigms in Thailand

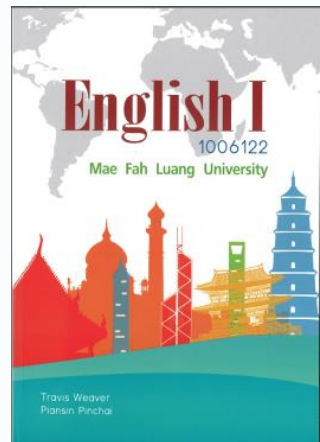
- The paradigm push and pull
- The ELF paradigm – an aspirational push in ASEAN strategic development and Thai HE curriculum documentation
- The EFL paradigm – a familiar pull for teachers

Teaching paradigms associated with the push and the pull

Aspect	EFL	ELF
Form	Standardised NSE varieties, models	Emergent forms
	Tends to be prescriptive	Tends to be descriptive
	Fluency re NSE performance	Fluency re ELF users
	Accuracy vis-à-vis NSE norms	Utility, mutual intelligibility in ELF usage
Purpose	Interaction: NNSEs \leftrightarrow NSEs	Interaction: Between whoever
	Cross-cultural (e.g. Thais-Americans)	Intercultural communication (i.e. between anybody)
	Culture specific (e.g. American food, way of life, British politeness, “face” in Thai society)	Culture general (e.g. politeness and “face” can be issues), awareness

Part III: The classroom orientation

- The university: a Thai, public university where English is used as the main medium of instruction (EMI)
- Materials: international (e.g. American Headway) and locally-produced textbooks
- *English 1* textbook with ASEAN countries theme





What we have learned from the analysis

- The elements of the push towards greater ASEAN awareness (e.g. Vietnam focus)
- ELF (Vietnamese English and culture)
- EFL (word stress, Standard English)

Let's look at what teachers think.

Excerpt 1

Kamala: Because when asked to pronounce /chill/ there was a group (of students) who said /chiw/, like what they typically do, but that is wrong and they have done it repeatedly until they do not know that it is wrong. I always tell the kids that we do not have to be "farang", but we can pronounce words correctly. Many times, we cannot get our messages across when communicating with "farang" because, although we are saying this word, "farang" do not get it because it is wrong. It is mispronounced. [pause] I really want to change this attitude. Don't be shy. Students feel shy to pronounce words correctly, to sound different from friends who are not brave to pronounce words correctly.

Interviewer: What do you mean by "correct pronunciation"?

Kamala: To know how to pronounce a word according to phonetic principles or IPA. In short, to pronounce correctly like native speakers do, but we do not have to have that (native) accent.

(Interview 1_K, coded as Pronunciation; Accuracy; NNS → NS; and Native speaker model)

Excerpt 2

Ploy: This is because on Thursday we will have a test on complex sentences, so I wanted to test their old knowledge I taught at the beginning of the term. I have taught them all the three types: simple, compound, and complex sentences. I reviewed these first before teaching relative pronouns so that they will be able to use (what they have learned). To be frank, the students did not quite get it; they did not understand anything. So, yesterday before the test, I reviewed these again before they did the test.

(Interview 19_P, coded as Grammar; Students as deficit language learners; and Examination)





Part IV: Teacher education possibilities

- The elements of the push towards the ELF paradigm and intercultural dimension from the top-down and curriculum discourse
- The elements of the pull towards the EFL paradigm from the syllabus and textbook and what teachers on the ground seem to be pre-occupied with (e.g. teaching and testing NSE norms and forms)
- To work with EFL teachers to raise their **interculturally-oriented ELF awareness**



Holmes and Dervin (2016):

“Although many aspects of the use of ELF have been researched, **interculturality seems to have been neglected, or at least discussions on interculturality in relation to ELF do not appear to be in line with current perspectives on and understandings of the term in fields** such as language education, applied linguistics, inter-/multicultural education and intercultural communication” (p.2).



Fay, Sifakis and Lytra (2016):

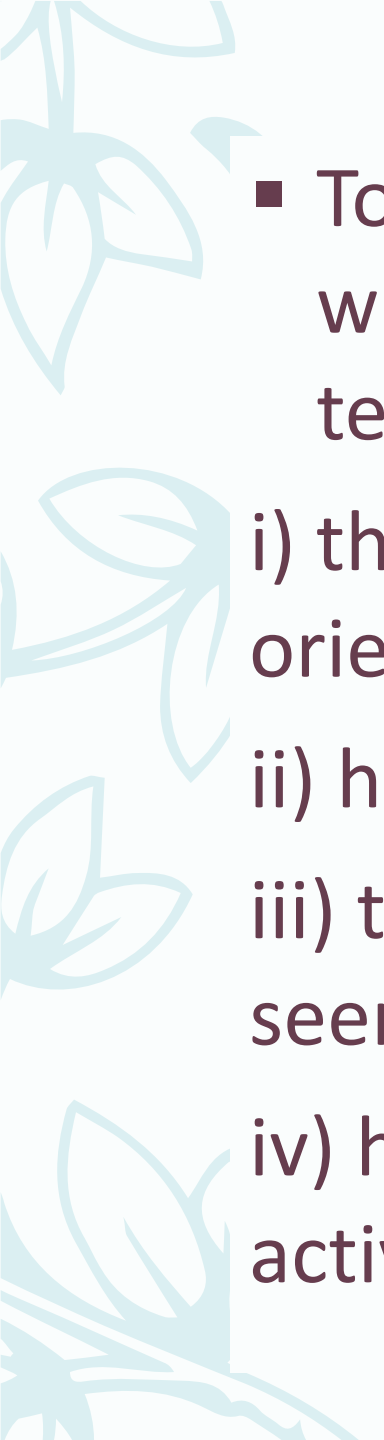
“We would agree that ELF research has tended to focus on linguistic aspects (i.e. phonology, lexis and lexico-grammar, and pragmatics) and less so on the educational and (inter)cultural aspects. However, it could be argued that the seeds for these previously under-discussed aspects were sown in part during the late 1950s in the discussions (admittedly outside the current applied linguistics home for much ELF research) of English’s function in international scientific debate” (p.50).



Bayyurt & Sifakis (2015):

“So far, a contrasting picture has emerged: on the one hand, there is a willingness to find out more about ELF and non-native speakers’ successful interaction strategies; on the other hand, there is confusion about what needs to be done to integrate the teaching of such strategies into established, EFL-bound practices [...]

What is needed is **an approach that will help teachers to appreciate (a) principles that arise from ELF research and (b) how these principles might have a bearing on their own teaching context.** Such an approach would start teachers on a reflective journey in which they think critically about established teaching practice and their convictions concerning English as a medium of communication” (pp. 119-120).

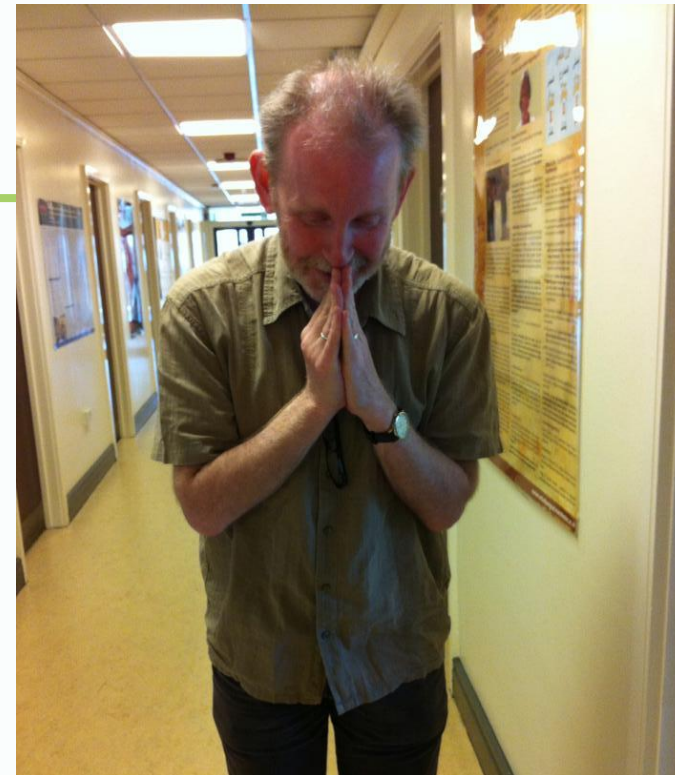
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- To set up a teacher network similar to the existing ones which will focus on helping teachers to analyse their teaching materials and become more aware of:
 - i) the aspects which resonate with the interculturally-oriented ELF;
 - ii) how these aspects might be further strengthened;
 - iii) the aspects supportive of the suggested paradigm which seem to be absent currently; and
 - iv) how they might design new materials, methods and activities to fill the gaps identified.



ขอบคุณครับ

Thank you

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References

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