

Reconsidering Objectives of English Language Learning in English as a Lingua Franca Context

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Abstract: It is undeniable that English has become a global language and the enormous global demand for using English as a means for communication has been apparent. With this spread of English and globalization, the result has led to a great demand for English language teachers who can be both native and non-native English speakers. The study aims to explore university students' attitudes towards native and non-native English speakers' teaching practices in a context where English has been used as a lingua franca and an international language. Samples were 348 students who took a foundation English course in semester 2/2011. The instruments used were the questionnaires and interviews. It has been found that students had positive attitudes towards both native and non-native teachers' teaching practices; however, there were some different reasons why students felt positively towards each group of English language teachers' teaching practices. It is suggested that concerned administrators should not divide between nativeness and non-nativeness, Recognition of teachers' pedagogical and professional abilities should be put into consideration. For teachers of English, they should have a full understanding of the goals of language learning in current situations and reality. Future research should extend to investigate a broader sample of students in other schools or institutions where English has been used a medium of instruction or as a foreign language.

Keywords: English language learning, English as a lingua franca, teaching practices, teachers' roles

Introduction

Recently, the field of TESOL has seen increasing interest in the role of English as an international language and there has been an increase in the number of English teachers with a wide variety of language backgrounds (Holliday and Aboshiha, 2009). It has been confirmed by Liu (1999) that the majority of English teachers worldwide are non-native English speakers: NNESTs. More discussion has been made in the expanding circle countries where English has played as a foreign language and in this setting (ELF), such as China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand, learning English from instructors whose mother tongue is the same as their students' is not only realistic, but also very successful (Medgyes, 1994).

In Thailand, it is evident to see that English has been one of the requirements for qualified employees to be competent in the four language skills. Therefore, the demand for English language teaching in Thailand exceeds the supply of language schools and institutions (Weawong and Singhasiri, 2009). However, if we consider English language teachers, Todd (2006) posits that one basic consideration is whether they are native speakers (NSs) or non-native speakers (NNSs) and he points out that NS teachers are perceived as being somewhat "better" but the predominance of NNS-NNS use of English in Thailand means that the goal of learning English should be EIL rather than any NS norms of English.