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Exploring the Congruence between Teachers' and Students' Preferences for Form-Focused Instruction: Isolated or Integrated?

Mehdi Haseli Songhori
Dept. of English, Zahedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Zahedan, Iran

Bio-data

Mehdi Haseli Songhori holds an MA degree in TEFL. He is an academic staff of English department at Azad university of Zahedan, Iran. He has been teaching English for ten years in different universities and language institutes. His research interests include reading comprehension strategies, grammar teaching, and vocabulary learning.

Abstract

Learners and teachers preferences regarding language learning and teaching and the mismatch between their preferences which can be a source of problems for both learners and teachers have been of paramount importance for a couple of decades. Grammar instruction is an area of language teaching in which learners' and teachers' preferences warrant investigation. Therefore, this study explored the congruence between English students' and teachers' preferences for isolated and integrated Form-Focused Instruction (FFI). A total of 202 English students and 30 English teachers completed a 26-item and a 22-item questionnaire respectively. The items were analyzed by SPSS 16 software. The means and standard deviation of students and teachers questionnaires were calculated separately and Pearson Correlation method of analysis was employed to compare both groups. Results indicate that students and teachers preferred integrated FFI over isolated FFI. The comparison of the two groups revealed that there is a strong correlation between students and teachers concerning their preference for integrated FFI. But there seems to be a mismatch between the reality of the grammar classes and the preferences of the students and teachers which will be explained in the discussion of the study.

Keywords: Form-focused instruction (FFI), Isolated FFI, Integrated FFI

Introduction

During the long period of second and foreign language teaching, it is the recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency that learners need that leads to changes in language teaching methods (e. g. Richards & Rogers, 2001). Grammar instruction is a part of language teaching that has received much attention and has been a hot topic of controversy through the history, mainly through a couple of decades ago till today (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Ellis, 2006). English teachers as well as English learners typically realize the benefits of knowing English grammar because, to them, it is the key to understanding language and using it to communicate (Cowan, 2008). As a result of these controversies and the importance of grammar in language learning, different views, approaches and methodologies to grammar teaching have emerged for ESL/EFL teachers to choose to suit their own learners and classroom environment.

Teachers perceptions regarding the instruction of grammar is a well studied area and the best method for grammar instruction is often chosen by the teachers according to their own perceptions and preferences. As Clark and Peterson (1986) state teaching is "substantially influenced and even determined by teachers' underlying thinking (p. 255)". However, teachers quite often do not take into account the views and preferences of the learners but choose their method for teaching grammar because they believe that their method of instruction is what their students expect (Borg, 1998). The ignorance of learners' real preferences and views about grammar instruction may lead to great conflcts in the language learning milieu which in turn culminates in demotivating learners and increase of their anxiety.

A brief historical view of the importance of grammar instruction

The study of grammar has had a long and important role in the history of second language and foreign language teaching (Purpura, 2004). A glance through the last century of language teaching practices reveal that there are mixed ideas about the place of teaching language forms, depending on the method or era (Brown, 2001). Since its origins in classical Greece, the main aim of grammar teaching has been to

support the learning of literacy skills (Hudson, 2010). Until the 1970s, grammar instruction had a dominant position among language teachers and methodologists. With the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the late 1970s and early 1980s, specially in its strong form, grammar instruction became an outcast and it was suggested that teaching grammar was not only unhelpful but might actually be detrimental (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004). Nassaji and Fotos (2004) state that:

> "Continuing in the tradition of more than 2000 years of debate regarding whether grammar should be a primary focus of language instruction, should be eliminated entirely, or should be subordinated to meaning-focused use of the target language, the need for grammar instruction is once again attracting the attention of second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and teachers" (p. 126).

Grammar teaching has been and continues to be an area of some controversy (Borg & Burns, 2008; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2006; Loewen et al., 2009; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Sheen, 2002; Spada & Lightbown, 2008; van Glederen, 2010). But today very few scholars and researchers (Abu Radwan, 2005; Gil & Carazzai, 2007; Kasem, 2009; Ozkan & Kesen, 2009; Palacios Martínez, 2007; Rahimpour & Salimi, 2010; Savage et al., 2010) cast doubts on the important role played by grammar in the learning of a second language; Krashen (1982), Truscott (1996, 1998) and Prabhu (1987) can be considered as an exception to the rule. Therefore, with regard to the central role of grammar in language classes, especially in EFL milieus, the idea that second language teachers are great consumers of grammar (Bourke, 2005) denotes that teaching and learning with an emphasis on form is valuable, if not indispensable (Burgess & Etherington, 2002). As a result, the most engaging questions and debates in L2 pedagogy are no longer about whether CLT should include form-focused instruction (FFI) but rather how and when it is most effective (Ellis, 2006; Spada et al., 2009; Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Cahn & Barnard, 2009). The next section will deal with the concept of form-focused instruction.

Form-focused instruction

According to Nassaji and Fotos (2004) the idea of focus on form has been widely

advocated in the literature. Form-focused instruction, according to Ellis (2001, p. 1–2), refers to 'any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form.' Conceptualized in L2 acquisition research, form-focused instruction differs from decontextualized grammar lessons. The latter emphasizes the learning and categorizing of forms rather than relating these forms to their communicative functions and appears to have minimal effect in classrooms where learners' exposure to the L2 has been primarily message-oriented (Swain, 1996).

Lightbown (1998) suggests that isolated grammar lessons may have only minimal effects in these contexts because learners exposed to language 'instruction' separately from meaningful language 'use' are indeed more likely to learn to treat language instruction as separate from language use; this is called transfer-appropriate learning (Segalowitz, 1997). In other words, language features learned in isolated grammar lessons may be remembered in similar contexts (e.g., during a grammar test), but hard to retrieve in the context of communicative interaction. Conversely, language features noticed during communicative interaction may be more easily retrieved in communicative contexts. Accordingly, form-focused instructional activities are generally considered most effective when embedded in communicative contexts, even though the extent to which form-focused instruction must be integrated into communicative activities is still open to debate (e.g., Lightbown, 1998; Ellis, 2002).

Since the 1980s several taxonomies have been proposed as regards Form-Focused Instruction (FFI). The earliest concepts were put forward by Johnson (1982) who made a distinction between the "unificationist" and "separationist" positions on the teaching of language use and language structure. The unificationist position advocates the teaching of forms and structures first which is then followed by a communicative stage where use is taught and forms and structures are activated. On the other hand, the separationist position supports the divorce between the teaching of form and meaning.

Long (1991) proposed the concepts of "focus on form" and "focus on formS". Whereas focus on formS involves discrete grammatical forms selected and presented

in an isolated manner, focus on form involves the teacher's attempts to draw the student's attention to grammatical forms in the context of communication.

Ellis (2001) uses different terms. In his taxonomy, form-focused instruction covers "planned focus on form" and "incidental focus on form". Planned focus on form involves the use of focused tasks, i.e. communicative tasks that have been designed to elicit the use of a specific linguistic form in the context of meaning-centered language use and incidental focus-on-form involves the use of unfocused tasks, i.e. communicative tasks designed to elicit general samples of the language rather than specific forms (Ellis et al., 2002).

Doughty and Williams's (1998) "reactive focus on form" and "proactive focus on form" are yet other taxonomies. Reactive focus on form involves a responsive teaching intervention that involves occasional shifts in reaction to salient errors using devices to increase perceptual salience. On the other hand, the proactive focus on form involves making "an informed prediction or carrying out some observations to determine the learning problem in focus" (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p. 208).

The most recent concepts pertaining to form-focused instruction are "isolated FFI" and "integrated FFI" put forward by Spada and Lightbown (2008). Isolated FFI is provided in activities that are separate from the communicative use of language. In integrated FFI, the learners' attention is drawn to language forms during communicative or content-based instruction (Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

Learners' and teachers' beliefs on grammar instruction

Learners' and teachers' beliefs and views on grammar instruction are of paramount importance in the field of language learning. Horowitz (1990) claims that there often exists incongruence in perception between students and teachers on the use of grammar which may result in negative effects. An awareness of this incongruence is important in understanding conflicts that could result in lack of motivation or anxiety (Kern, 1995). Phipps and Borg (2009) say that an extensive literature on teachers' beliefs exists in relation to language teaching and grammar instruction but "… there exists a gap in the literature as regards students' perceptions on this important topic"

(Pazaver & Wong, 2009, p. 27). The following is a review of the related literature on the teachers' and student's perceptions and beliefs on grammar instruction.

Burgess and Etherington (2002) attempted to identify the attitudes of 48 teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in British universities to grammar instruction. The findings indicated that these teachers considered that grammar was important for their learners, and they favored discourse-based approaches, rather than decontextualized presentation of grammar items, with an inclination towards the use of authentic, full texts and real-life tasks for practice. The authors claim that the use of texts, rather than isolated structures, to introduce grammatical features suggests a tendency for these teachers to adopt an approach based on focus on form principles.

Loewen et al. (2009) investigated several underlying factors regarding learners' beliefs about grammar instruction and corrective feedback. The results indicated that among learners studying English as a second language and those studying a foreign language, there were varied beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction. For instance, learners had a general view of the efficacy or usefulness of grammar instruction. However, some learners held negative views of grammar instruction and still others prioritized communication over grammar. In this research different target language groups expressed different beliefs which may be accounted for, in large part, by their previous language learning contexts.

Pointing out various gaps between teachers' and learners' beliefs on foreign language learning, Peacock (1998) found that learners were much more in favor of error correction and grammar exercises than their instructors. Peacock concluded that there is a high probability that this has a negative effect not only on the learners' progress but also on their satisfaction with the class and their confidence in their teachers.

Regarding the students' and teachers' views on error correction and the role of grammar instruction in a foreign language setting, Schulz's (1996) study revealed that many students have a more favorable attitude towards grammar instruction than their teachers. The students also believed that in order to master a language, it was necessary to study grammar. On the other hand, more teachers than students believed

that it was better to practice language in simulated real life situations than to study grammatical forms explicitly.

Schulz (2001) has also explored learners' and teachers' perceptions concerning the explicit grammar instruction and corrective feedback in EFL learning. She found out that although there was relatively high agreement between students and teachers on most questions, a number of discrepancies were evident between students' and teachers' beliefs. She concludes that it is important for the teachers to explore their students perceptions regarding those factors believed to enhance the learning of a new language and attempt to tackle the potential conflicts between student beliefs and instructional practices.

Phipps and Borg (2009) explored the tensions in the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three practicing teachers of English working in Turkey. Drawing on the distinction between core and peripheral beliefs, results of their study indicate that while at one level teachers' practices in teaching grammar were at odds with specific beliefs about language learning, at another level, these same practices were consistent with a more generic set of beliefs about learning. The latter, it is hypothesized, constituted the teachers' core beliefs and it was these, rather than the more peripheral beliefs about language learning, that were most influential in shaping teachers' instructional decisions.

Borg and Burns (2008) examined the beliefs and practices of teachers about the integration of grammar and skills teaching. Teachers expressed strong beliefs in the need to avoid teaching grammar in isolation and reported high levels of integration of grammar in their practices.

Pertaining to learners' perceptions; Palacios Martinez's (2007) paper deals with the investigation of the views of English majors on grammar teaching with the purpose of implementing the existing program at the University of Santiago. The results of this study indicate that students see value in the study of grammar although they are more in line with practical, descriptive and functional approaches rather than with theoretical, prescriptive and formal perspectives to language.

Research questions

Research in second language learning suggests that learners' and teachers' preferences for instructional approaches warrant investigation. While some research has been carried out to investigate second and foreign language learners' views about grammar instruction and corrective feedback, none of them has specifically investigated preferences for isolated or integrated FFI (Spada et al., 2009). Thus, the following research questions are proposed to explore, in more detail, the preferences of learners and teachers for isolated FFI and integrated FFI.

1. Which type of FFI is preferred by English students: Isolated or integrated?
2. Which type of FFI is preferred by English teachers: Isolated or integrated?
3. Is there any congruence between the students' and teachers' preferences as regards isolated FFI and integrated FFI?

The method

Participants

The participants of this study were two groups. The first group was 202 English major students at Islamic Azad university of Zahedan. The participants were 150 female (74.3%) and 52 male (25.7%) students who were studying English for various years at university. In Iran students enter the university with about six years of English learning background at school, starting from the second grade of junior high school and ending in the fourth grade of senior high school. The participants' English level ranged from the beginner to the intermediate and their age from 18 to 42. The second group was 30 English teachers teaching at universities in Zahedan. Forty percent of the English teachers were female and sixty percent were male. The participants in the second group included lecturers (83.3% of the participants), who held MA degrees, and professors (16.7% of the participants), who held PhD degrees.

Instrument

The research was mainly quantitative in design, using a questionnaire to survey English teachers' and students' preferences about isolated and integrated grammar

instruction. Two questionnaires, based on Spada, Barkaoui, Peters, So, and Valeo (2009) were used to gather the data. The first section of each questionnaire included questions related to the participants' demographic information and the second section took the form of a Likert-type scale with responses to statements made on a 1–5 scale of strong disagreement to strong agreement. Students' questionnaire consisted of 26 items of which 14 were related to integrate FFI and 12 pertained to isolated FFI. The teachers' questionnaire included 12 items for integrated FFI and 12 items for isolated FFI. For ease of understanding, the students' questionnaire was translated into Persian, but the English version of the teachers' questionnaire was used with some minor changes in its demographic section. Both questionnaires consisted of items that investigated students' and teachers' preference for isolated or integrated grammar instruction (See tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 below). The students' questionnaire was piloted for its reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated through Chronbach's α analysis amounting to **0.78**.

Data collection and analysis

The researcher, along with his colleagues, distributed students' questionnaires in classes and students filled in the questionnaires in class. But depending on the preferences of the teachers, they either completed the questionnaire in class or completed it at home and returned it to researcher. The SPSS statistical package version 16.0 was used to analyze the data. Frequencies and valid percentages were used to analyze single items and 'Pearson Correlation' means of analysis was employed to compare both groups.

Results and discussion

Research question 1: Which type of FFI is preferred by English students: Isolated or integrated?

The result of the descriptive analysis of students' questionnaire concerning the preference for isolated and integrated FFI is shown in figure 1. As figure 1 indicates, English students preferred integrated FFI with the mean of 54.16 and SD= 5.84 over
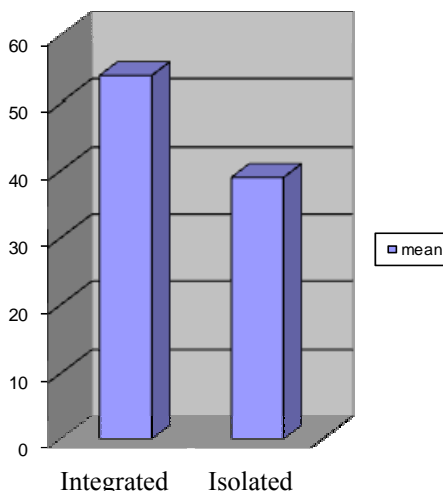
isolated FFI with the mean of 39.48 and SD=6.94.

Figure 1. Students' preference for FFI type

Table 1

Students' responses to integrated items

Items for Integrated FFI	Frequency of responses (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree; 0=missing)						Valid percentages (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)				
	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Grammar should be taught during communicative activities	4	13	8	108	63	6	2	6.6	4.1	55.1	32.1
2. I like learning grammar by communicating	7	12	22	88	73	0	3.5	5.9	10.9	43.6	36.1
3. I can learn grammar during reading or speaking activities	5	30	19	94	52	2	2.5	15	9.5	47	26
4. Doing communicative activities is the best way to use English accurately	1	17	42	93	47	2	0.5	8.5	21	46.5	23.5
5. My grammar improves when I do communicative activities	0	11	17	111	60	3	0	5.5	8.5	55.8	30.2
6. I find it hard to learn grammar by reading or listening	19	61	33	59	25	5	9.6	31	16.8	29.9	12.7
7. I like activities that focus on grammar and communication at the same time	3	12	23	91	69	4	1.5	6.1	11.6	46	34.8
8. I find it helpful when the instructor teaches grammar while we read a text	1	11	7	100	81	2	0.5	5.5	3.5	50	40.5
9. I can learn grammar while reading or listening to a passage	15	53	39	74	18	3	7.5	26.6	19.6	37.2	9
10. I like the teacher to correct my mistakes while I am doing communicative activities	9	25	4	95	67	2	4.5	12.5	2	47.5	33.5
11. I like grammar teaching during communicative activities	15	18	167	0	0	2	7.5	9	83.5	0	0
12. I like to learn grammar as I work on different skills and activities	2	15	23	105	52	2	1	7.6	11.7	53.3	26.4
13. I like communicative activities that include grammar instruction	6	28	21	99	47	1	3	13.9	10.4	49.3	23.4
14. I like learning grammar during speaking, writing, listening or reading activities	2	14	8	99	79	0	1	6.9	4	49	39.1

Results of the items concerning the students' questionnaire are presented in the following tables. As table 1 shows, in almost all the items students agreed with the integrated FFI. For instance, students showed their agreement with the instruction of grammar during communicative activities (55.1%). Doing communicative activities was the best way for them to use English accurately (46.5%). Also, it was helpful for the students when the teacher taught grammar while reading (50%).

Table 2
Students' responses to isolated items

Items for Integrated FFI	Frequency of responses (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree; 0=missing)						Valid percentages (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)				
	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. I like to study grammar before I use it	2	7	10	83	98	2	1	3.5	5	41.5	49
2. I like lessons that focus only on teaching grammar	32	88	32	24	23	3	16.1	44.2	16.1	12.1	11.6
3. I like grammar teaching before, not during, communicative activities	11	66	25	72	25	3	5.5	33.2	12.6	36.2	12.6
4. I like the teacher to correct my mistakes after I finish communicative activities	2	0	5	67	124	4	1	0	2.5	33.8	62.6
5. My English will improve if I study grammar separately from communicative activities	22	84	40	32	20	4	11.1	42.4	20.2	16.2	10
6. I like studying grammar rules first and then doing communicative activities	9	40	24	77	49	3	4.5	20.1	12.1	38.7	24.6
7. I like learning grammar separately from communicative activities	22	71	40	47	16	6	11.2	36.2	20.4	24	8.2
8. Grammar should be taught separately from communicative activities	3	77	33	25	57	7	1.5	39.5	16.9	12.8	29.2
9. Doing grammar exercises is the best way to use English accurately	32	77	35	35	18	5	16.2	39.1	17.8	17.8	9.1
10. Before reading an article, I like to study the grammar used in it	11	24	28	94	43	2	5.5	12	14	47	21.5
11. I find it helpful to study grammar separately from communicative activities	25	47	27	75	25	3	12.6	23.6	13.6	37.7	12.6
12. I like grammar teaching after, not during, communicative activities	37	91	34	30	8	2	18.5	45.5	17	15	4

Table 2 deals with the items concerning isolated FFI. As the analysis of the items shows, students disagreed with the separation of grammar from meaning. For example, they disagreed with the lessons that focused only on grammar instruction (44.2%). They disagreed that their English will improve if they study grammar separately from

communicative activities (42.4%). They also disagreed that grammar should be taught separately from communicative activities (39.5%).

Research question 2: Which type of FFI is preferred by English teachers: Isolated or integrated?

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaires (figure 2) shows that they preferred integrated FFI (mean= 38.45 and SD= 5.44) over isolated FFI (mean= 28.92 and SD= 5.27).
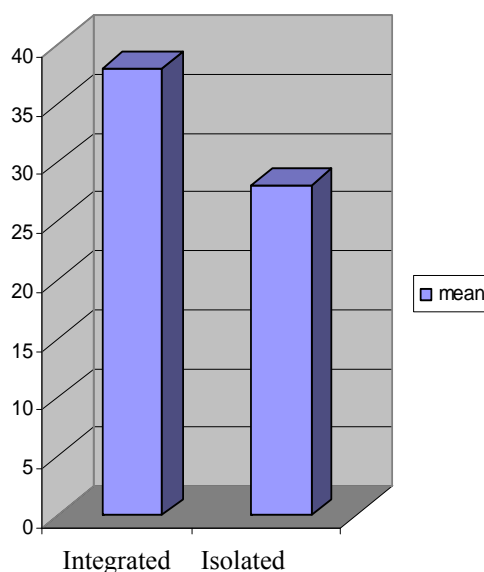

Figure 2. Teachers' preference for FFI type

Table 3 shows the teachers' answers to the integrated FFI items. Like the students, teachers preferred the integrated instruction of grammar. For example, teachers agreed in involving students in communicative activities which included attention to grammar in order to develop their grammatical knowledge (55.2%) and they preferred grammar teaching as a part of meaning-based activities (57.1%).

As for the isolated FFI items, table 4 shows that teachers mostly disagreed with the isolated grammar instruction. For instance, they disagreed with the isolation of grammar from communication (46.7%) and with the idea that grammar should be taught separately from communicative activities (66.7%).

Table 3

Teachers' responses to integrated items

Items for Integrated FFI	Frequency of responses (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree; 0=missing)						Valid percentages (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)				
	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Participating in meaning-based activities that include attention to grammar is the best way for students to develop their grammatical knowledge	5	4	0	16	4	1	17.2	13.8	0	55.2	13.8
2. I prefer teaching grammar as part of meaning-based activities	0	5	1	16	6	2	0	17.9	3.6	57.1	21.4
3. When students learn grammar in a meaning-based context, they will be able to successfully express their meaning	4	4	5	13	4	0	13.3	13.3	16.7	43.3	13.3
4. Students learn grammar more successfully if it is presented within context	2	0	0	10	18	0	6.7	0	0	33.3	60
5. The most effective way to teach a new structure is to present it within a meaning-based context	2	4	3	14	7	0	6.7	13.3	10	46.7	23.3
6. Separate treatment of grammar fails to develop language knowledge which students can use outside the classroom	0	7	9	12	2	0	0	23.3	30	40	6.7
7. Students' grammatical mistake should be corrected during communicative activities	7	9	5	5	2	2	25	32.1	17.9	17.9	7.1
8. Teaching grammar in a meaning-based activity is my preferred way to teach	0	6	4	15	4	1	0	20.7	13.8	51.7	13.8
9. I prefer lessons that teach communication and grammar at the same time	1	2	0	17	10	0	3.3	6.7	0	56.7	33.3
10. Doing meaning-based activities that include attention to grammar is the best way to learn to use English more accurately	1	5	6	13	5	0	3.3	16.7	20	43.3	16.7
11. Grammar is best taught through activities which focus on meaning	0	2	4	21	3	0	0	6.7	13.3	70	10

Research question 3: Is there any congruence between the students and teachers preferences as regards isolated FFI and integrated FFI?

In order to see if the students' preferences for isolated and integrated FFI are in accord with the teachers' preferences, the data obtained from both questionnaires was compared by means of Pearson Correlation method (table 5 and 6). The significance level in this study was set at P<0.05. The comparison revealed that there is a significant correlation (r= 0.247, P< 0.05) between both groups regarding their preference for integrated FFI.

Table 4

Teachers' responses to isolated items

Items for Integrated FFI	Frequency of responses (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree; 0=missing)						Valid percentages (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)				
	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Teaching structures only through meaning-based activities can limit students' grammatical accuracy outside the classroom	1	8	6	15	0	0	3.3	26.7	20	50	0
2. Doing exercises that focus exclusively on individual structures is the best way for students to develop their grammatical knowledge	2	9	11	7	1	0	6.7	30	63.7	23.3	3.3
3. Learners will be able to communicate accurately only if they learn grammar separately from meaning-based activities	7	16	2	4	0	1	24.1	55.2	6.9	13.8	0
4. I prefer lessons that teach grammar separately from communication	10	14	2	4	0	0	33.3	46.7	6.7	13.3	0
5. Students learn grammar more successfully if it is separated from context	10	16	2	0	1	1	34.5	55.2	6.9	0	3.4
6. I prefer teaching grammar separately from meaning-based activities	5	14	1	9	1	0	16.7	46.7	3.3	30	3.3
7. Grammar is best taught through exercises which focus on individual structures	1	13	3	11	0	2	3.6	46.4	10.7	39.3	0
8. Doing exercises that focus on individual structures is the best way to learn to use English	1	11	8	8	1	1	3.4	37.9	27.6	27.6	3.4
9. The most effective way to teach a new structure is to present the grammar rule before a communication activity	5	10	9	5	1	0	16.7	33.3	30	16.7	3.3
10. Grammar should be taught separately from communication activities.	6	20	2	2	0	0	20	66.7	6.7	6.7	0
11. The best time to correct students' grammatical mistakes is after, not during, communication activities	1	1	2	16	9	1	3.4	3.4	6.9	55.2	31

Table 5

Pearson's correlation for integrated items

		Integrated	Integrated
Integrated	Pearson Correlation	1	.340
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.066
	N	202	30
Integrated	Pearson Correlation	.340	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.066	
	N	30	30

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6

Pearson's correlation for isolated items

		Isolated	Isolated
Isolated	Pearson Correlation	1	-.124
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.515
	N	202	30
Isolated	Pearson Correlation	-.124	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.515	
	N	30	30

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Implications

The data obtained from English students and teachers provide insight into their preferences for form-focused instruction. The findings of this research support the finding of previous research regarding the integration of grammar and meaning simultaneously (e.g. Kasem, 2005; Schulz, 1996; Borg & Burns, 2008; Palacios Martinez, 2007). From the results it seems possible to make some claims that those students' and teachers' preferences concerning the type of form-focused instruction are congruent and they consider integrated grammar instruction as their desirable way of grammar teaching. This implies that communicative activities where the emphasis is on meaning provide a suitable condition for the explanation of grammatical points.

The integration of grammar and meaning seems an ideal condition, but in an EFL context like Iran, especially in small cities, it may not be achieved. The fact is that in Iranian schools, no matter in which part of the country, the method of English language instruction is similar to Grammar Translation method. The English books have been designed in a way that emphasize the skill of reading and the teaching of isolated grammar items and de-contextualized vocabulary, with little emphasis on communicative ability in English. The only way that students can learn the language communicatively is at language institutes.

At the university level, due to the requirements of the curriculum, the teachers have to teach many grammatical points in around 50 sessions during two terms. And

teachers mostly resort to the isolated grammar instruction for teaching grammar. There are several reasons why grammar is taught separately from meaning in most of the universities. The first one was mentioned above, namely, the requirements of the curriculum. The second reason can be the sizes of the classes, sometimes, there can be seen around 40 or even more students in a class. The third reason, which the researcher thinks is the most important reason, is the students' proficiency level of English. Students enter the university with little communicative ability in English language. The researcher has taught in several universities and has experienced the problem that teaching grammar communicatively causes a lot of problems for the teacher and the students, even for some advanced students. Teachers mostly resort to L1 in explaining the grammar.

Conclusions

The research reported here has attempted to explore the congruence between teachers' and students' preferences for integrated or isolated grammar instruction. As the previous studies indicate, mismatches between teachers' attitudes and views and those of the students are often seen in the language teaching milieus. Grammar instruction area is not exempt from this fact. There has been a lot of research exploring the beliefs of teachers concerning grammar and grammar teaching (Phipps and Borg, 2009) and some research has been carried out to investigate second and foreign language learners' views about grammar instruction and corrective feedback, but none of them has specifically investigated preferences for isolated or integrated FFI (Spada et al., 2009).

The findings for this research shed light on the idea that integrated grammar instruction is a favored approach to teaching grammar and hence should be implemented in EFL and ESL classrooms. Teachers and learners will benefit a lot from this method of grammar instruction. But in some EFL contexts that classes are teacher–centered teacher choose almost everything for the students, including what to teach and how to teach. This may bring about a great deal of discontent on the student's side. Therefore, teachers should try to modify their grammar teaching

method and take into account the views of the learners' as well.

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English education in Thailand: 2012

Robert Kirkpatrick
Shinawatra International University, Thailand

Bio-data

Robert Kirkpatrick has a PHD from Curtin University of Technology. He now lectures on the Master of Education program at SIU International University in Thailand and is the editor of Language Testing in Asia journal. His book, *English Language Teaching in Thailand and Myanmar* (edited collection) was published in 2011.

Abstract

The current Thai education system is well funded but is not producing sufficient graduates skilled in English. This paper, after summarizing the situation, and looking at one private university, makes several recommendations including: opening of more bilingual schools; implementation of the planned 'tablet for every child' policy; greatly expanded English training for teachers; incentives for English skills among government employees; partial funding of good quality private institutions involved in teacher training; and the adoption of English as an second official language.

Keywords: ELT, English, education policy, Thailand, official language

Introduction

Since my introduction to education in Thailand (and Myanmar) at the beginning of last year (Kirkpatrick, 2011a) a new government has being voted in and this paper reviews, updates and greatly expands those earlier observations as well as outlining the approach to English teaching and teacher training at an international university near Bangkok.

Thailand continues to invest a great deal of resources and money in education with varying results. On the positive side literacy has increased to over 93% and most children complete over 9 years of schooling, while in higher education Thailand granted 2.4 million bachelor degrees and 16,000 doctorates in 2007 and current figures are no doubt even higher. On the other hand, there are major divides between

the quality of education received in rural areas compared with Bangkok, and even within Bangkok between the well-off and the less fortunate. In tertiary education, the degrees from some institutes are inferior when judged by international standards and a significant proportion of degree holders fail to gain meaningful employment.

On the language learning front, with the Thai economy heavily dependent on international trade, English learning is a critical component for further development. An indication of the demand for and exponential growth of, English study is that there are now over 880 international education programs where English is the main language while in 2004, there were about half this number (Hengsadeekul, Hengsadeekul, Koul, & Kaewkuekool, 2010).

Further, Thai educators are virtually unanimous in their insistence on the importance of English: Hengsadeekul, Hengsadeekul, Koul, and Kaewkuekool (2010) wrote:

> Today, with Thailand's role in the international trade, the English language is needed for Thailand's economic survival. — It is no longer a matter of preference; it is a matter of necessity. Significantly, English is a powerful vehicle for carrying on international business, strengthening the economy and improving technical knowledge.

And Punthumasen (2007) from the Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education says "*all evidence in recent years indicates that the English language education will be a critical priority for education systems in most developing countries for many years to come*".

Since the shock of the 1997 Asian economic crisis, ambitious education sector reforms have been implemented which attempt to both modernize education while preserving traditional values. This pronouncement from the National Economic and Social Development board summarizes the aims:

> Thai society should be knowledge and learning society. Learning opportunities should be created for all Thai people, designed to promote logical thinking and life-long learning. Science and technology should be strengthened, so that Thai society can benefit from local innovation, creativity, and the accumulation of intellectual capital, in order to increase competitiveness and to appropriately

supplement Thai local wisdom and national traditions, culture and religion (NESD & OPM, 2001, p.13).

And this one (2005) from the Ministry of Foreign affairs gives more details:

In lieu of the 1997 Constitution and the 1999 Education Act, the Government is determined to launch educational reforms with the aim of developing Thailand into a knowledge-based society, which is a pre-requisite for becoming a knowledge-based economy." Education Builds the Nation, Empowers the Individual and Generates Employment" as follows:

(1) Accelerate efforts to establish an educational system and network that is of high quality and truly beneficial to the general public.
(2) Develop an education technology system and information network to increase and disperse the opportunities for education for all Thais in both urban and rural areas.
(3) Promote the role of Thailand as an educational hub for the neighboring countries.
(4) Promote the integration of education, religion, culture and sports into the educational and training curriculum offered to children and youth.
(5) Reform the learning process through the "learner-centered approach", self-education and life-long education by emphasizing the power of creativity, encouraging a love for reading, and providing sufficient community-based libraries, learning centers and educational mediums for public use.
(6) Ensure that "teaching" becomes a dignified, highly respected and trusted profession. Develop high-quality teachers and educators who live up to basic ethical requirements.
(7) Improve the educational curriculum to ensure that children and youth are disciplined, hard working and competent (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005).

The Democrat government, led by Abhisit Vejajiva, allocated an impressive sum – about 371.5 billion baht in 2010 – to the Education Ministry, and implemented a 15-year free education scheme under the "*Education Reform II*" package that comes with these large sums. Jurin Laksanavisit; the previous Thai minister of education, in an interview with the Bangkok post claimed that the MOE was working toward increasing critical thinking skills and will try to eventually *"eliminate teacher-centered classrooms and rote learning"* Johnson, Trivitayakhun and Thirisak (2009). The new government of Yingluck Shinawatra is even more generous with regard to education and the current budget is one of the highest in the world at 30% of total spending according to an editorial in the Bangkok post in August, 2011, and has

ambitious and promising programs such as the 6 billion baht a year "*one tablet computer, one student*" policy (Kirkpatrick, 2011b).

All of this might lead one to assume that Thai education and English education should be steadily, if not rapidly, improving and even leading the way in Asian countries. However this is most decidedly not the case: the International Institute of Management Development (IMD) recently ranked Thai students' at 43rd out of 55 countries, (Jitprapas, 2009) while for English proficiency the IMD currently ranks Thailand 54th out of 56 surveyed countries (Ahuja, 2011). Punthumasen from the Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education states:

> The results of the final examination of English language in primary and secondary levels between academic years 2002 – 2004, organized by the Bureau of Education Testing, showed that the percentage of average marks declined continuously each year; with the average results ranging from a low of 32% to a high of 49.6%. For the university entrance examinations in English language the average mark between 2002 -2005 was only 40.12%. English assessment and examination results for Thai students have been declining for many years despite the great efforts of Thai education policy and implementation agencies (2007).

Yet despite the undisputed acclaim for the importance of English and despite the dismal state of English education in most parts of Thailand, (partly because Thai students have few chances to practice English outside the classroom; and some would say even within) in 2010 the education ministry of the Democrat party government turned down a reform committee's recommendation to make English a second official language saying that such a move could make people think Thailand had once been colonized.

Main Issues

As with most countries there are debates and confusion about the core principles of education and English teaching. The main issues revolve around:

1. Teaching methods: here rote learning, grammar translation methods and teacher-centered classes are routinely condemned (Nonkukhetkhong, Balduf Jr., & Moni, 2006).

2. Teacher training and skill level: especially at the primary levels, teachers are often unqualified to teach English, their own English is weak, the classrooms are overcrowded, and teachers know little about communicative approaches to language teaching. And even at tertiary level Hallinger and Kantamara (2000) bemoaned the lack of skills and paucity of practical and theoretical knowledge among many academics.

3. Movement away from traditional Buddhist values: most business leaders (and students and parents) want Thailand to increase competitiveness internationally and a 'knowledge-based society' is a perennial political slogan. However there is also tremendous concern about the loss of culture and decline in Buddhist ideals with some sense that education must try to protect and sustain these ancient values.

Teaching Methods

Hallinger and Kantamara suggest "*when faced with implementing new approaches to management, learning and teaching, Thai educators remain subject to traditional Thai cultural values, assumptions, and norms*" (2000); Chalapati (2007) also found educational places and teaching reflect the hierarchical nature of Thai society, and Nonkukhetkhong, Balduf Jr., and Moni (2006), assert Thai students are taught to be passive and respectful. Pongsudhirak (Chulalongkorn University) contends the education system is still top down and designed to produce obedient students devoid of critical thinking faculties (cited in Ahuja, 2011). Social critic Jitrapas (2009) contends that "*Worse, the number of children with moral deficiency and personal misbehavior from game addiction to drug abuse to intolerance for hard work, has grown exponentially*" and directly blames the Thai education system for this.

Some of the main features of successful learning and teaching have been highlighted by writers such as H. Brown (2002, p. 12-17). Of note is meaningful learning and most research has found that this leads to higher retention and understanding than rote learning. This ideal fits well with the comments by the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see above) and also with popular education

commentators in Thailand, (e.g. Bunnag, 2005), who criticize teacher centered classrooms surmising that these encourage passive rote learning. And certainly there are classrooms where parrot like repetition of the teachers lectures and regurgitation for exams are expected. Learning new English words and their functions are very important in Thai way of learning English.

Strengthening vocabulary is seen as the primary step of English language acquisition and vocabulary lists and spelling tests are often used in the class room to teach English. Although the students are often successful in memorizing a good number of English language words, they sometimes trip when attempting to use the words appropriately. Therefore, Witte (2000) argues that "*Students in Thailand are taught vocabulary by repeating words spoken by their teachers and memorizing the word's spelling and meaning, which are passive learning strategies. Students do not have the opportunity to apply their vocabulary in real-life situations, that is, through active learning strategies* (p.176)".

However, memorization and repetition should perhaps not be identified with rote learning. The latter term implies parrot-fashion acquisition of certain abilities without understanding. The Buddhist approach to memorization, however, is that it is a process towards understanding. Once the concepts are understood, and memorization should aid this, then there is no further need to try to remember, similar to the Buddhist image of the raft that, once having carried one from the shore of ignorance to the other side, can be discarded. And recent research such as that by Taguchi (2007) suggests that rote learning is preliminary and can lead to natural and fluent language use. Indeed as a native speaker teaching in Thailand I find it encouraging seeing the work that devoted students will put into memorizing.

Pennycook (1996) also expressed surprise at a very fluent non-native English speaking colleague who it turns out had put in unusual amounts of time at memorization and that his eloquence and fluency had apparently stemmed from a foundation of time-consuming memorization. Thus this emphasis on vocabulary meaning can serve as a basis for further development – and it seems that the problem is that, due to the lack of English opportunities in the community – this next step of

using the vocabulary in a meaningful way is not taken. Possibly a more serious issue than teaching methods is overall teacher training and when it comes to English a paucity of English skills among English teachers.

Teacher Training

While Thailand now has over 650 programs producing teachers many of these are poorly aimed or low in quality especially in areas of high demand such as English. Sombat Noparak; president of the *Thailand Education Deans Council*: "It is also difficult for faculties of education to provide quality education to their teachers-to-be, because they don't have enough lecturers with expertise in different fields, especially in science and English," (cited in Khaopa, 2011).

And the *Consortium of Sixteen Education Deans of Thailand* President, Sirichai Kanjanawasee: "*Therefore, there are shortages of physics, chemistry, biology and English-teaching teachers in remote areas. Underprivileged students in those areas receive a worse quality of education,*" (cited in Khaopa, 2011). In 2004 the number of teachers of English in basic education was 113,957 (OBEC, 2004). However, Punthumasen (2007) notes that the most teachers are not able to continuously attend the government provided 60 hour English training course [and of course for most that do complete it they have only improved their English level and ability to teach English by an incremental amount]. In fact often they complete the basic training in English, realize how poor their skills are and no longer want to be involved in English teaching: leading to a rapid turnover of non-qualified poorly trained teachers with only elementary English skills.

In 1995, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) launched English Programs in schools which were ready to provide this program throughout the country. These "*E.P. schools*" or "*bilingual schools*" use English to teach about half of the curriculum (usually Science, Mathematics, English and sports), these schools require extra fees and they employ native or near native (from countries such as the Philippines) English speakers. In 2007 there were 183 of these bilingual schools, with over 30,000 students. However while the English ability of these teachers is high there

are problems with the majority not having degrees related to education, English or language teaching. Nevertheless, this appears to be an effective way of improving English nationwide. A possible way to expand these programs would be a Thai government to Philippine government initiative which could potentially provide thousands or tens of thousands, suitably qualified graduates from education course in Philippine universities and at salaries similar to those of Thai teachers.

Buddhism and Education

One aspect of education that is particular to Thailand is the intertwining of Buddhism. There are around 400,000 Buddhist monks in Thailand. Moreover, the religion is still an integral part of the daily life of a large proportion of the population. One indication of how tied up literacy and Buddhism remain is that Buddhist books are found for sale, at very reasonable prices, not only at temples or bookshops – where Dhamma books often comprise the largest section – but also revolving stands at gas stations, coffee shops, and even many convenience stores. A well-written Dhamma book – the most popular of which usually have some element of self-help – can make a monk and sometimes a layman or women famous almost overnight.

Thailand has a tradition of reading and writing dating back over 1000 years where young men could, and still do, ordain as monks for a long or short period of time and be taught Pali language reading and writing. The Thai script was also widely taught since its inception in the 13th century. Watson (1980) writes, "Buddhist monks were expected to be adept at Pali, fine arts, law, astronomy and arithmetic. They regarded reading and writing and the provision of knowledge to others Asian religious act." Beyond basic education and knowledge however the temples also inculcated virtue. "Whereas parents gave life, monks imparted a way of life and knowledge that made life worth living" This centuries old tradition meant that "the Buddhist monasteries became centers of learning and culture, and Bhikkhus had to master all subjects that had to be taught to everyone from prince down to peasant" (Watson, 1980).

However since the advent of western style education near the end of the 19th century based on a recognition of the need to modernize society, the role of temples in

education has gradually lessened – and with it some of the culture and virtue that directly flowed from the temples to the wider society. This is a concern to many Thais and Sarot suggested as far back as 1970 that the Thai education system should integrate Buddhist ideas and expressed concern about overreliance on western philosophies of education. Witte (2000) asks the question: "*the education sector as spearhead of modernization and technological upgrading or as protector of national identity and traditions?* (p. 223)".

One private university

Shinawatra University, where the researcher currently works, is rather innovative and highly graded by the Thai government with ONESQA rating it as one of the better universities in Thailand. High level facilities, a well paid teaching staff led to the university being able to recruit world class lecturers, and it also has a motivating and competitive fully English environment. Consequently by graduation most students are fluent enough in English to work in an international company with over 90% of students gaining immediate employment with relatively high salaries.

The intake has about 30% foreign students mainly from Asian countries but also with students from Europe, Africa, and Australasia. All subjects are taught completely with English as the medium of instruction. However, this causes some problems with the freshman intake because students are at varied levels of English ability. These can be grouped into two: Those on scholarship - up to 30% of the total number- from districts in Thailand who were often the best English/mathematics students in their respective schools yet still enter at below pre-intermediate level English. And those whose English is already intermediate level or above: including those who studied at bilingual schools or international schools - who have usually sufficient English although writing skills may need work; and international students from India, Nepal, Bhutan, Europe and Africa who are sometimes already fully fluent in English.

However by the third year - after a few tears in some cases- even the lowest level students have greatly improved their English and all graduate with fluency in English. The grading system is competitive and a past president instituted as policy of only

10% of students being given an A grade in any class (except in exceptional circumstance which the teacher must justify to a committee).

The writer was involved in writing the curriculum on the M. Ed. program in *Teaching English as an International Language*. The course is demanding and in the four years it has been running the quality of students (diverse nationalities), most of whom are experienced teachers, has been exceptional. The students have written well researched essays and have represented at national and international conferences with over 20 publishing in academic journals. Courses like this, which are now running at several universities, and which are mostly of international standards, are improving the quality of those Thai teachers lucky enough to take them. Many more programs are needed!

Naturally more could be done to improve the university. However it is one example of how some Thai universities are doing useful work, and it can serve as an example for any tertiary institute in Thailand who want to initiate an English speaking (and writing) environment.

English, Competitive Thailand and National Innovation System

The absence of a prominent English speaking community, possibly more than any other factor, hinders the development of English language among the Thai people. However, the private sector has been successful in bringing native English speakers to the country to teach English. It is noted that "*the institutional diversity that the private sector brings into the Thai higher education system particularly via business-oriented foci, professional training, and abundant numbers of institutions is also remarkable*" (Praphamontripong, 2008, p.3). And the more the competition, the better the quality, so to some degree the health of the English education in Thailand depends upon the fate of the private education sector.

The attempts at present are aimed at producing an 'eternally' competitive Thailand. It is argued that "*Thailand which was once successful in catching up and competing with others, is now facing problems in maintaining its position and upgrading to the next stage of development*" (Intarakumn erd & Lecler, 2010, p.1).

Institution building is seen as key to constituting a national innovation system. The national innovation system in Thailand focuses on both the governmental agencies and the private sector to radically restructure science and technology and research and development.

Importantly, in a knowledge economy, *"what is important is not only knowledge in itself, but also the learning capability of an economy, that is, the ability to create, diffuse, and use new knowledge"* (Intarakumnerd & Lecler, 2010, p.3). The idea is that knowledge has become more prominent than other factors of production such as land, raw materials and capital. Most importantly, national innovation system is necessary for catching up with rapid globalization. However, Thailand's *"national innovation system is weak and fragmented. Actors such as government agencies, private firms, universities, research organizations and so on are not so efficient in performing their supposed roles"* (Intarakumnerd & Lecler, 2010, p.3).

E-learning is not successful enough in Thailand; argue Snae and Bruecn as *"reading is not a common habit of Thai students. Rote learning and learning by example are common ways of learning in Thai culture as well. E-learning on the other hand requires a high level of discipline from the learner which is often simply not the case for Thai students as Thai students have less of a sense of participation as an attitude towards learning"* (2007, p. 3). Since e-learning expects students to have certain levels of expertise, Thai students who are deeply embedded in a system of rote learning cannot easily adapt to this kind of a sophisticated digital learning environment. However, the novelty and innovation of such policies as the *"one tablet, one child"* may be just what the doctor ordered.

The national innovation system is *"a core conceptual framework for analyzing technological change, which is considered to be an indispensable foundation of the long-term economic development of a nation"* (Intarakumnerd et al, 2001, p. 1445). The construction of the national innovation system framework is especially useful for realizing the technological development potentials of developing countries such as Thailand. An effective national innovation system must aim to produce a learning intensive environment for Thailand.

Both the private sector and public sector plays a crucial role in the national innovation system of Thailand. However, *"Thai universities have rather poor research capability and most of their research has a low level of industrial relevance. Linkages between university and industry are based on personal connections between individual researchers and companies rather than organizational commitments; development of long-term and formal links is still at early stage"* (Intarakumnerd et al, 2001, p. 1451). Thailand is also facing various issues related to the integration Information and Communication Technology (ICT) with education. Thai students are not fully prepared to live a life in the informational society. Developing ICT in education is a challenging task for Thailand.

Conclusion

Does Thai education perpetuate structural inequality? The current purpose of education is both the inculcation of Thai cultural values and also to promote western style scientific/ business/economic development; and these twin aims are not always easy to reconcile. From 1960s onwards, Thailand's economic development has been solid and stable and Thailand has been praised for its high literacy despite being a large, developing country. However, the shift from Fordist production to Post-Fordist production model is a serious challenge for reorienting Thai education. The need of the economy in the near future is not disciplined labor but innovative labor. Studies have revealed that *"Thailand is losing part of its competitiveness because of its mismatch between increases in real wages and increases in labor productivity. The increase in the latter is lower due to Thailand's underachievement in education, compared with its Asian neighbors"* (Intarakumnerd & Lecler, 2010, p.6). Establishing a proper national innovation system is not enough; there must be a decentralized institutional framework for the effective implementation of the ambitious policy.

Thus the future of education and English learning is uncertain: Thailand has the financial wherewithal and popular mandate to radically improve both areas but when and whether sufficient insight and consensus from politicians, bureaucrats and teachers will occur is an unknown. Of course it could asserted that money and

government is not the major factor in Thailand lack of educational improvements; take the case of south Korea, where English levels and education in general is improving and showing dividends with regard to economic growth. Yet the government funding is one of the lowest percentages of the budget of any OECD country (although the total amount spent on education is huge). This is because Korean families – due to a Confucian based deeply held belief in education- spend an incredible 45% of a typical families budget on educating their children, and in study time students over 30% more each year than the average of industrialized countries (Parry, 2011).

However even if the multitudes in Thailand could be persuaded of the value in education, even to the degree of using half of their incomes on their children education, the wide disparities in income mean that the bulk of the poorer families (who make up the vast majority of Thais) would not be able to provide enough money to make a real difference- the funding from the government in Thailand is essential- what is less clear is exactly how the money could best be used. In this regard the Yingluck government upcoming introduction of tables for every child is one idea that could quickly allow self-access to the best English learning sites – of which there are many-on the web- and also many stand alone applications that could be preinstalled (see Kirkpatrick, 2011b). If (and it is a still a big if) children and teachers can learn how to take advantage of self access sites then, given sufficient motivation, improvements could be dramatic and sustained.

Recommendations for the Thai Government

Thailand is not alone in its ambivalent approach to English education. After all Japan has managed for many years to spend extraordinary amount of money on English study (mostly outside of public schools) and still has a population the majority of whom are unable to understand or speak basic English. Is Thailand prepared to spend some of its huge education budget on proper training for English teachers throughout the country? Will it take the necessary step of making English an official language – and enforce use of it country wide. Or will it muddle along as it is now without any

real expectation of most people ever learning English.

One only has to look further south to Malaysia and Singapore to see that English can become a welcome part of society at large to see that given a 10 year (or even 20 year) plan Thailand could achieve similar results. The other option is to do what they are doing now: send the children of the elite to any of the 100 plus international schools in Bangkok so that at least they have the benefits of fluency in written and spoken English, so that they can succeed in the internationally competitive world where English is lingua franca. Another important feature is to implement self access English learning – possibly using the new tablet computers.

Teacher training is possibly the most crucial and urgent factor: rather than focusing on innovative teaching techniques what is even more urgent is bringing up the level of English in teachers. 60 hour courses can do little: teachers need to be given real salary incentives such as scores in TOEFL, IELTS and TOEIC, leading to substantial salary increases for high scores, and then they will have the motivation to improve individually independent of being sent on some limited program.

For the best teachers funding them to attend M. Ed. programs such as was mentioned above is important. At present private universities such as Shinawatra receive no funding from the government. Considering the very high level of grading from ONESQA, the large number of scholarship students, the exclusive use of English, the state of the art facilities, and the research output – in other words everything the Thai government could desire in an university -- some support should be given.

Expand the number of bilingual schools until all government elementary and secondary schools adopt the model. This could be brought about by a government to government arrangement between the Philippines (under ASEAN) where well qualified English teachers are available and willing to work in Thailand under similar salaries to Thai teachers.

Reward English speakers (using TOEIC or a similar international proficiency test) in Thai government service by connecting salary increase to English ability and insisting all new hires must have achieved certain levels of English. And, to bring it

all together, make English an official language (see Kirkpatrick, 2012).

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Will English Coexist with the Indonesian Language?

Lusia Neti Harwati

lusianeti@ub.ac.id

The Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Brawijaya University of Malang, Indonesia

Bio-data

Lusia Neti Harwati currently teaches at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Brawijaya University of Malang, Indonesia. She earns her M.Ed. from Flinders University of South Australia. She has presented several papers related to foreign language teaching at both national and international conferences.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the phenomenon of English popularity in Indonesia. In the age of globalization, mastering English as an international language (EIL) seems to be an advantage for everyone as it is a medium of communication and interaction between people of different cultural backgrounds. It leads English to be studied around the world. In Indonesia, for instance, learning English now becomes more popular among young generation. Some people, however, believe that this phenomenon has the potential to put the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) in danger of being considered as a second-class language. This opinion is based on the reason that there has been a rapid growth of schools that use English as the main language of instruction and devote little time to Bahasa Indonesia. Consequently, communicating in English has become a part of the Indonesians' daily lives especially for those who have a great access to a worldwide social network. In addition, there is a fear that the Indonesians will lose their national identity because of the possibility of western-dominated international culture. The primary methods used in this paper are literature investigation and data analysis. From the discussion, there are two proposed strategies that may enable the government to deal with such complex problems. Indonesian decision makers, such as a ministry of education and a state board of education are expected to be able to decide which languages should be used as the language of education and issue a strict regulation requiring all schools to position Bahasa Indonesia at the same rank with English.

Keywords: globalization, EIL, national identity, Bahasa Indonesia, curriculum

Introduction

Globalization can be defined as "the acceleration of interaction and assimilation among countries with a number of consequences either good or bad related to economic, political, cultural aspects, and so on" (Harwati, 2011, p. 1). As globalization spreads, mastering English as an international language (EIL) seems to be an advantage. This language can be used to break cultural and language barriers among people from all backgrounds. The popularity of English study, therefore, is widespread all over the world, including in Indonesia. Indonesian learners believe that mastering English could raise self-reliance. In turn, they would be able to compete in global markets.

On the other hand, some people perceive this phenomenon as a danger that threatens the Indonesian language's function and existence. Furthermore, using English in daily communication has been seen as a sign of losing the national identity. It seems, however, not an easy task to define this notion as Harwati (2010) explains:

> "National identity may refer to the feeling of being connected with specific national group, characterized by several common features, such as region, ethnicity, language, history, and so on. However, Indonesia is a melting pot with various ethnicities, beliefs, and values system. It is, therefore, questionable whether there is a single Indonesian identity" (p. 380).

Drawing from the above explanation, it can be argued that we need to view the phenomenon of English study in Indonesia from a different perspective. More specifically, this paper aims to argue that mastering English is not merely a threat for the Indonesian language (known as Bahasa Indonesia) and the national identity. It is even possible to position both languages at the same rank. The research method used in this paper, however, will be explained first. A brief history of Indonesia will then be presented in order to provide insight into a correlation between language and social class during the Dutch colonialism. What political leaders did to protect and promote Bahasa Indonesia will then be outlined. In addition, what the relationship between politics and education in Indonesia is will also be discussed. The position of English

in Indonesia and alternative solutions in terms of specific strategies for fear of losing the national identity faced by some people, including the government, will then be proposed.

Method

Literature investigation and data analysis are the primary methods adopted to find out whether or not English will coexist with Bahasa Indonesia. This paper will intensively review current literature, which is selected for synthesis based on its relevance to the topic under study and confined to the politics and education in Indonesia. The literature investigation is designed to establish knowledge of how political leaders position foreign languages especially English in Indonesian educational system after the Dutch colonial era.

Analysis of the number of Indonesian children who do not have opportunity to get formal education and their educational attainment data obtained from the Ministry of Education and the State Ministry of Women's Empowerment/MOWE will be used to establish whether or not poverty has a strong correlation with education access and whether or not linguistic imperialism is happening in Indonesia.

A Brief History of Indonesia: The Dutch Colonialism and Its Impact

In the sixteenth century, the Dutch came to the island of Java, Indonesia for the first time and became the predominant power in the country. For more than a hundred years under the Dutch colonialism, there were significant changes in Indonesian culture. In support of this explanation, Soekiman (2011, p. 23) states that there was a mixed language known as *bahasa petjoek*, which emerged from Dutch-Javanese code switching. The latter is the main language on the island of Java. Rachman (2010) explains that during that time "each language had a social rank" (as cited in Onishi, p.1). When people spoke *petjoek*, they were below. This language was at the bottom of the rank because it was not pure Dutch. Bahasa Indonesia, on the other hand, was at the second position and the language of the colonist with a limited number of educated Indonesian speakers was at the top.

In 1945, Indonesia proclaimed its independence and political leaders did not want to retain Dutch. Bahasa Indonesia then became the official language of the country and used to create a national identity. Soeharto, the former president who ruled Indonesia from 1966 to 1998, has gone further to enforce teaching and using Bahasa Indonesia. Under the Soeharto regime, English and other foreign languages were curbed. As Dawis (2010) explains, "during the Suharto era, Bahasa Indonesia was the only language that we could see or read. English was at the bottom of the rung" (as cited in Onishi, p. 1). In brief, it was obligatory for everyone to use Bahasa Indonesia in every aspect of life. The raised question is: Is there a correlation between politics and education in Indonesia? This question will be discussed more fully in succeeding part of this paper.

Discussion

Politics and Education

In this section, the national curriculum during the Soeharto era will be outlined. More specifically, how government controlled the national curriculum will be used as an essential step in the discussion. The word curriculum itself is very hard to be defined. Hirst (1968) attempts to simplify the definition of this terminology as "a program of activities designed so that pupils will attain, as far as possible certain educational ends and objectives" (as cited in Gür, 2006, p. 40). This explanation implies that setting goals need to be achieved by pupils in educational process is essential. So, who should design, influence, and control the national curriculum? Government, schools, or both?

In Indonesia, the government had absolute power in deciding what curriculum should be applied. Rifai (2011, p. 167) explains that there were four different curriculum implemented in all provinces under the Soeharto regime. The first national curriculum was applied from 1968 to 1975. The second one was implemented for nine years, from 1975 to 1984. The third national curriculum was officially used for ten years, from 1984 to 1994. The last curriculum was introduced in 1994. An interesting

fact is that English was not the priority in each curriculum as it was previously mentioned that this language was curbed. Indeed, English was taught in Junior and Senior High Schools for about two hours per week as one of compulsory subjects. Most teachers, however, focused more on form rather than function. Consequently, pupils failed to understand how to use the language to communicate in naturalistic settings. At present, the situation remains the same. In most public schools, English is taught poorly.

It seems impossible to enforce establishing a uniform curriculum in Indonesia, as it is a big country with various ethnic groups. Each of them has its own characteristics, such as norms and values handed down from generation to generation. Gür (2006) states, "one of the aims of the curriculum is to transmit cultural values from one generation to another" (p. 41). It would, therefore, be wiser if every school in cooperation with local government, scholars, parents, and the general public had greater autonomy to determine what kind of curriculum should be introduced.

What had happened in Indonesia indicates that the government tried to show its power not only in political aspect but also educational system. Rifai (2011, p. 168) argues that in Indonesia education was a vital instrument for political leaders to preserve their superior position. This suggests that the predominant power would like to retain a single curriculum in the attempt to maintain its domination over others, as education is one of vital pillars of a country.

English versus Bahasa Indonesia

After Soeharto's downfall in May 1998, the situation has changed. In educational aspect, for instance, Indonesians have greater opportunities and freedom to study foreign languages, especially English. There has been a rapid growth of private schools (and also state schools claiming themselves as international standard schools) at all levels offering English as the main language of instruction. In other words, English is now more popular among young generation. Mastering English as the first foreign language is becoming a new trend. More and more parents, especially those coming from upper-middle social classes would like to send their children to such

schools. Some schools even "devote little time, if any, to Indonesian" (Onishi, 2010, p. 1). This trend may be related to academic and career advancement reasons. Parents are attempting to prepare their children to be able to pursue further education, if possible, in English speaking countries in the hope that they would be able to enhance their earning potential, earn a higher salary, or even get a better work overseas.

The situation in Indonesia is very complicated. On the one hand, regulations are loosened. These schools do not follow the national curriculum. They design by themselves the curriculum with other countries, such as Singapore and Australia as models. On the other hand, there is a fear, especially from the government itself, that Bahasa Indonesia will be considered as a second-class language. Experts even state, "English became the new Dutch" (Onishi, 2010, p. 1). In Phillipson's terminology (1992) this is called "linguistic imperialism" (as cited in Hamel, 2005, p. 7). Phillipson (1997) has gone further to explain:

> "English linguistic imperialism, as a specific case of linguicism is a theoretical construct, devised to account for linguistic hierarchisation, to address issues of why some languages come to be used more and others less, what structures and ideologies facilitate such processes, and the role of language professionals" (as cited in Hamel, 2005, p. 8).

Based on the above definition, it can be said that linguistic imperialism occurs when English is considered as a superior language over others.

In relation to the current phenomenon of English popularity in Indonesia, I would like to argue that the government does not need to worry too much about English linguistic imperialism. This argument is based on the reason that Indonesia is home to over 237 million people and for most of them English is still something expensive and exclusive. Many Indonesian children are unable to attend school due to financial reasons. It is therefore almost impossible for them to have a chance to learn English. In short, there is a big gap between the poor and rich. Although Indonesia is blessed with abundant and excellent natural resources poverty remains one of major problems for the country.

Jalal (2011) released data related to the top five provinces in Indonesia with 47,292 to 1,055,000 children in each province who do not have the opportunity to get formal education as depicted in table 1. Metro TV, one of Indonesian television stations, broadcasted the data on May 8, 2011. Currently, Indonesia is divided into 33 provinces and each province has its own local government headed by a governor.

In addition, the State Ministry of Women's Empowerment/MOWE (2011) explains that research conducted by Education Watch in 2006 revealed a bitter fact related to educational attainment of Indonesian children population. Around 24% of children lack basic education, 21,7% never in Junior High School, 18,3% not graduated from Junior High School, and 29,5% with no access to Senior High School as shown in table 2. MOWE further argues that those children are not able to go to school due to lack of funds.

Table 1

The top five provinces with 47,292 to 1,055,000 children cannot attend school

No	Province
1	South Sulawesi
2	West Java
3	East Java
4	Central Java
5	Papua

Source: Adapted from Jalal, May 2011

Table 2

Basic education data in Indonesia

No	Data	Educational Attainment	Data Source
1	24%	Not graduated from Primary School	Education Watch 2006
2	21,7%	Never in Junior High School	Education Watch 2006
3	18,3%	Not graduated from Junior High School	Education Watch 2006
4	29,5%	Never in Senior High School	Education Watch 2006

Source: Adapted from the State Ministry of Women's Empowerment (MOWE), 2011

In sum, the number of English speakers in Indonesia is still limited. We should not jump to the conclusion that linguistic imperialism is happening in the country. It would be better if we try to be open-minded. The global spread of English is inevitable and mastering the language is one of skills needed for those who want to be actively involved in international movement. Furthermore, mastering English does not mean losing the national identity. English is adaptable to every culture. As Alatis (2005) argues, "English is a language to be used by different cultures in the world; it potentially belongs to all cultures" (p. 34). Reducing educational fees as they climb significantly every year is therefore more important than debating about the existence of English in Indonesia. Children are the future and it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that they get the best education in their home country.

What should the government do?

Putting to rest the words linguistic imperialism will enable the government to determine specific strategies for complex problems faced by Indonesia. There are at least two strategies need to be applied. First, involving Indonesian decision makers, such as a ministry of education and a state board of education in deciding which languages should be used as the language of education. Second, is the issuance of a strict regulation requiring all schools to position Bahasa Indonesia at the same rank with English.

In relation to the first proposed strategy, the process of legislation, however, can lead to the disagreement in the society. Indeed, it can be a good policy to unify Indonesians by using Bahasa Indonesia as a single language of education. As Ricento (1994) explains:

> "Within the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Linguistics Rights has endorsed the right of all people to develop and promote their own languages and to offer children access to education in their own languages" (as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 194).

Such a decision can also be considered as one of solutions to bridge the gap between rich and poor. For those who believe that mastering English is vital for educational, societal, or even economic success, however, this kind of policy may be seen as an obstacle on the road to globalization. In short, either Bahasa Indonesia or English will be chosen as the single language of instruction, a clash in the society will rise.

From the paragraphs above, I would like to argue that by considering the current situation, both English and Bahasa Indonesia could be chosen as languages of education. Initiating a revolutionary change by neglecting the importance of English in the field of education seems to be an unwise decision. It is time to stop blaming schools that offer English as the main medium of instruction and start finding a new way to improve the quality of education in most Indonesian schools. In the case of teaching English for example, it would be beneficial if teachers attempt to change their point of view. Although knowledge of the grammar is essential to help pupils produce meaningful utterances, achieving a communicative competence as a final product of language teaching is much more important. In turn, it would be possible for pupils to be familiar with English and its exclusive label might be removed.

In order to prevent English domination, the government needs to more strictly regulate either private or public schools by requiring them to devote enough time to Bahasa Indonesia. In addition, it will be better if teaching one of traditional languages in Indonesia is compulsory as it is vital to preserve and introduce linguistic diversity and cultural pluralism to pupils. It will, therefore, possible that English coexist with Bahasa Indonesia and traditional languages of the country.

Conclusion

It was shown in the literature that languages were strongly tied to social class and there was a correlation between politics and education. In order to be able to preserve its power, the Soeharto regime attempted to control educational system by establishing a uniform curriculum and curbing foreign languages, especially English.

The central problem upon which this was based relates to the current phenomenon of English popularity in Indonesia. More specifically, the problems

addressed included the fear of losing the national identity and the possibility of English linguistic imperialism.

Countries facing complex problems such as Indonesia clearly need to focus more on the importance of reducing poverty, as it will be beneficial in assisting Indonesian children to have access to education, deciding what languages need to be used as media of instruction, issuing a strict regulation to position English and Bahasa Indonesia at the same rank, and offering traditional languages to introduce linguistic diversity to pupils as outlined in the discussion. It is hoped that the government will be able to re-establish its mission, which is providing the best education for the future generation. In addition, putting to rest the fear of linguistic imperialism is also essential. The statement that English has become the new Dutch seems to be a superficial conclusion as English is one of skills needed for Indonesians to be able to survive in the global era.

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Extracurricular Activities as means to improve English at a Thai University

Roxanne Jade Kirkpatrick
Shinawatra International University, Thailand

Bio-data

Roxanne Jade Kirkpatrick is currently studying her Masters in Education, 'Masters in Teaching English as an International Language' at Shinawatra International University, Thailand. Her current research interests include technology in EFL learning and teaching, and bilingual learners.

Abstract

This case study looks at a group of first year university students at Shinawatra International University, Thailand, who have the option of English focused extracurricular activities available to them. The data includes surveys from the students, staff members, teacher assistants and administrators. Observations were also conducted to gauge their perceptions of the program.

Keywords: Extracurricular activities, teaching in Thailand, ESL teaching

Introduction

Shinawatra International University (SIU) is a private international university that was established in 2002, founded by the prime minister of Thailand at the time, Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra. Currently, there are over 370 students from all over the globe taking different studies, from undergraduate studies, graduate study in masters to PhD. During the academic year of 2011 semester one, SIU had the intake of forty new first year undergraduate students. As well as Thai students, this number includes students from Bhutan, Nepal, India, Myanmar, and Uganda. With the diversity of students as well as being an international university, everything is completed in the main communication level, English language. Although with that said, not all students at

SIU have the capable English level that is necessary for comfortable daily conversations with other students.

In 2011 semester one, new extracurricular activities have been offered to these students, as well as being available to any other students enrolled at SIU. With these extracurricular activities available for the students at SIU, the aim of offering these activities are to achieve the goal of giving the students more activities that they can enjoy participating in while at the same time, gain important English skills whether relating to their university studies or for pure personal use.

The hypotheses made before beginning the case study are as follows:

- These extracurricular activities will further help the students with their English language abilities.

- The enjoyment factor of these activities will further help the students with their English language abilities.

- Specific activities, e.g. Wednesday night debating should add to their motivation levels for other areas of life – They will want to be better at debating with the new skills they will acquire.

- Having these extracurricular activities available to the students will give a stronger realization of the help that the university provides for the students outside of class time.

The aim of this study is to follow the new extracurricular activities offered to students at SIU, during semester one of 2011. It is well known knowledge that most students have different learning styles and abilities. Using this knowledge, the approach taken was to have these extracurricular activities available to the students. Electronic surveys were sent out to the first year students of SIU to gauge their perceptions of these new activities when these activities first became available. As well as the perceptions from the participating students, a survey was also sent out to the lecturers, assistant teachers and administrators who participated in these activities. As well as these online surveys, observations are made to gauge the students' thoughts and opinions about the activities.

Literature review

Fluency of a language is achieved in many ways. It is said by many academics that the use of the target language is the best way to achieve this. Of course, even with this being said, there are other aspects which need to be considered such as how each individual has a different manner in which he or she may learn a language best. There are factors such as each individual having different personalities, motivation, and so on, to consider. Although, Parker (2005) has suggested that many individuals are more similar than they are different. In a technical sense, this may be the case, but Parker also acknowledges that at an observable level, we are very different and he further explains that human capacity for learning is the greatest among primates and the most distinctive.

Zhang and Sternberg (2005) argue that the possible effects of individual-difference upon learning approaches are there and continuing efforts should be made to identify these variables. With the differences that each person has, there needs to be something to help keep these different individuals motivated and on task. A way in which we can keep motivation levels for learning as Worthy (2000, as cited by Xiaoping, 2011) has suggested, is that students are more motivated to learn when the students interest is involved in their learning.

As Race (2010) mentions, he gathered 100,000 answers from participating subjects to gain knowledge to find the factors that underpin successful learning. To find out how most people become good at things, he was able to conclude from the information gathered, that people felt that 'doing', was the best method to learn. As many can agree, learning can be further achieved through the 'doing' of the learnt things, making mistakes and taking learning into your own hands does work for most. Therefore, with the combination of learning, and with the motivation from involving students' interests, it would create the perfect learning environment.

Across the globe, as the understanding and the optimizing of the learning environment of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in Taiwan has been recognized by Taiwan's Ministry of Education, Wen-chi Vivian Wu, and Pin-hsiang

Natalie Wu, from Chien-kuo Technology University in Taiwan conducted a study to examine the EFL learning environment provided for their students. They primarily looked at the three aspects of the learning environment, the physical environment, instructional arrangements, and the social interaction among their students, in their Taiwan University to explore the perceptions of the students concerning its EFL learning environment (2008). Wu, W. and Wu, P. indicated in their research that, although social interaction among the students may not have a negative impact on the students learning environment, the participating students in their research considered the overall EFL environment to be an obstacle to their learning of the language (2008). While this may have been the case for the students in this Taiwan University, it does not imply that all students would consider these natures of environments in the same way.

According to Lightbown and Spada, individual differences in Second Language Learning, is something that needs to be considered largely. The Environment, the length of the language use, and the age of when the learning of the second language begun are all things which need to be looked at to begin thinking about the needs of individual differences. As well as these factors, students' characteristics may also be a part of these factors such as, intelligence of the language learner, aptitude, and motivation (2006). Under the chapter, '*Individual Differences In Second Language Learning*', they emphasize how success in second language learning can be affected by the individual learners characteristics. Although the affect of each individuals learning of a second language may be different, it is a large part of the students learning which needs to be measured and explored thoroughly.

At Kanda University of International studies, Japan, they have created the centre 'Self Access Learning Centre' (SALC), a place to promote and encourage learners to become more responsible for their own learning. An atmosphere for the students to practice and improve their English is created with their main aim of having this centre available is to raise the English language proficiency level of their students (Kanda University of International Studies, 2011). With this type of option available for the students, the two previously mentioned suggestions, learning involved with interest

and learning by doing, can work well as the centre follows what has been said. Thus through the knowledge of this all, SIU has come to offer these extracurricular activities while keeping all of this in mind.

The activities

From 2011 semester one at SIU Thailand, a new system was offered to students where they have the opportunity to take advantage of the new extracurricular activities that are offered during the week. Both in the mornings at 8:30.a.m. until 9:00.a.m. while the night activities occur from 8:00.p.m. onwards. All activities are available to any of the students at the campus and are not only for the first year students, although to make this case study more concentrated, the study results are only taken from the first year students of 2011 semester one, here at SIU. These extracurricular activities were created with the intention of helping students with their English abilities. As well as helping improvement of the students English, these activities give them extra activities that they can do outside of class and gives them the opportunity for bonding between the students, which has been seen through the first half of this semester.

The activities offered and their times are as follows:

Every morning 5 days a week: News N' Meals
Each morning from 8:30.a.m, in a specific room, the students are able to come and watch the morning news in English, read the newspaper or simply have breakfast with teachers and fellow students and discuss various topics using English language.

Monday nights: Movie night
Every Monday night there is a screening of a pre-chosen movie, in the SIU movie theatre, available for the students to watch.

Tuesday nights: English for special purposes
The activities during this session aim to target specific things such as pronunciation, vocabulary or tenses. Each session has a specific aim for improving the students' English language.

Wednesday nights: Public speaking, debating
Students are able to join in public speaking or debating activities where they have the opportunity to put their English language to real use and have a say on the topic

given for the night.

Friday nights: English writing
This activity ended at a very early stage as Friday nights usually meant that there were no students around the campus to attend the activity.

As one of the questions given in the survey, the level that students believe their English is before the activities, with the options from 1 to 5 where 5 is at a high level of English, have been divided in the following way:

1 – 8.3%

2 – no selections

3 – 12.5%

4 – 16.7%

5 – 62.5%

A high percentage of students believed that their level of English is already at a very high level. This may affect the coming answers that the students give for the survey.

Methodology

In the following tables are example results from surveys given to both students and staff, to help gather information relating to the extra-curricular activities.

The survey was completely anonymous and were created and sent out online to the participating students through means of email and social networking websites. Obtaining the responses for the surveys were at a 100% response rate as personal relationships had been built with the students so reminders in person were also made. The first survey involved the newly joined first year students' semester one of 2011. A mix of student nationalities was apparent with students ranging from Thai students to Bhutan, Uganda, Nepal and Myanmar students.

As the student intake number was 40 students, only a small group of students' views is available. In the same manner, the survey sent out to staff members was also conducted in the same manner as the student survey, an Internet survey that was completed anonymously by participants.

The following table, table 1, is the results gathered from students who participated in the offered extracurricular activities and answer the following questions given in the survey.

Table 1
Student Survey 1

Items	Participant - 1	Participant - 2	Participant - 3
Where are you from? What country are you from?	Bhutan – 50%	Thailand – 16.7%	Uganda – 13%
How good do you think your English is at the moment out of 5?	6 – 62.5%	4 – 17%	3 – 12.5%
Are you aware of the extracurricular activities that are available to you?	Yes – 75%	No – 8.3%	Don't have a clear answer – 16.7%
Which is your favorite activity?	Monday nights, Movie night – 79.2%	News'N Meals – 41.7%	Tuesday nights, English for special purposes – 37.5%
Do you like the morning 'NewsN' Meal' activity or the night activities better?	Morning NewsN' Meals activity – 29.2%	———————	Night activities – 70.8%
Why did you choose the above?	I don't feel so rushed at night like I do in the morning.	Because It helps to wake up early and freshen up for class, but I am then too tired to attend the night activities.	Because sometimes it becomes hard for us to manage time. We get a lot of assignments and it becomes tiring to attend the night activities.
Do you feel like these activities are helping in improving your English?	Yes – 87%	No – 4.3%	I am not sure – 8.7%
Please explain the above answer	I have learned to talk well and comfortably	Yes it is because we do everything in English like speaking, writing and listening. The whole conversation is done in English.	Students are brought together to interact among themselves, which in turn help us in speaking English with people from around the globe.
What is a recommendation you would give for these activities, if any?	There should be a listening section like from the radio or interview to further improve students listening skills	Encourage more students to attend by making the activities more fun	We should have sub divisions like for the week once a different class and a different one for the others

*Each question may have been answered by different participates

The questions given in the survey as shown in table 1, was able to provide answers to the questions that are held to help provide an insight of the perspectives that the students hold about these activities. Monday night movie night was the most favored activity for the students when the question "Which is your favorite activity?" was given. A surprising number of students selection of answer to the question, 'Do you like the morning NewN' Meals activity or the night activities better?', was that they prefer the NewN' Meals activity more between the two. Although over 70% of the students did answer to liking the night activities more in other questions such as, 'Which is your favorite activity? ', the answers to these questions did not quite fit together therefore one cannot be sure of whether the students have answered all questions correctly with full understanding or not.

The main aim was for the students to achieve improvement in their English from the availability of these activities, which have appeared to be achieved thus far. From the students who participated, 87% of them seemed to agree that their English level had improved. The reasons given for this was very positive such as "Students are brought together to interact among themselves which in turn help us in speaking English with people from around the globe". This does not imply that the activities directly helped, but successively they were able to socialize with the other students, which was one of the aims in which we wanted to gain from offering these activities. A large goal was that the students' would at least enjoy spending time with their fellow peers and during this time spent, use English. Although not consciously learning from direct teaching, they will nevertheless be learning to speak English through the genuine use of the language.

The survey given to participating lecturers, assistant teachers and administrators

With this survey given to the participating lecturers, assistant teachers and administrators, it is possible to see some of the answers they gave which will help in gaining their perspectives of the offered extracurricular activities.

The answers provided were mainly at a positive note. From looking at the answers given, all participating lecturers, assistant teachers and administrators thought

that the activities offered are on the positive side. Very honest opinions and helpful suggestions were made which will help improve these activities for the coming semesters.

Table 2
Participating Staff Survey

Items	Participant - 1	Participant - 2	Participant - 3
Are you a lecturer, assistant teacher (TA) or Administrator?	**Lecturer**	**Administrator**	**Assistant teacher**
What is your involvement in the activities? E.g. Tuesday night teaching, etc	Wednesday night public speaking, morning New'N Meals	Help with Monday nights 'Movie Night'	Involved with morning 'News'N Meals'
What do you think of the new extracurricular activities available for the students? Please explain why	I think we need to make options available, if the students make use of them that is hard to say. I think what we are doing is good but we need to be flexible if an opportunity would present itself.	Good, it helps students regain the happiness brought by study.	I think that they are good. They give something to do for the students while the also get to use more English
What are some changes you would make/ add to the activities?	I have thought about some form of writing club that would produce some English related newsletter once a month or so.	The frequency of the activities should be once every 15days	For them to work the way needed, they would have to become a little bit more compulsory or incorporated so that the students have some incentive in attending more.
Do you think that the students enjoy these activities available to them? Please give reasons	Yes and no. I think that time will become more of an issue as we approach midterms. Students will be forced to study more and will have less time for other activities.	Some do enjoy these, some do not because the new students feel fresh about everything, but the old students just do the same as before, this also has an effect of the new students.	Yes I think that they do. I think that they appreciate the fact that there are more opportunities for them to use English and they can do this while attending fun activities like Monday 'Movie Night'

Looking at 3 months since the extracurricular activities had begun, when the students were at a very busy stage such as when they had mid-term exams or their final exams, the rate of attendance almost went down to zero or where there was only

attendance of a few students. Nevertheless, for the next semester, we will have very similar activities available for students to keep up the routine of these activities being available to them as we feel that they have helped, whether in a small or large way.

The following results are the answers that the students have given after the first semester had ended. Although only a small number of participates answered this last survey, a small insight after the semester ended, answers from six students who were also participates of the previous survey, could be gained.

Table 3
Student Survey 2

How good do you think your English is at the moment?	4	5
Were you aware of the extracurricular activities that were available to you?	Yes	Yes
Which is your favorite activity?	Movie night - Monday nights English for special purposes - Tuesday nights	NewsN Meal Public speaking, debating – Wednesday nights
Did you feel like these activities were helping in improving your English?	Yes	Yes
Please explain the above answer	Helped me improve with my tense skills by the extra class on Tuesday	Improves one's vocabulary
What caused you to lower/ stop your attendance?	Not enough time to do other thing and that period of time is important for meeting in group work and other thing else	It became optional
What is a recommendation you would give for these activities, if any?	If it takes place earlier it will be good, something like 6.00-7.00	———

The answers obtained were unexpected from the students. Although we, as the activities organizers, had came up with reasons behind the lower level of attendance. These were reasons such as by assuming this may have been from the students having busy schedules etc. Assumptions were made to help explain these reasons, but it can be seen from the results that, the same reasons had been given by two students to answer why their attendance level did go down, which is the same reasons as one of the assumptions we had made. The students answer to the question "what caused you to lower/ stop your attendance?" as, "it became optional" was answered in this way.

This answer may be as, when the activities were first introduced, they were set as compulsory activities for the students because they were first introduced with the intention of them being integrated into their class work.

Again, this was a very surprising answer to hear from one of the students that the reason for their lower attendance came from the fact that the activities became optional. Although this answer did not imply that they would like the activities to become compulsory again, it is something to think about for future semesters when holding these activities.

Personal observations of activities

From being a part of the organization of these activities, the researcher was able to make personal observations of the activities while they occurred. The researchers' main role was to organize and set up the Monday movie nights as well as taking a smaller role in the other activities.

As the researcher was present for almost every night of the semester to observe the way the activities took place and the students' reactions to the movies, the researcher observed the following:

> The attendance level of the movie nights started very good. As with the other activities, the level of attendance did decrease. During each session, the students would first join in at the movie theatre, but after 15minutes into the movie, where they could understand the basic information about the movie that would be running, some of the students would then leave the theater indicating that they were not interested in the movie that was being shown that night. The researcher was also able to view the other activities while they were held, although the researcher may have not been a part of them. From viewing the other activities, the students again began very motivated to learn at the start of the semester when these activities first begun. Then the attendance level started to drop off. With these other activities, the attendance level really mattered. For example, for the Wednesday night activity where debating took place, with a very low number of students attending, a debate could not take place. From speaking to some of the students after the activities during the night, they would say things such as it being too late for the students to engage in a passionate debate at that time therefore not making the students want to attend. Maybe this is one of the large reasons behind the lower attendance level. Overall, it seemed as if one of the main reasons for the attendance level going down was due to boredom that the students had with these activities and the latter survey to the

students was able to confirm this theory. The assumptions made from these observations can be confirmed by putting them together with the survey results.

Findings and Discussion

Students are all different, to help with this difference there is need to keep the motivation level of the students high, and as viewed in the literature review, students need to be studying something that they are interested in. As we can see from the observation, the number of students' attendance for the activities went down. Students in the latter survey gave the reasons for this such as the activities became very repetitive and boring to them.

As a result, the attendance numbers could not be kept towards the times that the students felt they were too busy to attend with things such as mid-term exams or final exams. Ways in which is recommended to help with the motivation levels for students as found in the literature review is to have the students interested in what they are learning. In addition, in the latter survey, some of the recommendations from the students were for a way to keep them interested by making the activities more fun to keep them going, which follows what was said in the literature review.

In the first survey taken by the students, they seemed to be happy with the fact that these activities are available to help them. To know this also raises our motivation level as a reason to keep these activities going. Although these activities are not available in the same way that Kanda Universities SALC has made available, we offer these activities with a similar aim to help the students improve in their English language skills. Overall, we could see that offering these activities has mostly had a positive feedback from the students therefore making it worth continuing and having them available, as they seem to be able to do what they were first set out to do.

Comments and disclaimer

Although this case study attempts to show the perceptions of the participants in the extracurricular activities, it must be kept in mind that the researcher is also a staff member at SIU and help with these activities so the researchers' views that occur in this paper may be biased. The results of the case study conducted should be taken

with the following limitations in mind.

First, the number of the participants is quite limited therefore the results may not be detailed enough to truly analyze. Second, since the data was collected from an online survey which was sent out to the students, the question whether the answers to the survey questions really reflect the students' real thoughts or not are questionable due to the time constraint therefore, the results may not express the exact results required. Thirdly, other social variables need to be considered in future research, such as students' English proficiency levels, gender, major, learning styles, and other student characteristics.

Recommendations taken from the survey and observation are as follows:

● There are improvements that need to be made for semester two extracurricular activities, which may help with the problems such as the attendance numbers.

● Monday night movie night – The students will have a choice to select the movies they want to watch so that there will be more motivation for them to attend this activity.

● Tuesday night English for special purposes – This activity is to stay the same as it had worked well throughout the semester. When closer to mid-term exams or final-exams, the activities should focus more on being connected to their current studies and can help the students with their mid-term exams or final-exams.

● Wednesday night public speaking, debating – To have more of an aim of making these activities 'fun' and 'interesting' to the students.

● Morning NewN' Meals – This activity will not have any change as it occurred very naturally and worked well for the students.

Conclusion

This case study has given an insight to whether these extracurricular activities have helped in achieving what was expected of them. With a combination of survey results gathered from the students, participating lecturers, assistant teachers and

administrators, etc., personal observation and results gathered from a latter survey given to students, a further insight was able to be gained. With the recommendations in mind for the extracurricular activities in the future, room for improvement is always available for the activities.

As gathered from the observations, the number of attendance went down significantly and to make these activities work better, the attendance of the students is needed. From the latter survey result, we could see that the reasons for the decrease in attendance came from such things as the students being too busy with assignments etc., but also with the combination of the activities losing their interest, so they did not feel the need to attend.

As interest-based activities need to be involved in these activities, and as a way to do this, first we have started out by giving the students the option to choose the movies which should be screened as this should be able to raise their interest level and improve the attendance number which should improve the experience of these activities overall. When selecting the materials for the activities, more consideration needs to be given to the fact that, as we could see from the first and second survey, the attendance numbers remarkably decreased towards the end of the semester where students felt that their schedules could not fit in with these activities.

From observing the activities and from looking at the answers of the surveys from the students themselves, one can then summarize that the activities were successful overall and for the improvements needed, the surveys and observation has been able to provided very useful information for the semesters to come.

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Appendix

Students survey questions:

1.) Where are you from? What country are you from?

( ) Thailand ( ) Uganda ( ) Bhutan ( ) Nepal ( ) India ( ) Myanmar

( ) Taiwan ( ) China ( ) Other

2.) How good do you think your English is at the moment?

( ) I have no problems having a conversation in English

( ) I can have a conversation

( ) Neutral

( ) I can get through a small conversation

( ) I struggle to speak English

3.) Are you aware of the extra-curricular activities that are available to you?

( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't have a clear answer

4.) Which is your favorite activity? Select as many as you like. Or the NONE option

[ ] NewsN Meal

[ ] Movie night - Monday nights

[ ] English for special purposes - Tuesday nights

[ ] Public speaking, debating - Wednesday nights

[ ] Academic Writing - Friday nights

[ ] NONE

5.) Do you like the morning 'NewsN' Meal' Activity or the night activities better?

( ) Morning NewsN' Meal activity

( ) Night activities

6.) Why did you choose the above? _____

7.) Do you feel like these activities are helping in improving your English?

( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) I am not sure

8.) Please explain the above answer _____

9.) What is a recommendation you would give for these activities, if any?

_____

Second students survey questions:

1.) How good do you think your English is at the moment?

( ) I have no problems having a conversation in English

( ) I can have a conversation

( ) Neutral

( ) I can get through a small conversation

( ) I struggle to speak English

2.) Were you aware of the extra-curricular activities that are available to you?

( ) Yes   ( ) No   ( ) Don't have a clear answer

3.) Which is your favorite activity?   Select as many as you like. Or the NONE option

[ ] NewsN Meal

[ ] Movie night - Monday nights

[ ] English for special purposes - Tuesday nights

[ ] Public speaking, debating - Wednesday nights

[ ] Academic Writing - Friday nights

[ ] NONE

4.) Did you feel like these activities were helping in improving your English?

( ) Yes   ( ) No   ( ) I am not sure

5.) Please explain the above answer _____

6.) What caused you to lower/ stop your attendance? _____

7.) What is a recommendation you would give for these activities, if any?

_____

Teachers survey questions:

1.) Are you a lecturer, assistant teacher or Administrator?

[ ] Lecturer   [ ] Assistant teacher   [ ] Administrator

2.) What is your involvement in the activities? E.g. Tuesday night teaching, etc

_____

3.) What do you think of the new extracurricular activities available for the students? Please explain
why _____

4.) What are some changes you would make/ add to the activities?

_____

5.) Do you think that the students enjoy these activities available to them? Please give reasons.

_____

A Door to the World or to Just a Handful of Anglo Cultures? English as a Lingua Franca and Students' Orientations toward English

Mark Fifer Seilhamer
Nagoya University of Commerce and Business, Japan

Bio-data

Mark Fifer Seilhamer has taught English and linguistics courses in California, Hawaii, Guam, Taiwan, Singapore, and Japan. He recently earned a Ph.D. from National University of Singapore and is presently an assistant professor at Nagoya University of Commerce and Business in Japan. His research interests include language & identity and the politics of English as a global language.

Abstract

In applied linguistics circles, one of the most polarizing issues related to the global spread of English has been the English as a lingua franca (ELF) research paradigm, which focuses on English use for communication among speakers who did not learn English as a 'native' language (ENL). ELF proponents maintain that 'non-native speaker' interactions in which speakers have little use for 'native-speaker' norms constitute much (perhaps even the majority of) English use in the world today, and that intelligibility and the development of communication strategies should, therefore, be the primary instructional objectives in many EFL teaching contexts. ELF critics, however, charge that a focus on mere intelligibility deprives learners of the valuable linguistic capital that comes with adherence to ENL norms and, furthermore, argue that EFL students themselves desire these 'native speaker' norms. Teachers that recognize valid arguments on both sides of this debate are thus faced with the dilemma of deciding whether to emphasize ELF, emphasize ENL, or try to balance the two perspectives in their classrooms. Reporting qualitative data from my own multi-case study of Taiwanese learners/users of English, I will discuss students' orientations toward English – their associations of English with specific traditionally English-speaking countries (such as the U.S. and the U.K.) versus associations of the language with an imagined global community of English users. I will then proceed to discuss various ways that I have personally attempted to balance the ELF and ENL perspectives in my own English courses in Japan.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca, intelligibility, linguistic capital, norms

Introduction

In the decade since Barbara Seidlhofer (2001) first made a call to "*close the 'conceptual gap'*" (p. 151) between the increased acknowledgement in academic circles of the many diverse contexts of English use and the continued adherence to '*native speaker*'[i] norms in English language classrooms, the concept of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has emerged as one of the most polarizing issues in applied linguistics. With their tireless promotion of the ELF research paradigm, Seidlhofer (2001, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009), Jennifer Jenkins (2000, 2006, 2007, 2009)[ii], and an ever-growing list of other ELF proponents (e.g., Dewey, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2006; Mauranen, 2006) have indeed managed to bring English as a lingua franca to the attention of researchers and teachers alike. This increased attention and the debate accompanying it, however, seem to have resulted in more questions than answers for those ostensibly on the front-lines of the battle to "*close the conceptual gap*" − English teachers in expanding circle[iii] contexts.

Almost all textbooks still very much embrace English as a 'native' language (ENL) norms. As Kirkpatrick (2006) notes, "Generally speaking, publishers prefer the native-speaker model, as this means they can publish their ELT textbooks for a global market" (p. 71). Given this fact, where are we to look for pedagogical guidance for our ELF instruction? Would an ELF-oriented curriculum involve explicit teaching of features that Seildlhofer (2004) and others have documented in ELF corpora, such as the use of *isn't it*? as an invariant tag? Or would such a curriculum be defined more by what is *not* taught − excluding certain ENL features (like those pesky articles) that Seidlhofer (2004) found in her corpus to be unproblematic for effective communication when omitted?

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[i] For a more detailed epistemological discussion of form and function in scholarly debates of ELF, see Saraceni (2008).

[ii] Wenger (1998) points out that "In a nexus, multiple trajectories become part of each other, whether they clash or reinforce each other. They are, at the same time, one and multiple" (p. 159).

[iii] Doing so, however, will probably require teachers to design many of their own materials since the vast majority of published texts are still very much oriented toward American and British ENL norms (see Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Could teaching ELF simply involve nothing more than a greater tolerance for features traditionally regarded as errors? And would ELF-oriented instruction that disregarded many ENL norms even be something our students' desire? These are just a few of the questions I have heard voiced by teachers regarding the introduction of ELF in our classrooms.

After a brief discussion of English as a lingua franca and some of the criticisms leveled at its proponents, I will, in this article, focus on the subject of students' orientations toward English – the extent to which a group of Taiwanese English learners/users in my own multi-case qualitative study associated English with traditionally English-speaking countries (the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) versus associations of the language with an imagined global community of English users. I will then wrap up the article with a discussion of various ways that I have personally attempted to balance ELF and ENL perspectives in my own English courses I am presently teaching in Japan.

English as a lingua franca – What exactly is it?

In one of the first published articles examining ELF use, Firth (1996) defined *English as a lingua franca* as "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language of communication" (p. 240, italics in original). In more recent years, however, Firth's stipulation that English be a "foreign" language for all participants in ELF interactions has been abandoned by most ELF proponents, who now (somewhat reluctantly) acknowledge that ELF interactions can and do (sometimes) involve 'native speakers' of English, with the condition that "when Inner Circle speakers participate in ELF communication, they do not set the linguistic agenda" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 201). In other words, a 'native speaker' of English engaging in an ELF interaction must treat his or her interlocutors as communicative equals and is expected to make the same accommodation and clarification efforts as the other participants to facilitate understanding. To reflect this inclusion of 'native speakers' in ELF communication, most definitions of ELF today are generally worded

something like the following one by Seidlhofer (2005): "when English is chosen as the means of communication among people from *different* first language backgrounds, across lingua-cultural boundaries" (p. 339, italics in original).

The reluctance of ELF proponents to dwell much on the 'native speakers' of English that could potentially be populating ELF interactions is understandable, given the fact that most ELF research focuses exclusively on communication among speakers who did *not* learn English as a 'native' language, and the ideology on which the ELF research paradigm is based explicitly denounces English as a 'native' language (ENL) models as irrelevant for most English learners and users in the world today. With countless statements proclaiming that "the vast majority of verbal exchanges in English do not involve any native speakers of the language at all" (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339), ELF proponents have indeed made statistical arguments about the numbers of 'non-native' English speakers and predictions about the influence of these speakers the cornerstones of their ELF promotion. Prophesies that English "will be a language used mainly in multilingual contexts as a second language and for communication between non-native speakers" (Graddol, 1999, p. 57) and that "it will be those who speak English as a second or foreign language who will determine its world future" (Graddol, 1997, p. 10) are frequently cited in the ELF literature.

Although an accurate measure of English exchanges between 'non-native' speakers would be impossible to obtain, and some critics (e.g., Maley, 2009; Saraceni, 2008) question whether interactions involving no 'native speakers' of English really do outnumber those that do, no one can deny that the number of 'non-native' English speakers using the language to communicate with one another every day is indeed huge. It is also widely acknowledged by ELF proponents and critics alike (e.g., Crystal, 1997; Prodromou, 2003, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2009) that the many culturally specific vocabulary items and idiomatic forms of ENL (particularly opaque idioms like *I'll give you a hand* and *out of left field*) serve to greatly obstruct understanding in lingua franca situations. With its focus on efficiency and comprehensibility, ELF certainly has no use for these culturally specific and idiomatic ENL norms.

But what other ENL norms are irrelevant in ELF interactions? Jenkins (2000) identifies certain phonological features of ENL that she deems necessary for successful ELF communication, dubbing these features the ELF phonological 'Core.' 'Non-Core' features, in contrast, are those that can vary considerably without greatly impeding understanding. As for lexico-grammar, Seidlhofer (2004) identifies a variety of features that repeatedly appeared in her ELF corpus research – features she says would traditionally be classified as errors, but "appear to be unproblematic and no obstacle to communicative success" (p. 220). These include:

- omission of articles

- treating all nouns as count-nouns (e.g., *informations, furnitures, advices*)

- omission of the 3rd person singular simple present tense *s* (e.g., *She look sad.*)

- interchangeable use of the pronouns *who* and *which* (e.g., *I want the book who is on the shelf.*)

- *Isn't it* as an invariable tag (e.g., *You like football, isn't it?*)

Since the above features represent lexico-grammar areas in which much variation does not impede understanding, they would all be considered 'non-Core' ELF features. Successful ELF communication can occur, for example, regardless of whether articles are used or omitted.

The fact that there appear to be quite a few such 'non-Core' linguistic features across a broad spectrum of different ELF interactions provides the rationale for some ELF proponents to characterize ELF as "an emerging English that exists in its own right" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 2). Describing ELF as a variety of any kind, however, is problematic. Not only does ELF have no base in any speech community. Its contexts of use and the proficiency of its speakers also vary wildly. As Meierkord (2005) points out, ELF does not constitute "a stable community of language users but rather one which is in constant flux" (p. 93). Recognizing that Kachru and others working in the World Englishes paradigm have been largely successful in legitimating indigenized Englishes by codifying their forms, those who claim ELF is a distinct variety seem to be attempting to replicate this strategy. Indian English, Singlish, and Tok Pisin, however, all have bases in specific speech community, which has allowed their forms

to stabilize. The same cannot be said for ELF and its constantly shifting participants and contexts. I therefore believe that conceptualizing ELF as a *variety* and focusing on its *form* is misguided. Along with Mollin (2006, 2007), I feel that it is much more accurate to conceptualize ELF as a specific *register* of English, since *register* (in the Hallidayan sense) focuses on the *function* rather than users or the form. Characteristics of ELF seem to largely be the result of communication strategies implemented for the purpose of facilitating understanding.

In a corpus study of ELF users in the European Union, Mollin (2006, 2007) found the majority of 'non-Core' ELF features identified by Seidlhofer (2004) to actually occur far more infrequently than Seidlhofer's data suggested. One form feature that she did find to occur with some regularity, however, was the tendency of speakers to extend the uses of a few common verbs, such as *have* and *make*, producing utterances like the following:

> My first son is an economist; the second makes research in biology (Mollin, 2007, p. 50).

Mollin explains that the reason for such usage could be either speakers' lack of lexical knowledge or their attempts to choose words that their interlocutors are sure to know, but either way, this tendency in her corpus is certainly not be construed as evidence that ELF is a distinct variety with unique and stable features. She argues that it is instead "a direct result of communicative purpose: getting meaning across…" (Mollin, 2007, p. 51). Mollin (2006) identifies several other characteristics of ELF interactions in her corpus that are also arguably the result of this *function* – arising from the need for efficiency and comprehensibility in ELF communication. These include simplification, redundancies, repetition and requests for repetition, use of short utterances, use of a relatively small range of vocabulary, addition of prepositions (e.g., *discuss about*, *phone to*), and addition of nouns (e.g., *black color*, *how long time*).

Teaching ELF

Attempting to deflect criticism that she is trying to impose a new ELF model on

teachers and learners of English in EFL situations, Seidlhofer (2006) insists that she is merely doing the job of a descriptive linguist, and it is up to individual teachers and learners to decide whether an ELF pedagogical model could be appropriate for their circumstances. While Seidlhofer and her fellow ELF proponents may not be actively imposing such a model, they make it abundantly clear that they view their descriptive research as having pedagogical implications. Seidlhofer & Jenkins (2003), for instance, sum up their case for ELF description by stating, "At a time when English is the de facto global lingua franca, it is anachronistic to deny that widespread developments in these contexts of use constitute legitimate change which needs to be described *and taken into pedagogical account*" (p. 152, emphasis added). Seidlhofer (2005) offers more specifics on how descriptions of ELF use might be "taken into pedagogical account," suggesting that by not focusing on 'non-Core' features found to be unproblematic for understanding in ELF communication, teachers "can free up valuable teaching time for more general language awareness and communication strategies" (p. 340). For teachers, who constantly have to choose their battles selectively, this suggestion makes intuitive sense. Our students could certainly benefit from additional communication strategy instruction and descriptive ELF research promises to provide corpus-informed information about which troublesome ENL features we might be able to safely ignore.

Critics argue, however, that by ignoring those troublesome ENL features, we would be doing our students a great disservice. Prodromou (2008), for example, asserts that "a reduced form of ELF does not condemn L2-users to voicelessness, but risks bringing them stuttering onto the world stage of ELF, i.e. with reduced linguistic capital" (p. 250). Ur (2008) likewise states, "Learners have a right to be taught the most useful, acceptable, and important forms…" It is the view of these scholars that a focus on mere intelligibility deprives learners of the valuable linguistic capital that comes with adherence to ENL norms.

Teachers like myself who recognize very valid arguments on both sides of this debate are thus faced with the dilemma of deciding whether to emphasize communication strategies and language awareness with little regard to certain ENL

norms, continue to stress ENL norms, or attempt to somehow balance the two perspectives in our classrooms. On the one hand, I definitely want to prepare my students for the ELF interactions they are very likely to encounter with great regularity in the future. I would also very much like to promote and raise awareness of ELF among my students since it positions them as legitimate users of the language – not deficient in relation to 'native speakers' – and attempts to alleviate the unfair advantage enjoyed by people like me who learned English effortlessly from infancy. At the same time, however, I can't ignore the reality that proficiency with ENL norms does serve as a gatekeeper, and I do want to equip my students with as much linguistic capital as possible to succeed in this world. As Canagarajah (2006) reminds us, "English is a linguistic capital and we ignore it at our peril" (p. 205).

But what do EFL students themselves want? Giving customers what they demand is, after all, one of the most important principles of the marketplace, and English is indeed a commodity. Maley (2009) cites several studies conducted in a variety of contexts, including one by ELF proponent Jennifer Jenkins, which all show a learner preference for ENL norms. Some other researchers, however, – Erling (2007) in a German context, Lamb (2004) in Indonesia, and Yashima (2002) in Japan – have found that sizeable numbers of their student participants did not particularly value ENL varieties of English and associated the language more with a fuzzy world culture concept that Ryan (2006) has dubbed the *imagined global community of English users*. The preferences, aspirations, and English associations of our particular students could vary wildly. What do *our* students desire?

Case Studies of Four Taiwanese Students' Orientations toward English
I will now briefly describe my own investigation of students' orientations toward English. Mine was a qualitative multi-case study of four female Taiwanese learners/users of English who had all previously been my students in an English course at their college in Taiwan. This was a longitudinal study that examined the four participants' community affiliations and attitudes over a year-long period following their graduation from a college specializing in foreign languages, where they had all

majored in English and minored in French. All four participants were around 20 years old at the time of the study. This investigation was a large one with multiple research questions, but the question relevant to the present discussion was this: To what extent are participants orienting toward membership in an imagined global community of English users (as opposed to associating English primarily with traditionally English-speaking countries – the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand)?

Research Design

My data for this investigation was obtained through multiple semi-structured interviews conducted in English with the four participants, my own participant observation – spending time with them in some of the various communities they were part of in Taiwan, and continuous email correspondence with them when I was not in Taiwan.

For the semi-structured interviews, I employed a narrative approach, for I completely agree with Kanno (2003) in her assertion that "Tapping into identity – how one views oneself and relates to the world around one – requires an inquiry into people's experience and meaning making, and an inquiry into those areas calls for the use of narrative" (p. 11). In the first of these audio-recorded interviews, conducted just a few weeks before the participants' college graduation in May of 2009, I began by eliciting narratives describing past experiences learning the various languages in their linguistic repertoires. I then moved on to narratives of the present, requesting that they reflect on their communicative interactions in the present (both face-to-face and technology-mediated interactions) and describe their daily language use in as much detail as possible along with accompanying contexts. Finally, I ended interviews by eliciting narratives of the future, asking participants to envision their future interactions, both in their lives outside the workplace and in the professional realm of their future careers.

After doing preliminary analyses on the data obtained from the initial interviews and notes taken during participant observation, I wrote up drafts of each participant's 'story,' taking into account and incorporating new data obtained through subsequent

email correspondence. These drafts were emailed to participants shortly before I returned to Taiwan in March of 2009. In addition to conducting follow-up interviews with participants during this trip, I also discussed with them the story drafts they had just read, giving them the opportunity to correct factual errors, comment on my analyses, and provide alternative interpretations.

After analyzing the complete body of data from each of my participants (the initial and follow-up interviews, as well as relevant data from email correspondence), I updated drafts of each participant's 'story' and emailed these drafts to the participants for them to again confirm, modify, or reject the interpretations I had made. Involving participants in the data analysis like this not only prevented me from misrepresenting their experiences. It also allowed for the sort of empowering research advocated by Rampton (1992), which "places informants in the driving seat, with the aid of researchers reflexively constituting themselves as objects in a theory which they are partly shaping themselves" (p. 56), making the entire research process, rather than just the data collection phase of the study, a dialogue between the researcher and participants.

My Position as Researcher

My position in carrying out this research in Taiwan was simultaneously one of an insider and an outsider. Since I had previously lived in Taiwan, I was quite familiar with Taiwanese societal norms and the particular ways things were done there. I believe that as a teacher at the college my participants graduated from, I had been well-liked among students, and many of them (including this study's participants) had continued to stay in contact with me via email after I left Taiwan and moved to Singapore. My participants for this study were comfortable with me and regarded me as a friend. They, therefore, had no problem immediately opening up in relaying their life narratives, allowing the interviews to proceed smoothly without an awkward initial 'getting to know the researcher' period.

At the same time, however, I was, as an American, very much a foreigner in Taiwan and this fact was quite obvious. My lack of proficiency in Mandarin Chinese

also, of course, made me very much an outsider. Giving participants the option of conducting interviews in Mandarin Chinese would indeed have enabled them to relay stories of their experiences with greater ease, but this was not an option due to my limited Chinese abilities. Use of an interpreter for interviews, I felt, would have greatly hindered the relaxed dialogue that I aimed to achieve. My participants were well aware of my limited Chinese skills though and had no problem expressing themselves in English. English, in any case, was arguably the more appropriate medium for the research process here since the role of English abilities in participants' identity negotiation constituted the main focus of inquiry for this study.

Gigi

One participant, Gigi, had spent a summer traveling around continental Europe using ELF for all communication (except for using a bit of French in France). She had close friends from Switzerland and Czech that she met and spent a great deal of time with in Taiwan (communicating in English) and an Italian boyfriend that she had met on Skype. Gigi and her boyfriend periodically visited each other, taking turns traveling to Taiwan and Italy, but theirs was mostly a long-distance relationship, and they communicated every day in English via email and MSN instant messaging.

Gigi associated English strongly with an imagined global community of English users. She told me in our March 2010 interview, in fact, that even if she were inclined to make specific cultural associations with English, she wouldn't really know what images to associate the language with. "American culture seems a little bit unfamiliar for me," she remarked. "I don't know much about that. I've never been to the States." Had she had more significant interactions with Canadians or Americans, Gigi might have had stronger cultural associations, but the experiences she had had communicating with people from various European countries, both in Europe and Taiwan, had brought her to view English as, in her words (from email correspondence), "a door to the world" rather than a door to just a handful of Anglo cultures.

Audrey

Another participant, Audrey, had had some experience using ELF for communication with a few friends and acquaintances from Korea, Czech, Finland, and Norway. She had far more English interaction, however, with a group of close friends from the U.S., Canada, Ireland, and South Africa – most of whom she had met while working at a bar/nightclub that catered mostly to a foreign clientele. Within this group of friends was a comedy troupe sub-community composed of mostly Canadians. Audrey routinely participated in this comedy troupe, performing with them when they put on comedy shows at her place of employment. Although her boyfriend was an Anglophone South African, she considered him British due to his ethnicity. "Their family is British," she told me in our March 2010 interview, and she went on to point out that his mother was, in fact, eligible to apply for a British passport because her grandfather had been a British citizen.

Audrey associated English strongly with the people and cultures of the U.S., U.K., and Canada, which is hardly surprising considering the extent that she invested her time and energies in communities composed of people from these countries – communities in which she had the good fortune of having her voice heard and respected.

Rachel

Another participant, Rachel, had an intense passion for French language and culture – a passion that she had been nurturing for years. She had had a French boyfriend for two years prior to the beginning of the study, and all her communication with him had been in English even though she eventually became quite proficient in French. She split with this boyfriend well before the study began, but his influence continued to be evident, for Rachel's English was very French-accented. She also used ELF for email and telephone communication with customers at various jobs she had held while in school and after graduation.

At the start of the study, Rachel professed to having a very international orientation toward English and not associating the language strongly with any

particular culture. She contrasted her orientation to English with her orientation to French, which was inextricably intertwined, in her mind, with the French people and culture. In our May 2009 interview, she told me, "When I speak French, I feel I am in love with this language, this culture, this country. I think English is more like an international language because everyone needs to learn it right now, and so for me it's more necessity – worldwide".

Toward the end of the study, however, Rachel informed me that her previous orientation toward English – associating it with an imagined global community of English users and simply a necessity for everyone – had completely changed. This change was the result of a close friendship she had forged with two Americans. English, instead of having general international associations, had quickly come to be associated with Americans and American culture for Rachel. And she was extremely enthusiastic about learning from her American cultural informants, as is evident in the following excerpt from our March 2010 interview:

> They are teaching me a lot about their culture, their living style, what they watch, what they do in America, how they say in this situation. So I really like it…I have total love of America – everything. Yes, I think I'm really American!

Although "I think I'm really American!" was said with a laugh and was clearly intended to be a joke, the utterance illustrates the extent to which she had embraced all things American. With her recent shift to associating English specifically with Americans and American culture, Rachel also noted a change in the way she approached learning English. Describing her previous attitude toward English as regarding it "as a tool," she explained in our March 2010 interview:

> We just say, "I take it as a tool." If you want to just use it as a tool – I mean for business trade or something, I think it's no need to know how to speak with them ['native speakers' of English] – because maybe you don't use English to communicate with Americans, with British…They talk to Japanese. They talk to Europeans – yeah. So if you want to just   learn fast and um – quick and efficiently, you just take it as a tool. Yeah, so you just need to get a good skill. I think that will be enough.

Since she had developed an intense interest in communicating with Americans, however, this approach, Rachel asserted, was no longer appropriate for her. "I will focus on the culture things for myself," she added "For French and for English as well".

Shannon

My fourth participant, Shannon, also underwent a shift in her orientation toward English during the course of the study. Despite having some regular ELF interaction with a Spanish Internet buddy on Skype, this was not sufficient to sway an intense American orientation toward English that she had nurtured since childhood. Shannon had American-born cousins that she visited and communicated with regularly. During her elementary school years, she also attended private English classes held by a Taiwanese English teacher who had previously lived in the U.S. for many years and frequently reminisced about the wonderful life she had had in America. This teacher had made quite an impact on Shannon, who recalled in our May 2009 interview, "My English teacher, she's very professional and she speaks English very well, so when I start learning English with her, I wanted to be like her".

By the time she completed junior high school, Shannon had set a goal for herself of eventually living and working in the U.S – a dream she carried with her into her college years and beyond. It was, therefore, standard American English with a very standard American accent that she strove for. In her efforts to achieve this accent, she reported watching American TV shows – especially the show *Friends*. Describing her use of this show for listening practice and exposure to standard American English pronunciation, she told me in our May 2009 interview:

> I watched Friends twice – the whole ten seasons…because it's almost all about practicing. I want to have speech more like real Americans – American English. So I think because they are all Americans in the TV shows, they can speak the real American speech and pronunciation and intonation…so I watch it to learn how to pronounce the words correctly, or the intonation or something.

Shannon's shift in English orientations occurred near the end of the study, when

she participated in the World Model United Nations conference, which was held in Taipei that year. Over the course of the entire week of the conference, Shannon reported, all of her communication was conducted in English, regardless of whether her interlocutors were foreigners or fellow Taiwanese. Although she had had some previous experience using ELF and she had certainly been well aware, on an intellectual level anyway, of the potential of English as a means to communicate with the world, it took 1,800 World Model U.N. delegates converging on a convention center in Taipei and her experience there, interacting with large numbers of students from all over the globe, to truly make the reality of ELF hit home for her. As she explained in our March 2010 interview:

> Knowing how to speak English is a very very good thing. Last week, I was kind of surprised that actually we can communicate – all the people around the world – in English. And if we don't learn English – we only speak Chinese or the official language of a country – then we cannot communicate and even have that conference, and we cannot share the ideas, have the discussion, and people are just isolated… Before, I talked to the Spanish guy, but this time, I think, is very special because people from all around the world – like Venezuela and some – India, and the people that I have never met…a lot of German people and Spanish people and some people with accents that I cannot really understand…and it's amazing!

Shannon summed up the impact her participation in this conference had on her and her view of English by calling it "the real experience of how important the language is". Although she continued to associate English strongly with the U.S., her experience at the World Model U.N. conference served to make the imagined global community of English users far more real for her. Previously the imagined global community of English users had been a truly imagined concept that, for her, was far too fuzzy to compete with the real and concrete images she had of the U.S. and Americans. As a result of her experience at the conference, however, she began to negotiate a *nexus of multi-membership* (Wenger, 1998) that enabled her to retain her American associations while simultaneously embracing her membership in an imagined global community of English users.

Some Implications of the Study for the Present Discussion

Without a doubt, the level of English proficiency and the amount of opportunity my study participants had to use English is higher than would be the case for the majority of English students in most EFL contexts. There are, nevertheless, some points from my four participants' narratives that can inform the present discussion of ELF versus ENL classroom models and norms – points that have also informed my own teaching now in the Japanese university context.

Without a doubt, there are a large number of English users in Taiwan and the rest of the world, who, like Gigi, engage in English interactions primarily with other L2 English speakers and have a decidedly global orientation toward English. Rachel and Shannon's stories illustrate, however, that community participation and affiliations are constantly subject to change. At one point in English users' learning trajectories, they may feel that achieving basic understanding with simplified ELF is all that is needed for their present communicative needs, but communicative needs can and do change, both over the long-term and from moment to moment. As Prodromou (2008) points out:

> An L2-L2 conversation can become an L2-L1 exchange from one moment to the next; it can evolve from shallow to deep commonality within the same speech event; a business deal can grow into friendship or marriage; ELF can go from 'big talk' to 'small talk' and vice versa (p. 248).

As I discussed earlier, I consider ELF to be a register of English. For some English learners and users in the world today, communicating in a single English register may prove to be sufficient for their entire lives. This, I believe, will not be the case for everyone though. Merely making oneself understood will, sooner or later, be deemed insufficient by many. Even if one's community affiliations do not change dramatically as Rachel's did, the demands of projecting the multiple aspects of one's identity through language are ever present. Upon reaching the point that she could easily make herself understood, even Gigi, with her decidedly international orientation toward English, found this inadequate, telling me in our March 2010 interview, "When my English is capable to communicate, I become more cautious

about what I speak because my language presents who I am".

Gigi, Audrey, Rachel, and Shannon, with their varied and shifting orientations to English, were all students in the same classroom several years ago and may represent the diverse orientations that are represented in many of our EFL classrooms since few schools stream students into ELF and ENL tracks. Attempting to balance the ELF and ENL perspectives would thus seem to be the best course of action for most of us. Certainly, a curriculum that emphasizes accommodation, clarification, repair, and negotiation strategies for communication with a wide variety of interlocutors in different situations would benefit all students. As Canagarajah (2007) reminds us, LFE [Lingua franca English] does not exist as a system out there. It is constantly brought into being in each context of communication" (p. 91). By focusing on "strategies and processes of language negotiation (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 210) while also familiarizing students with multiple accents through recordings now easily accessible on the Internet, we can equip them with the skills to handle the many different challenges that will emerge in ELF communication.

In order to provide students with linguistic capital and resources that will serve them well in multiple communities and appeal to the wide orientations toward English that we are likely to encounter in EFL contexts, I believe a more or less 'standard' English should continue to be taught, but not necessarily one that totally embraces ENL norms. It is possible to present language to students that any prescriptive grammarian would deem correct, while attempting to avoid highly idiomatic language and lexical items specific to particular countries. Efforts can also be made to alleviate the challenges learners face without transmitting ELF features their interlocutors could perceive as errors. Instead of telling students that it is acceptable, for example, to use the invariant tag *isn't it?*, they could be taught to use *right?* As an invariant tag – a practice that would be considered grammatically correct and would not detract from their linguistic capital in any community they might find themselves in.

More Details on My Personal Classroom Balancing Act

At my present position teaching at a Japanese university, I have been attempting to put

all of the recommendations I discussed above into practice. In my case, I have a great deal of freedom to do as I wish in my classrooms and have hence been able to mold most of the courses I teach to the basic principles outlined above. I have the luxury (or curse, some would argue) of being able to design my own materials (in collaboration with colleagues) for many of the courses I teach. I do realize, however, that particular circumstances in individual teaching contexts vary wildly. Even with the freedom I enjoy, I would be unable to adopt a totally ELF-oriented curriculum even if I wanted to, for my university places a great emphasis on the TOEIC exam, requiring all students to take this test each semester. If I totally ignored ENL norms in my classrooms, I would be depriving my students of a good TOEIC score, which would qualify them for study abroad opportunities.

In my writing classes, I assign two distinct kinds of assignments with very different marking criteria. For the regular essay assignments, 'correctness' (according to ENL norms) is one component of the marking criteria. For students' journal assignments, however, grades are not based at all on ENL standards of 'correctness.' These journal assignments are graded solely on the basis of quantity (number of words) and understandability – whether students are able to make their point (in whatever manner). For these writing courses, I explain to my students in the first class that both approaches to writing and language are necessary in different situations and thoroughly explain my grading criteria for both kinds of assignments.

This semester, all of our department's English majors (approximately 100 students) are also participating in an ELF Internet communication project that I organized in collaboration with a friend teaching at a university in Taiwan. For this project, my students are having discussions on various assigned topics with Taiwanese university students in small online forum groups of six to eight members each. Through their participation in this project, students at both universities can gain valuable experience with accommodation, clarification, repair, and negotiation strategies.

Conclusion

The balance that I try to achieve between ELF and ENL orientations in my own classrooms is one that I believe acknowledges the realities of both ELF in the world today and students' continuing need for the linguistic capital that comes with adherence to ENL norms. Each teacher's balancing act will vary depending on his or her individual views and particular circumstances. Even if we are severely restricted in materials selection or time with students in the classroom, we can still try to make our students aware of the diversity they are likely to encounter. Even if we lack the time to give students explicit instruction in ELF communication strategies, we can still attempt to foster positive attitudes toward accommodation. Our students will tinge their English with whatever flavors they deem appropriate for projecting their individual identities and orientations toward English. This tailoring of the language to suit their specific needs will be mostly done on their own outside the classroom – via the Internet and in whatever communities they happen to be participating in. It is our jobs as teachers to encourage and facilitate this process or, as Maley (2009) eloquently puts it, "to help our learners navigate the troubled waters of convention" (p. 197).

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