

# From linguistic challenges to classroom activities: Preparing EIL hosts for visitors

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# Introduction

- ◇ Micro-level and macro-level roles of tour guides.
- ◇ Tour guides help reduce visitors' vulnerability and create the quality of tourist experience (Dahles, 2002).
- ◇ They work as public relations to encapsulate the essence of a place and country (Pond, 1993).

# Introduction

◇ Wichaidit (2014) found technical terms, correct idioms and grammar were problems for speaking. Understanding accents, unknown vocabulary, and cross-cultural knowledge were listening problems.

◇ Ka-kan-dee and Nonthapot (2020) found tourists' accents, speech rate, and unfamiliar vocabulary problematic at moderate level.

# Research Questions

1. What types of place and nationalities of friends and customers are Chula students and Thai tour guides most familiar with?
2. What are linguistic challenges of them when hosting foreign visitors?
3. How will those linguistic challenges and EIL tenets be incorporated into classroom activities to prepare EIL hosts for visitors?

# Theoretical Underpinnings 1

- ◇ EIL as a paradigm that recognizes *the international functions of English and its use in a variety of cultural and economic arenas by speakers of English from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds who do not speak each other's mother tongues* (Marlina, 2014, p. 4).
- ◇ Four considerations to teaching EIL.

# Theoretical Underpinnings 2

◇ **Aim for mutual intelligibility** TEIL is crucial to distinguish linguistic differences that create intelligibility problems from those that may lead to negative attitudes in the users (McKay, 2002).

◇ **Promotion of strategies for communication**

**Speakers:** circumlocution, use of all-purpose words, literal translation, and use of non-linguistic means (Bjorkman, 2014)

**Listeners:** lexical suggestion, lexical correction, request repetition and clarification (Kirkpatrick 2007).

# Theoretical Underpinnings 3

◇ **Cultural considerations** Hino (2018) saw importance of critical understanding of learner's own culture and how to explain it to outsiders. McKay (2018) supported development of learner's sphere of interculturality.

◇ **Varieties of English** Awareness, exposure and respect: Students awareness of linguistic differences can be achieved by exposing them to different varieties (Chan, 2020, see work by Evans, Villarreal and Loring, 2014)

# Methodology

Phase I: Experience and Linguistic Challenges

Phase II: Session Design and Implementation

- ◇ Students (n=113) and tour guides (n=70) answered questionnaire on nationalities of foreign friends and customers, types of places, and linguistic challenges.
- ◇ Students (n=7) and tour guides (n=2) were interviewed for 35 minutes.
- ◇ Questionnaire: Frequency counts (Parts 1 and 2) coding (Part 3). Interviews: transcribed and used for triangulation.



# Results

## RQ 1: Nationalities and places

- ◇ America, China, England, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, India, Korea, the Philippines, and Indonesia
- ◇ Clearer demographic group of EIL interlocutors of research population
- ◇ EIL speakers use English with NNTSs more.

# Results

Type of Attractions	Frequency
Buddhist Temples	119
Palaces	96
Floating Markets	90
Historical Places	89
Local Communities	71

Type of Attractions	Frequency
Shopping Malls	68
Museums	66
Sea	60
Islands	46
Night Clubs	40

- ◇ Places for culture, history and art were most popular, followed by places for local ways of life.
- ◇ Nature, though popular among tourists in Thailand, did not top the table. Student 2 provided some insight.

# Results

## RQ 2: Linguistic challenges while hosting visitors

Linguistic problem	Frequency
Vocabulary	37
Accent	33
Speaking	11

Linguistic problem	Frequency
English Competency of visitors	8
Listening	7
Pronunciation	5
Grammar	1

- ◇ In general, results correspond to those of Wichaidit (2014) and Ka-kan-dee and Nonthapot (2020).
- ◇ Results reassure the importance of intelligibility over accuracy among EIL users.

# Results

- ◇ **Vocabulary**: Specialized words (f=8), Thai culture-specific words (f=4), architectural terms (f=3).
- ◇ Knowing a culture-specific word does not ensure intelligibility.

*Sometimes I use words that my clients do not know like academic words. They look confused. Like **stupa**, some clients do not know the term. I have to explain ... telling them the significance of stupa. (Tour guide 2)*



- ◇ Communicative strategies of circumlocution can be taught in an EIL classroom for visitor hosts.

# Results

◇ **Accent:** British accent most frequently mentioned (f=4)

*Accent is a problem. Indians are fast and hard to get. I will ask them to explain when I do not understand them. (Tour Guide 1)*

◇ Speech rate coupled with accent can impede intelligibility.

◇ British and Indian were also in top 10 of nationalities. These two accents should be targeted in an EIL class for visitor hosts.

## Phase II: Session Design

- ◇ Thai History related to Travelling, a two-hour extra curricular session (n=26)
- ◇ Session included 3 activities: Trivia Quiz, Thai Cultural-Specific Words, and Presentation on Historical Attractions.
- ◇ It addressed the problem of Thai culture-specific words, incorporated circumlocution as communication strategy (Wongsawang, 2001 & Purnomo, 2017), and promoted students' sphere of interculturality (McKay 2018).

# Phase II: Session Implementation

## Pair Work

Describe 2 of the words to your partner. Use the techniques learned. You can elaborate more on those words (where you often see it/ a story behind it, etc.)

1. Thai tacos with sweet cream ขนมเบ็อง
2. Chedi (stupa) เจดีย์
3. Prang ปราสาท
4. Boundary stone ไบเสมา
5. Naga นาค
6. Jasmine ดอกมะลิ
7. Alms bowl บาตรพระ
8. Thai boxing มวยไทย



## Phase II: Session Implementation

◇ 4 circumlocution techniques were taught: 1. compare the culture-specific notion with what is widely known (Wongsawang, 2001), 2. describe the shape, 3. tell visitors what it represents/symbolizes (Salazar, 2005) and 4. tell visitors where they are commonly found.

*Thai boxing (Muay Thai) is Thai martial arts in which fighters can use elbows and knees to strike. Muay Thai can be watched at the Rajadamnern Stadium, near the old town of Bangkok.*



# Phase II: Session Implementation

## Presentation on Historical Attractions

### Steps

1. Make decision who your audience are (e.g. art students from Japan / engineering students from America).
2. Search for information about the history of the place and its importance.
3. Think about how you will link the place to their interest (e.g. compare the year it was built with the year of a major incident of their country/ compare its size with a well-known structure of their country).

Focus on the sphere of interculturality

# Phase II: Session Implementation



**Audience:** Art students from Japan. Described Giant Swing by comparing it with a torii gate in terms of color, size and function.

# Conclusion

- ◇ Non-predetermined questionnaire items revealed similar results of previous studies': vocabulary and accent problems.
- ◇ Places for art, history and culture and places for local ways of life were most familiar.
- ◇ Implemented session had good evaluation results: 4.73 for overall and 4.69 for content (n=26).
- ◇ Further study could be design and implementation of session or course that addresses accent possibly British and Indian through content related to Thai ways of life.

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Thank you ขอบคุณครับ

Q&A

Comments

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