Promoting an Approach of English Language Coaching in Thailand
การส่งเสริมการสอนภาษาอังกฤษแบบระบบพี่เลี้ยงในประเทศไทย

David D. Perrodin and Kulchalee Thupatemee
เดวิด เพอร์โรดิน และ กุลชลี ธูปเตมีย์
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Eastern Asia University
คณะศิลปะศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยอีสเทิร์นเอเชีย

Abstract

Nowadays, the establishment of English education programs in Thailand are thriving and are in constant demand among learners who have a desire to compete in the ever-growing global economic arena. Although the existing landscape of English language education at the tertiary level in Thailand has undergone tremendous changes over the past decade, the effort made in teaching and learning continues to show limited progress. This exploration has drawn upon leading primary academic documentary sources as to how incorporating innovative language coaching for the creation of an effective English learning environment in higher education institutions may assist in the promotion of proficient English learners in the Kingdom of Thailand.

Keywords: English education, language coaching, teaching approaches

บทคัดย่อ

ปัจจุบันนี้ การจัดหลักสูตรการศึกษาภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศไทยยังคงเติบโตและเป็นที่ต้องการอย่างต่อเนื่อง ของผู้เรียนที่ต้องการมีความสามารถที่จะแข่งขันในสนามเศรษฐกิจโลกที่เติบโตอย่างไม่หยุดยั้ง ถึงแม้ว่า โครงสร้างการ จัดการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในระดับอุดมศึกษาในประเทศไทยจะมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงอย่างมากในช่วงทศวรรษที่ผ่าน มา ทว่าความพยายามในการเรียนการสอนยังคงมีข้อจำกัด การศึกษาในครั้งนี้ได้ค้นคว้าจากแหล่งข้อมูลทางเอกสารทาง วิชาการเพื่อศึกษาถึงการนำนวัตกรรมระบบพี่เลี้ยงทางภาษามาทำให้เกิดประสิทธิภาพในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในระดับ อุดมศึกษา จะสามารถช่วยส่งเสริมความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนในประเทศไทยได้อย่างไร

คำสำคัญ: การเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ, ระบบพี่เลี้ยงทางภาษา, แนวคิดทางการสอน

Introduction

English remains the lingua franca and the language of the global economy (Baker, 2012; Bowman, Burkart, & Robson, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Kaur, Young, and Kirkpatrick, 2016). Accordingly the ability to use English to fluently and accurately communicate in pertinent professional settings as a crucial component in an ever-growing competitive international trade arena is greatly valued (Baker, 2012; Bowman, Burkart, & Robson, 1989; Kato & Mynard, 2016; Kaur, Young, and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Salomaa, 2015).

Although the introduction of more modern methods of teaching English is in constant demand among both educators and learners alike (Kato & Mynard, 2016; Sanonguthai, 2014),the lack of institution of modern methods of teaching English in many tertiary language education programs has led to a deficiency in the creation of internationally competitive graduates (Bowman, Burkart, & Robson, 1989; Kaur, Young, and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Noom-Ura, 2013; Piamsai, 2017; Punthumasen, 2007). This documentary research, based on an analysis of information drawn from respected journal articles and other related documents (Ahmed, 2010; Mogalakwes, 2006), therefore aspires to examine how modern methods of language coaching may be utilized in better preparing university graduates in meeting the challenges of contending in a global marketplace (Hayes, 2010; Kongkerd, 2013; Punthumasen, 2007; Žeguniene & Karczewska, 2018; Sanonguthai, 2014).

Preparedness of Higher Education in Thailand

At present the English education system in Thailand is still yet another unfortunate example the country's longstanding exercise of adopting ideas from abroad then ineptly adapting them to suit an already archaic regional education environment (Hayes, 2010; Kaur, Young, and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Noom-ura, 2013; Sanonguthai, 2014). The challenges and obstacles associated with unqualified and inadequately trained educators, out-dated pedagogy, and poorly motivated learners are impeding and indeed disheartening the progress of English language education in Thailand (Baker, 2012; Bowman, Burkart, & Robson, 1989; Kaur, Young, and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Noom-ura, 2013; Piamsai, 2017).

Hice (2015) states that the financial growth of national economies must place a priority on the demand of well-trained university graduates as well as the general workforce to assure the financial realization of any particular nation (Žeguniene & Karczewska, 2018). Hice rationalized that one of the most significant demands for future accomplishment is a higher proficiency in English (Marginson, 2004). Hice further stated that analyzing how learning is affected by changes in a learning environment should be considered essential for the further progression of knowledge (Kato & Mynard, 2016). English education programs in Thailand are currently undergoing extensive reform, without much success due to questionable pedagogical practices, in an attempt to meet the needs of the current global demand for highly-skilled personnel (Chupradit and Baron-Gutty, 2009; Marginson, 2004; Piamsai, 2017; Sanonguthai, 2014).

The Ministry of Education of Thailand continues to strive to overcome difficulties with antiquated conventional English education programs in an effort to create a more internationally competitive population (Kaur,

Young, and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Sanonguthai, 2014). As a result, both public and private universities in Thailand had been encouraged by the government and international employers to produce graduates with more globally relevant English language skills (Teng and Sinwongsuwat, 2015; Žeguniene & Karczewska, 2018;). These universities have attempted to redefine their relevance to be more sustainable, competitive and relevant in a global context with increased exposure to programs that will foster proficiency in the English language among their graduates (Baker, 2012). Regardless, the apparent economic drive behind and the formidable competition between English graduate applicants in international business and management vocations are significantly altering the way universities decide upon the fundamental English requirements for admission (Kaur, Young, and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Marginson, 2004).

Universities in Thailand are lowering the minimal English proficiency requirements for enrolment into international English programs to attract a higher number of admissions of non-English speaking learners. Nevertheless, thousands of Thai learners choose to participate in English language learning in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia each year and this means a significant loss of revenue for Thai institutions (Chupradit and Baron-Gutty, 2009). On the international stage, the move towards more autonomous and commercialized English language training has already been undertaken by many of Thailand's major trading partners. Innovative universities from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, to name a few, have found that professional collaborations with higher education institutions in Thailand have

proven to be quite lucrative (Marginson, 2004; Noom-Ura, 2013).

Until now, despite years of protest for education reform and the introduction of more modern methods of teaching English in the Kingdom of Thailand, there does not seem to be a noticeable shift in the English language education system (Hice, 2015; Kongkerd, 2013). As a result, conventional educator centered language teaching approaches have remained dominant at the tertiary level in the Thailand education system (Punthumasen, 2007).

Parab (2015) indicates that for over the past two decades there have been numerous books and journal articles universally published about the English language in general and in particular, English language teaching. Fittingly many of these manuscripts characteristically view the subject of teaching English as a second or foreign language in different ways by presenting a plethora of voices trying to liberalize current English teaching from the clutches of traditional or outdated methods (Parab, 2015).

Teaching Systems in Higher Education Institutions

Among the limitations to be found in the current teaching and learning systems, pedagogies, and philosophies within English language teaching is both the tendency and manner of attempting to passively impart or transfer knowledge from the educator to the learner (Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, & Willingham, 2013; Perrodin and Thupatemee, 2018). In the majority of English learning environments within the tertiary institutions of Thailand, Behaviorist (traditional) approaches of language teaching such as the

Audio-Lingual Method, Direct Method, Grammar Translation Method, and the Structural Approach, which generally do not require active participation on the part of learners, are still being employed (Dunlosky, et. al, 2013; Hice, 2015; Kongkerd, 2013; Teng and Sinwongsuwat, 2015). Accordingly, a paradigm shift from utilizing traditional Behaviorist approaches of passive learning to incorporating Constructivist (modern, learner-centered and active learning) approaches are seen as paramount to language learning in Thailand (Morrison, 2011; T. H. Khuong, 2015; Weegar and Pacis, 2012).

The Constructivist theory was initially developed from the extensive study of cognitive development by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget and Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and later built upon by American psychologist Jerome Bruner (Chapman, 2006; Dunlosky et al., 2013; Weegar and Pacis, 2012). Piaget determined, assuming an element of progression, that social interaction played a fundamental role in the development of cognition within young learners. Vygotsky (1978) insisted that social interaction played a fundamental role in the development of cognition. He relatedly established that the level of cognitive development attained when young learners engage in social behavior development was dependent upon the "zone of proximal development (ZPD)." The ZPD refers to the zone between what a learner can achieve without assistance, and what they can proximally achieve with guidance and encouragement from interaction with a superior scheme (Chapman, 2006; Dunlosky et al., 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

Bruner, influenced by Vygotsky's work, concentrated on the role of the educator and language and instruction, in that learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their schema (Sharma, 2014). Bruner believed that learners develop knowledge through active participation in their learning through collaboration, engagement, inquiry and problem solving (Bruner, 1975; T. H. Khuong, 2015; Morrison, 2011; Weegar and Pacis, 2012).

The general framework of the Constructivists theory tends to view learning as a search for meaning in learning that promotes the cognitive engagement and motivation of the learners by enabling them to actively participate in such a way that they "construct" new knowledge (Bruner, 1975; Chapman, 2006; Hayes, 2010; Morrison, 2011; Pitt, 2015; Sharma and Gupta, 2016). As well, Constructivist approaches tend to emphasize higher-order cognitive learning and thinking activities which aid in facilitating learning while encouraging educators to support the construction of connections between elements in order to foster new understanding among learners (Broadfoot, 2008; Bruner, 1975; Chapman, 2006; Dunlosky, et. al, 2013; Sharma and Gupta, 2016).

However, the overwhelming impression that the role of the educator in Thailand must be autocratic or authoritative in learning environments is often viewed as a more significant threat to English language learning (Hayes, 2010; Kongkerd, 2013; Teng and Sinwongsuwat, 2015). Besides, constructing new knowledge occurs by the promotion of extensive dialogue and by associating and organizing the new knowledge with the previous experiences and behavior of the learners (Bruner, 1975; Dunlosky et al., 2013; Morrison, 2011; Sharma, 2014). As a result, to better foster learning, the primary role of the educator must then become that of a "language coach".

In the role of "language coach" the educator is then better equipped to encourage the learners to analyze, evaluate and formulate their ideas, opinions, and conclusions while motivating them to create their knowledge through their personal experiences (Broadfoot, 2008; Morrison, 2011; Paling, 2014, 2017; Pitt, 2015; Sharma, 2014).

Incorporating Innovative Language Coaching

In Neurolanguage Coaching: Brain Friendly Language Learning, Rachel Paling (2017) states that in the role of language coach, the educator is able to facilitate a stronger learning or working relationship between the educator and the learners by creating a comfortable positive and nurturing environment where learners are more apt to be open to language learning (Pitt, 2015; Zeppos, 2014). The language coaching approach, therefore, involves a more active role for the learner and a more active learning setting with recurring exposure to the target language. This process is demonstrated by Rachel Paling (2017, pp.110-119) as they present a rather detailed account of a language coaching session where language patterns are conveyed through powerful coaching conversations.

Paling (2017) further asserts that a more dedicated association with and exposure to the target language is essential for a successful language learning setting (Baker, 2012; Hayes, 2010; Hice, 2015). For this reason, the educator imparting the knowledge should have both a high-functioning grammatical and theoretical awareness of the target language, and dedication to predominantly using the target language as the medium of instruction (Noom-Ura, 2013; Piamsai, 2017; Punthumasen, 2007; Teng and Sinwongsuwat, 2015).

Paling (2014) states that both the educator and the learner must have equal status in the practice of language coaching thereby negating the impression of the superiority of the teacher. Traditional (Behaviorist) language teaching approaches situate the learner in a more passive role, whereas in the more modern language coaching approach, the learner is encouraged to become much more active (Constructivist) and more responsible for their learning process (Paling, 2014, 2017; Zeppos, 2014). Paling (2014) continues that the learner assumes ownership of their language learning and the learning process, and in so doing, the learner stays engaged, motivate and values taking on the responsibility to learn the target language.

Paling (2014) conveys the differences between language teaching and language coaching, and that the development of language coaching as a distinct approach to teaching and learning in the world of ESL/EFL teaching is escalating (Zeppos, 2014). Acquiring near native-like proficiency of a target language requires as much as 10,000 hours of diligent and deliberate practice (Baron and Henry, 2010). Accordingly, language coaching tends to be adaptable, utilizing authentic conversations and dialogues, which allows the learner to reflect, then embrace and incorporate the new target language knowledge immediately into practical use (Paling, 2014, 2017; Zeppos, 2014). Therefore, in order to maximize the potential of the learner, language coaching generally utilizes components of the language learning process, such as systematic grouping and chunking information, to provide for a more efficient, effective, and prudent learning process (Paling, 2014, 2017).

Paling (2014) continues that a directional, instructive and compulsory instruction is found to a greater extent in language teaching whereas language coaching tends to assume a more flexible and adaptable process focusing on higher-order cognitive learning. Paling advocates that continuous feedback and positive acknowledgment create a remarkable learning environment while keeping the learner motivated and committed to learning the target language. Although traditional language teaching and progressive language coaching cultivate different language learning pedagogies according to Paling (2014), language coaching is able to represent a new and innovative dynamic into the field of English language teaching and learning thereby better prepare university graduates to meet the challenges of contending in a global marketplace (Noom-Ura, 2013; Piamsai, 2017; Punthumasen, 2007; Teng and Sinwongsuwat, 2015).

Conclusion

Higher educational institutions in Thailand for the past decade have been striving to produce highly proficient English speaking graduates who may become internationally competitive professionals (Chupradit & Baron-Gutty, 2009; Marginson, 2004; Piamsai, 2017; Punthumasen, 2007; Salomaa, 2015). In order for the above goal to come to fruition, developing innovative teaching approaches for the creation of an effective English learning environment in Thailand's higher education institutions should be fervently considered (Dunlosky, et. al, 2013; Hayes, 2010; Kongkerd, 2013; Noom-Ura, 2013; Piamsai, 2017; Punthumasen, 2007; Teng and Sinwongsuwat, 2015). Therefore, incorporating innovative language coaching into an effective, engaging and motivating learning environment must be further investigated in order for educational institutions in Thailand to meet and adapt to the mounting challenges of cultivating university graduates to compete in an ever-changing global marketplace (Paling, 2014, 2017; Piamsai, 2017; Zeppos, 2014).

References

Ahmed, J. (2010). Documentary research method: New dimensions. *Indus Journal of Management and Social Science, 4*(1), 1-14.

Baker, W. (2012). English as a lingua franca in Thailand: Characterisations and implications. *English in Practice, 1*(1), 18-27.

Baron, R. A., & Henry, R.A. (2010). How entrepreneurs acquire the capacity to excel: Insights from research on expert performance. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 4*(1), 49–65.

Bowman, B., Burkart, G., & Robson, B. (1989). *TEFL/TESL, teaching English as a foreign or second language*. Washington, DC: Peace Corps, Information Collection and Exchange.

Broadfoot, M. (2008). Constructing cognition: Ethan remmel. *American Scientist, 96*(1), 80-81.

Bruner, J. S. (1975) From communication to language: A psychological perspective. *Cognition, 3*(3), 255-287.

Chapman, S. (2006). *Thinking about language: Theories of English*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chupradit, S., & Baron-Gutty, A. (2009). *Education, economy, and identity: Ten years of educational reform in Thailand.* Bangkok: Institut de recherche sur l'Asie du Sud-Est contemporaine.

Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K. A., Marsh, E. J., Nathan, M. J., & Willingham, D. T. (2013). Improving students' learning with effective learning techniques. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 14*(1), 4–58.

Hayes, D. (2010). Language learning, teaching, and educational reform in rural Thailand: An English teacher's perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 30*(3), 305–319.

Hice, C. (2015). *English education in Thailand and Singapore: Differences in English education, use and identity.* Retrieved from https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/ viewcontent.cgi?article=1370&context=honorstheses

Kato, S., & Mynard, J. (2016). *Reflective dialogue advising in language learning.* New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Kaur, A., Young, D., & Kirkpatrick, R. (2016). English education policy in Thailand: Why the poor results? In Robert, K. (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia*. (pp. 345- 361). Bangkok: Springer International.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). Teaching English as a lingua franca in ASEAN: Maintaining linguistic and cultural diversity. *Proceeding of the 2012 International Conference on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in ASEAN,* Suan Dusit Rajabhat Unversity, Bangkok, Thailand, 17-25.

Kongkerd, W. (2013). Teaching English in the era of English used as a lingua franca in Thailand. *Executive Journal, 33*(4), 3-12.

Marginson, S. (2004). Competition and markets in higher education: A 'glonacal' analysis. *Policy Futures in Education, 2*(2), 175-244.

Mogalakwes, M. (2006). The use of documentary research methods in social research. *African Sociological Review, 10*(1), 221-230.

Morrison, B. (2011). *Independent language learning: Building on experience, seeking new perspectives.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University.

Noom-Ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai educators' professional development needs. *English Language Teaching, 6*(11), 139-147.

Paling, R. W. (2014). The differences between language teaching and language coaching. *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, 2*(6), 13-19.

Paling, R. (2017). *Neurolanguage coaching: Brain friendly language learning.* Gloucester: The Choir.

Parab, V. V. (2015). Innovative techniques, methods & trends in English language teaching. *IOSR Journal of Humanities & Social Science, 20*(6-1), 40-44.

Perrodin, D., & Thupatemee, K. (2018). Globalization of English education: The case of Eastern Asia University, Thailand. *SIKKHA Journal of Education, 5*(2), 45-58.

Piamsai, C. (2017). An investigation of Thai learners' needs of English language use for intensive English course development. *Pasaa Paritat Journal, 32*(1), 63-97.

Pitt, T. J. (2015). Coaching language: A key to student learning. *Journal of Pedagogic Development, 5*(2), 17-18.

Punthumasen, P. (2007). *International program for Educator education: An approach to tackling problems of English education in Thailand*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/ publication/265992796_International_Program_for_Te acher_Education_An_Approach_to_ Tackling_Problems_of_English_Education_in_Thailand

Salomaa, R. (2015). Expatriate coaching: Factors impacting coaching success. *Journal of Global Mobility: The Home of Expatriate Management Research, 3*(3), 216-243.

Sanonguthai, S. (2014). Ready or not? The state of Thai schools in response to the ASEAN English language policy. *Thammasat Review, 16*(2), 128-142.

Sharma, H. & Gupta, P. (2016). Constructivist approach for teaching English: Making sense of paradigm shift from the traditional approach. International *Journal of Science and Research (IJSR), 5*(10), 788-792.

Sharma, R. (2014). Constructivism-an approach to enhance participatory teaching learning. *Gyanodaya, 7*(2), 12.

Teng, B., & Sinwongsuwat, K. (2015). Teaching and learning English in Thailand and the integration of conversation analysis (CA) into the classroom. *English Language Teaching, 8*(3), 13-23.

T. H. Khuong, C. (2015). Teaching English grammar communicatively: Theories, principles, and implications in English teaching in Vietnam. *International Journal of English Language Teaching, 2*(2), 68-76.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Weegar, D., & Pacis, D. (2012). *A Comparison of two theories of learning – Behaviorism and constructivism as applied to face-to-face and online learning*. Retrieved from https://www.g-casa.com/conferences/manila/papers/Weegar.pdf

Žeguniene, V., & Karczewska, M. (2018). Global and innovative tools in English language learning: Strengths or threats? Society, integration, education. *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference* (pp. 580-593). Rzekne: Rezeknes Tehnologiju akademija

Zeppos, D. (2014). Profiling neurolanguage coaches worldwide – A case study. *World Journal of Education, 4*(6), 26-41.