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A Development of Supplementary Materials on Some ASEAN Englishes for Khon Kaen University Students

Patoomporn Chairat*^a, Preedaporn Srisakorn^b
^{a,b} Department of English, Khon Kaen University,
Khon Kaen, Thailand
*Corresponding Author: pato.ch@kkumail.com

ABSTRACT

English is going to be a working language of ASEAN Community. Therefore, English learners in Southeast Asia are expected to realize about Englishes in this region. However, the instructional materials on this issue are still limited. As a result, self-prepared materials by the teachers can be an alternative for exposing the students to ASEAN Englishes. This study was aimed to develop supplementary materials on some Englishes of Southeast Asia for Khon Kaen University students. This study focused on making the students familiar with the pronunciation of English accents in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines because these countries were in the outer circle of Kachru's three concentric circles of English uses. The supplementary materials were implemented as extra activities in a phonetics course. The supplementary materials consisted of 4 chapter presented the pronunciation features of Singapore English, Malaysian English, Brunei English, and Philippine English. Each chapter took 45 minutes for describing the pronunciation of each English accents, listening activities by using video materials taken for website 'YouTube', and discussing about the pronunciation features which the students have to pay much attention. The participants of this study were 30 English-major students who enrolled in the course in the first semester of academic year 2014. After implementing the supplementary materials in the classroom, the results from a materials evaluation revealed that the supplementary materials were at a good level. Moreover, the students had a better understanding on the pronunciations of Singapore English, Malaysian English, Brunei English, and Philippine English.

Keyword: ASEAN, Listening, World Englishes, YouTube

1. Introduction

The important role of English in Southeast Asia has been increasing gradually as English is going to be a working language of Southeast Asia nations (ASEAN). (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008). Even though native English model is an ideal model of teaching and learning English (Harris, 2012), varieties of English in the real life situations cannot be ignored (Mutsuda, 2002). Because when ASEAN Economy Community (AEC) is established officially at the end of 2015, the opportunities of Thai students to interact with ASEAN English users inside and outside workplace will be more in the future after they graduated. Therefore, students might get confused if they face the varieties which are not taught in classroom (Mutsuda, 2003), and might get World Englishes shock, "a mental state of disorientation and frustration due to an exposure to alien varieties of English (p. 49)" (Tananuraksakul, 2009).

To strengthen Thai students for achieving intelligibility in ASEAN Community, exposing them to various varieties of ASEAN English accents is an essential issue. Levis (2005) claimed that the features which affect intelligibility of the listeners should be focused in English class. Similarly, Jenkins (2006) suggested that shared and distinctive features of different varieties should be focused. However, implementing Englishes in Thailand is still difficult as the materials developing is limited (Jindapitak and Teo, 2013). Therefore, teacher self-prepared materials can help the teachers to implement Englishes in the classroom (Harris, 2012), and Internet technologies such as Facebook and YouTube can help the teachers prepare the materials on World Englishes (Kongkerd, 2013).

At Khon Kaen University, a lecturer of an English phonetics course revealed that teaching English phonetics at Khon Kaen University is mainly focused on British English and American English pronunciation (Personal discussion). To introduce other varieties of English to the class is still limited as it lacks of materials developing. However, the lecturer was interested in introducing other varieties of English to the class. After

the researchers conducted a needs analysis survey of 51 Khon Kaen University students who enrolled in an English phonetic course in the first semester of academic year 2014, the results revealed that 84.31% of the students had never studied about pronunciation of ASEAN English accents. Even though they were learning native English accents, they still realized that they might have some communication problems with ASEAN English uses ($\bar{x} = 3.69$, S.D. = 0.86) and were still interested in learning pronunciation of ASEAN English accents ($\bar{x} = 3.69$, S.D. = 1.1) which might be useful for them in the future. The needs from both the lecturer and students were relevant to balanced approach of Farrell and Martin (2009). They proposed that teaching English at this present time should focus on both native and non-native varieties of English. Therefore, the aim of this study was to develop supplementary materials on some ASEAN Englishes for Khon Kaen University students.

2. Research Questions

There were four research questions in this study as follows:

1. What are the results of the materials evaluation after implementing the supplementary materials in the classroom?
2. What are the results of students' self- assessment before and after implementing the supplementary materials in the classroom?

3. Research Methodology

The participants of this study were 30 English-majored students of Khon Kaen University who enrolled in the subject "411254 - English Phonetics" in the first semester of academic year 2014. The supplementary materials were implemented in the class as extra activities at the end of the course after the students had learned about pronunciation of British and American English as an English language foundation (Trudgill n.d.; cited in Jenkins, 2006). As a result, only 4 period were available for extra activities.

The supplementary materials consisted of four chapter including Singapore English, Malaysian English, Brunei English and Philippine English. It took 15 minutes for describing pronunciation of each of these English accents, 15 minutes for listening activities which focused on the online video from website 'YouTube', and 15 minutes for discussing about the distinctive features that caused their intelligibility. Before implementing in the class the supplementary materials were reviewed by the lecturer of the course for content validity checking. In addition, in the last period of the extra activities, there were 2 research instruments conducted in the classroom including materials evaluation form and students self-assessment.

4. Findings

The result of the materials evaluation form after implementing the supplementary materials in the classroom showed that the practicality of the supplementary materials was at a good level ($\bar{x} = 3.73$, S.D. = 0.73), the clarity of instructions and the comprehensibility of the text was at a good level ($\bar{x} = 3.88$, S.D. = 0.67), the suitability of the exercises and tasks was at a good level ($\bar{x} = 3.90$, S.D. = 0.81), the effectiveness in facilitating long-term learning was at a good level ($\bar{x} = 4.03$, S.D. = 0.57), and the attractiveness of the materials was at a good level ($\bar{x} = 4.08$, S.D. = 0.67). The overall results from the materials evaluation were interpreted that the supplementary materials were at a good level ($\bar{x} = .93$, S.D. = 0.68)(See Table 1).

Table 1

The overall result of the supplementary materials evaluation

Item	Statements	Level of Rating		Level
		\bar{x}	σ	
1	The practicality of the supplementary materials	3.73	0.67	Good
2	The clarity of instructions and the comprehensibility of the text	3.88	0.67	Good
3.	The suitability of the exercises and tasks	3.90	0.81	Good
4.	The effectiveness in facilitating long-term learning	4.03	0.57	Good
5.	The attractiveness and the availability of the materials	4.08	0.67	Good
	Total	3.93	0.68	Good

However, there were some suggestions from six students provided at the end of the questionnaire as follows without changing their words:

- "Some VDO are hard to understand and a little bit non-sense."
- "The videos was very interesting, more VDO would be good."
- "Should have more information of each accents"
- "Using computer program such as Flash player to create supplementary materials."
- "Presenting on the social network (Facebook page to provide the knowledge)"
- "Very Good"

The findings from the students' self- assessment were interpreted that the students had a better understanding toward pronunciation of ASEAN English accents (before $\bar{x} = 2.68$, S.D. = 0.81; after $\bar{x} = 3.58$, S.D. = 0.61). Moreover, the student had a more confidence to interact with ASEAN English interlocutors (before $\bar{x} = 3.17$, S.D. = 0.65; after $\bar{x} = 3.87$, S.D. = 0.63). However, their understanding toward Malaysia and Brunei English accents had a slightly improvement when compared with Singapore and Philippine English accents.

Table 2

The Comparison Of The Results Of Students' Self-Assessment Toward Their Understanding On The Pronunciation Of ASEAN English Accents Before And After Implementing The Supplementary Materials

No.	Statements (Before)	Level of Rating		Level	Statements (After)	Level of Rating		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.			\bar{x}	S.D.	
1.1	You understand segmental features of Singapore English	2.73	0.69	Average	You have a better understanding in segmental features of Singapore English	3.80	0.55	High
1.2	You understand suprasegmental features of Singapore English	2.77	0.73	Average	You have a better understanding in suprasegmental features of Singapore English	3.70	0.60	High
1.3	You understand segmental features of Malaysian English	2.47	0.86	Low	You have a better understanding in segmental features of Malaysian English	3.47	0.57	Average
1.4	You understand suprasegmental features of Malaysian English	2.53	0.9	Average	You have a better understanding in suprasegmental features of Malaysian English	3.40	0.56	Average
1.5	You understand segmental features of Brunei English	2.53	1.01	Average	You have a better understanding in segmental features of Brunei English	3.4	0.72	Average
1.6	You understand suprasegmental features of Brunei English	2.87	0.86	Average	You have a better understanding in suprasegmental features of Brunei English	3.4	0.62	Average
1.7	You understand segmental features of Philippine English	2.77	0.73	Average	You have a better understanding in segmental features of Philippine English	3.73	0.64	High
1.8	You understand suprasegmental features of Philippine English	2.80	0.66	Average	You have a better understanding in suprasegmental features of Philippine English	3.73	0.64	High
Total		2.68	0.81	Average		3.58	0.61	High

5. Discussions

The overview of this study exhibited that teaching and learning English as an international language and world Englishes in Thailand is limited because materials development is still limited (Jindapitak and Teo, 2013), and the main goal of teaching and learning English in Thai context is still focused on the intelligibility in foreign context.

This study attempted to begin developing materials to facilitate teaching and learning various varieties of ASEAN Englishes in English classroom in Khon Kaen University. According to the results of this study, this study had reached the main objective of this study that was to develop the supplementary materials for helping the teacher to introduce and expose the students to different ASEAN English accents to be really proficient in English in the postmodern era (Canagarajah, 2006). Additionally, the insight of the researchers out of developing the supplementary materials for the course 411254 'English Phonetics' was to increase the students' awareness of English in an international context and World Englishes in English classroom in Khon Kaen University.

In a brief closure, the researchers agreed with Mutsuda (2002) that English learners should primarily be aware of various varieties of English. Even though native model of English is selected for teaching in classroom and students' preference is native accents, they have to be reminded that it is not the only one accent in the world. However, adding only some additional lessons or activities might not be sufficient. Putting more effort and emphasis on English as an international language should be more collaborated among language policy makers, language planners, institute authorities, teacher educators, language teachers, parents and students to help learners achieve receptive performance in ASEAN and international community in the future.

6. Recommendations

There were some recommendations from the results of this study. Firstly, further studies should translate the supplementary materials into Thai for a wider range of readers as it might be useful for those who are interested in knowing some characteristics of pronunciation of Singapore English, Malaysian English, Brunei English, and Philippines English. It is easier for them to read Thai materials. Secondly, further studies should be conducted by designing additional activities to the lesson, for example, interacting with the real English speakers of each accent in the classroom or using instant message technologies (Skype, Line and Facebook) to interact with the real English speakers of each accent in the classroom. Because the example sounds in this study were taken from the video materials from website 'YouTube' which might be limited and insufficient. Thirdly, further studies should be conducted by including more ASEAN English varieties in the materials as this supplement materials included only four varieties of ASEAN Englishes that were Singapore English, Malaysian English, Brunei English, and Philippines English. Fourthly, further studies should be conducted by designing a set of proficiency tests to find the improvement of the students after implementing the materials. And finally, further studies should be conducted by extending the duration per period. Because this study was conducted with time limitation, so it took only 45 minutes per period per each chapter.

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