

The theoretical background of the material

ELF Communication with Thai visitors

The number of foreign visitors to Japan reached 31 million in 2018. In terms of their language backgrounds, Chinese speakers constitute 50%, Korean speakers 25%, followed by Thai speakers at 3.7% (or 1.1 million). Such recent trends in the inbound tourist population raise issues regarding communication in English as the *lingua franca* (ELF) between non-native service providers and non-native customers. The ThaiE-speaking population in particular has remained relatively unknown until recently, and the distinctive characteristics of Thai English could cause difficulties in communication with non-ThaiE speakers. In the East/Southeast Asian region including Japan and Thailand, American English has been mainly learned as a norm, which has been self-evident from the strong influence of American English. This accords with the account of the Expanding circle of Braj Kachru's World Englishes (WE), in which non-native English variations should be norm-dependent on Inner or Outer-circle Englishes (Kachru, 1985). However, this strong Inner-circle English ideology no longer accounts for the reality of ELF communication. Rather, it is making it more difficult to achieve ELF communication between ThaiE speakers and JapaneseE speakers since they are learning only American English, which is equally far from each other's respective English variation. This project was launched with the sincere belief that it is necessary to solve this issue from the viewpoint of equality among the speakers of various English variations and thereby promote efficiency in communication among them.

The theoretical background of the material

The project is based on the perspective that “any English variation is equivalent before the goal of achieving mutual understanding.” It partly shares with current theories of English as an international language (EIL) that asserted the equality of native speaker's English and non-native speaker's English (Smith, 1983; McKay, 2002). In addition, this project incorporates the discipline of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that focuses on the specific needs of the language learners (Dudley-Evans, 1998; Hutchinson and Walters, 1987). Although ThaiE has been categorized as essentially exo-normative in terms of Kachru's framework of WE, this research is distinguished in legitimizing ThaiE to be a learning target for a discourse community, which is comprised of tourism workers in Japan. Their common objective is to achieve more effective ELF communication with their Thai customers.

This research, from the EIL perspective, clearly divided the intersection of WE, ELF, and ESP theories into learning objects and we called it “EIL-based ESP.” It is distinguished in providing an environment within which students are able to learn intensively the characteristics of a specific non-native English variety. In turn, this gives means to legitimize Expanding-circle Englishes as an object of intensive study. Such authorization to Expanding-circle Englishes has not previously existed in the WE theory. Since it is hoped it will promote positive change in the perception of English learners in Japan toward their own English variety, it is therefore considered significant to present the theoretical framework of “EIL-based ESP” as a valid contribution to the research literature (Miyamoto & Watanabe, 2017; 2018). It is important to note, again, that EIL-based ESP should be applied to the learners in specific discourse communities. Although this material should prompt further evaluation in

terms of appropriateness and quantity, it is hoped that it will eventually make significant contribution to the optimization of communications within the tourism industry.

References

- Dudley-Evans, T. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchinson, T. and Walters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO). (2018). *The number of Foreign visitors by nationality and purpose of visit 2003-2018*. Retrieved 02 01, 2019, from Japan National Tourism Organization:
https://www.jnto.go.jp/jpn/statistics/visitor_trends/index.html
- Jenkins, J. (2007) *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitudes and Identity*. Oxford University Press.
- Kachru, B. (1985). "Standards, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism: The English Language in the outer circle". In: Quirk R., Widdowson H. (Eds.) (1985). *English in the World*. Cambridge University Press.
- MacKay, S. L. (2002). *Teaching English As An International Language: Rethinking Goals and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Larry E. (1983). *Readings in English as an International Language*, Pergamon.
- Miyamoto, S, and Watanabe, Y. (2017). The perception of "Thai English" in Japan: An analysis of interviews with hotel staff and a survey of university students' attitudes toward accented English, 『相模女子大学文化研究』 (35), 25-36.
- －. (2018). Material Development of Thai English for learners in Japan's hospitality industry: a pilot study, 『相模女子大学文化研究』 (36), 3-24.

References of the material

- Osaka University, "Thai language for self-learning"
<http://el.minoh.osaka-u.ac.jp/flc/tha/pandl/01.html>
- JTB, "The Number of Foreign Visitors by Countries (2016)", <https://www.tourism.jp/tourism-database/stats/inbound/>
- 吉田英人 (2014). 『ゼロから始めるタイ語』、三修社。
- ランナー・タイ「英語のタイ文字置き換え規準」、
http://www.geocities.jp/lanna_thai_chiangrai/eng2thai/eng2thai.htm
- BBC Learning English, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/thai/home>
- Gentner, Michael M. (2014). *Teaching English to Thai Learners*, Bangkok University Press.
- George Mason University, The speech accent archive, <http://accent.gmu.edu/index.php>
- IDEA (International Dialects of English Archive),
<http://www.dialectsarchive.com/thailand>
- Pisarn Bee Chamcharatsri, (2013). "Perception of Thai English", *Journal of English as an International Language*, Vol. 8, Issue 1.
http://www.academia.edu/3805219/Perception_of_Thai_English
- Pronunciation Studio Ltd, "10 English Pronunciation Errors by Thai Speakers", <https://pronunciationstudio.com/thai-speakers-english-pronunciation-errors/>
- Sabajai Consulting Co. Ltd, 『[コラム] タイ人の英語の発音は変?』
<http://sabaijaicons.com/sound.html>
- Wei, Youfu & Zhou, Yalun "Insights into English Pronunciation Problems of Thai Students",
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED476746.pdf>
- Travelloco, "Thai Language into Asia, Making sense of 'Tinglish', the Thai version of English", https://www.into-asia.com/thai_language/thaienglish.php