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การศึกษานัยของกฎบัตรสมาคมแห่งประชาชาติเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ข้อ 34 ต่อนโยบายการเรียน
การสอนภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้เทคนิคเดลฟาย

A Study Using the Delphi Technique on the Implications of ASEAN Charter Article 34
on English Language Teaching Policies

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ใช้เทคนิคเดลฟายในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากกลุ่มผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิใน 2 ขั้นตอนวัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยในขั้นตอนแรกเพื่อรวบรวมความเห็นของผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิในสาขาวิชาอาเซียนศึกษาเกี่ยวกับนโยบายและแรงจูงใจในการกำหนดกฎบัตรสมาคมแห่งประชาชาติเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ข้อ 34 ซึ่งระบุว่า “ภาษาที่ใช้ในการทำงานของอาเซียนคือภาษาอังกฤษ” หลังจากได้ข้อสรุปจากเดลฟายในขั้นตอนแรกแล้ว ผู้วิจัยนำเสนอข้อสรุปไปสร้างแบบสอบถามเพื่อขอความเห็นจากผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิในขั้นตอนที่ 2 ซึ่งเป็นผู้เชี่ยวชาญทางการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษโดยมีวัตถุประสงค์ในการเสนอข้อแนะนำในเรื่องสมรรถนะทางภาษาและหลักสูตรที่เหมาะสมในการจัดการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในบริบทของประชาคมเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ ดังนั้นงานวิจัยนี้ใช้แบบสอบถาม 2 ชุด ชุดแรกใช้เก็บข้อมูลจากกลุ่มผู้เชี่ยวชาญในขั้นตอนแรก แล้วนำมาใช้ข้อมูลนั้นเพื่อสร้างแบบสอบถามที่สอง สำหรับเก็บข้อมูลจากผู้เชี่ยวชาญกลุ่มที่ 2 ข้อมูลที่ได้รับจากผู้เชี่ยวชาญในขั้นตอนที่ 2 ได้รับการวิเคราะห์ ทั้งในเชิงปริมาณและในเชิงคุณภาพข้อสรุปได้จากการรวบรวมความคิดเห็นของผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิจากคำตอบ ข้อเสนอแนะ คำถามปลายเปิดเทคนิค “เดลฟาย” สะท้อนการรวบรวมหาข้อสรุปที่เป็นเอกฉันท์จากประเด็นที่อาจมีความหลากหลายเนื่องจากผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิมีอิสระในการให้ความเห็น

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Abstract

This study utilized a two-phase-Delphi technique using two different sets of panelists. The objective of the study was to gather valid opinions from experts in the field of ASEAN studies on the implications and motivations behind ASEAN Charter Article 34 which states “the working language of ASEAN shall be English.” After the first Delphi phase, the researcher summarized the feedback obtained by first panel, in order to formulate an appropriate questionnaire for a second panel of experts in the area of English Language Teaching, with the goal of formulating a series of recommendations regarding what sort of competencies and English language curriculum should to be taught in the ASEAN community context. Two different questionnaires were used in this study: one formulated exclusively for the first panel of experts and a second one constructed on the basis of the results collected from Phase One results and subsequently submitted to the Phase Two panel of experts. The responses of the Second Panel Delphi were analyzed both on a quantitative and qualitative base. The conclusion was drawn from the responses, the observations and the open-ended remarks. Delphi techniques reflect the data collection which seek consensus opinion which may be vary as the experts gave their responses anonymously.

คำสำคัญ: กฎบัตรสมาคมแห่งประชาชาติเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ข้อ34 /นโยบายการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ /เทคนิคเดลฟาย

KEYWORDS: ASEAN CHARTER ARTICLE 34 / ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICIES / DELPHI TECHNIQUE

Introduction

The decision taken by ASEAN to give English the status of “sole working language” of the union and exclude all the other national languages from official functions set out the focus of this study. The motivations behind ASEAN Charter Article 34 definitely sprouts from the need of a regional lingua franca able to unify such a diverse union of nations, but inevitably it implies the eventual entailment to teach and spread English as the primary language of education in all of the ASEAN countries. The ramifications of this decision carry extremely crucial implications, not only for language policy and language education, but for the livelihood and economies of the ASEAN people as a whole. Also, to the researcher, this decision stands out as quite an unexpected resolution, at least in historical terms. In fact, at the time of the signing of the Bangkok Declaration in 1968, any notion of English as the lingua franca of ASEAN, if not unthinkable, was just a dim, theoretical possibility, because of the various political, cultural and social factors of the time. Thirty years on, surprisingly, English has been appointed the ASEAN “working language”. How could such a dramatic linguistic shift have taken place, in such few decades? And why has English, and not some other languages, have achieved such a status within ASEAN? ASEAN provides a particularly interesting site for the study of English as a lingua franca because the member states,

following Kachru's 'circles' classification (1985), fall into distinct categories.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore can be classified as 'outer circle' countries, where, because of their colonial past, English continues to play a major role and where it is possible to talk about the Brunei, Filipino, Malaysian and Singaporean varieties of English. Yet, the history of English in these countries since their independence has been anything but similar. Also if we look at other international institutions worldwide, we can see how almost all national languages are included to facilitate communication within the organization.

Examples are:

- African Union – Arabic, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Swahili are “working languages”

- European Union – all languages of the member countries are recognized, including regional dialects, even though English, French and German are the selected working languages of some internal EU bodies such as the European Commission

- North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) – English, French and Spanish - Southern -

- African Development community – the “working languages” are English, French and Portuguese - Union of South American Nations – Dutch, English, Portuguese and Spanish

In the case of South East Asia, a good insight on the decision of ASEAN to adopt “only” English, might come from Malaysia's National Language Act of 1967, which mandated the gradual shift from English to Malay as the medium of instruction in all government schools and universities. As this act was passed in the same year that Malaysia became a founding member state of ASEAN, this makes it all the more surprising that English was tacitly accepted as the sole working language.

Also, Burma seems to fit into the 'outer circle' category in the sense that it was once a British colony and where English played a major role, the inward-looking xenophobic policies initiated by U Ne Win from 1962 led to the marginalization of English, a marginalization that there has been some attempt to reverse in recent years, but with little success.

Regarding Indonesia, finally, it is very surprising, because the country represents a hugely diverse range of languages and cultures. As a consequence, terms such as linguistic imperialism, center and periphery, and linguistic hegemony need to be carefully defined and elaborated. The concepts must prove their worth in the clarification of the workings of linguistic dominance and linguistic empowerment, through uncovering hidden agendas and power structures, and linking scientific and political discourse (Phillipson, 1998). This quote from an Indonesian politician involved in the ASEAN foundation is very indicative 'the idea of English as the common language came out automatically' ... 'there has been no

regulation for the use of English but it has been used in all the actual situations' ... 'we took it for granted' (1999:95–6).

Also it is worth mentioning that there have been two attempts to introduce other working languages and both failed (Okudaira,1999). The first attempt took place when Vietnam's membership was under discussion and the Vietnamese asked whether French might be adopted. The second attempt occurred in 1997 at the meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information when the Malaysian Minister for Information suggested the adoption of Malay as a second working language. The suggestion was not even discussed.

At the ASEAN Summit in November 2007, the ASEAN Charter was introduced. Article 34 'Working Language of the ASEAN' reads: 'The working language of ASEAN shall be English'. This is the only mention of working or official languages in the entire charter to become legally binding, all ten member states must ratify the Charter before the next ASEAN. This is the background of the motivations of this study and the implications that this decision will have on the education of ASEAN member nations in the future.

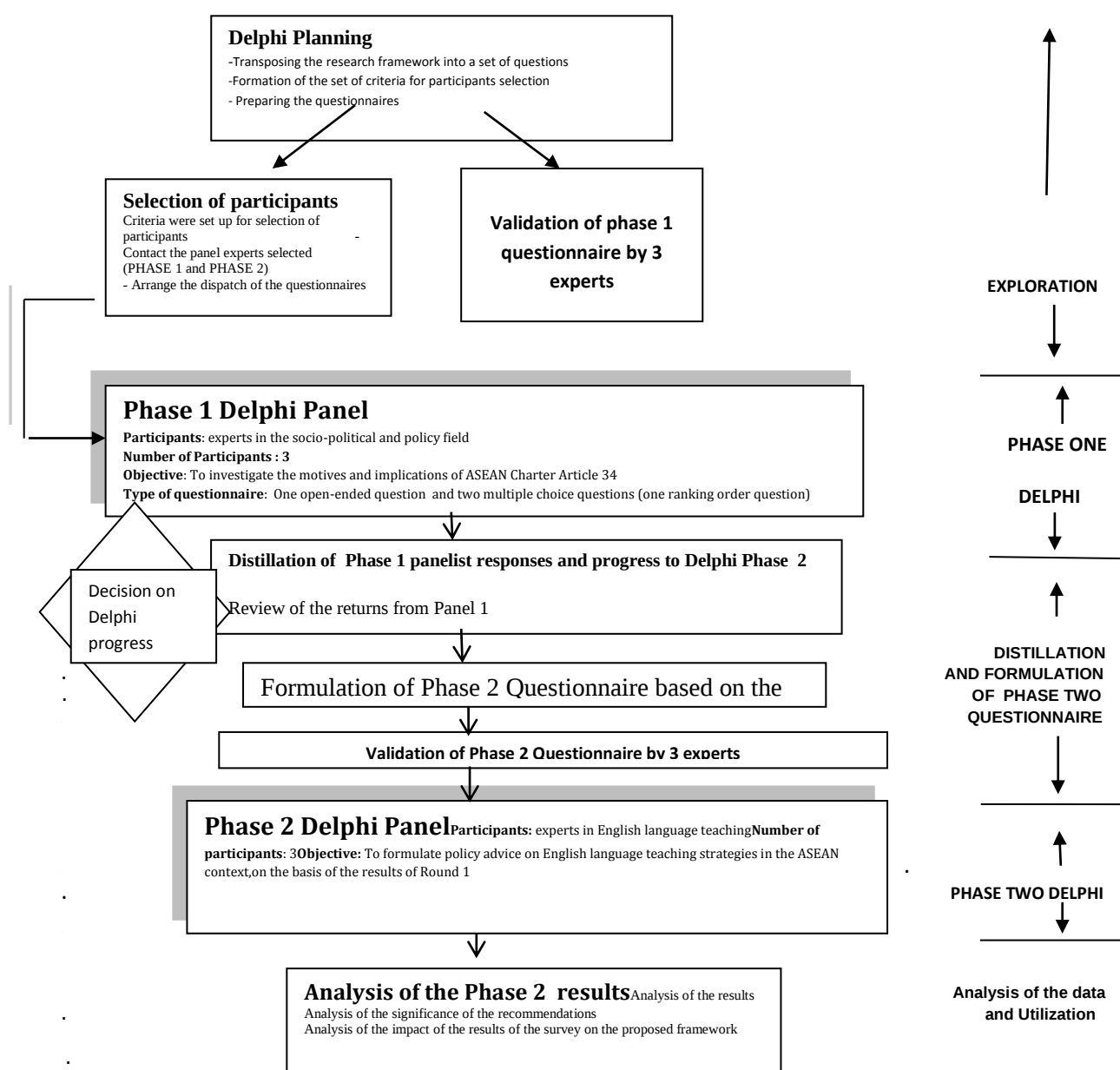
Objectives

The objective of the study is to gather reliable feedback from experts in the field of ASEAN studies on the implications and motivations behind ASEAN Charter Article 34 (the working language of ASEAN shall be English), in order to formulate recommendations on what sort of competencies and English language curriculum should to be taught in the ASEAN community context.

Research Methodology

This study was a two-phase-Delphi technique using two different sets of experts. The first panel included experts in ASEAN studies and the second panel included experts in English language teaching. The research design is displayed in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY



Rationale for the use of Delphi

The Delphi method, as a research tool, is still in its developmental state, as opposed to the usual survey methods; therefore there is a multitude of ways in which to conduct a Delphi research, and no fixed procedure is considered to be the “right one”. According to Decrop (1999), methodological eclecticism is desirable: research questions or, more precisely, the relationship between the knowledge (phenomenon) and the knower (person possessing the knowledge) must direct the choice of appropriate research design and methods. Researchers have applied the Delphi method to a wide variety of situations as a tool for expert problem solving. They have also developed variations of the method

tailored to specific problem types and outcome (Linstone, H. A., & Turoff, M.-1975). An approach that combines multiple tools has been defined as mixed-methods research, triangulation, a multi-method or multi-trait matrix and convergent validation, for instance Campbell and Fiske (1959); Creswell (2009) Decrop (1999); Hanson et al. (2005); Jick (1979); Rudd and Johnson (2009). It is important to reiterate that the Delphi Technique is a method for the systematic solicitation and collation of judgments on a particular topic through a set of carefully designed sequential questionnaires interspersed with summarized information and feedback of opinions derived from earlier responses (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975).

This feature of Delphi, in the researcher's view, fitted perfectly with the aim and intent of the study, since the multi-trait and combined nature of this research needed a system able to combine and link opinions from diverse fields. The researcher has divided the experts into panels. Their size and constitution depends on the nature of the research question and the dimensions along which the experts will probably vary. In this case, two relevant categories of experts have important and valuable knowledge about ASEAN AND English language teaching: academics, practitioners, etc.). These groups probably would have somewhat different perspectives. Since Delphi's goal is to obtain a reasonable degree of consensus, it has been best to have panels that separate these groups. This design also permits comparison of the perspectives of the different stakeholder groups. The process of Delphi consists of a series of rounds of survey questionnaires. In a traditional Delphi study, the first round consists of participants responding to a broad question, while each additional round would build upon the responses gleaned from earlier rounds. The process is terminated when consensus is reached (Delbecq et al., 1975).

The true Delphi technique starts with an open-ended question that is given to participants to solicit opinions about one or several aspects of the topic (Ruhland, 1993). A modified version of Delphi dispenses with the traditional open-ended questionnaire and begins with a structured questionnaire (Murry & Hammons, 1995).

According to the literature, the Delphi technique has several advantageous features which include (1) anonymity, (2) written responses, (3) controlled feedback, and (4) statistical group responses (Dalkey, 1969; Delbecq et al., 1975). Among its advantages is the fact that participants do not have to meet face to face, respondents may remain anonymous, domination by individuals is prevented, adequate time is provided for thinking and reflection, participants are granted flexibility in responding, and conformity issues are avoided (Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Weaver, 1988; Ruhland, 1993). Anonymity refers to maintaining the anonymity of participants or at least of their answers. The aim of anonymity is to avoid the social pressure and potential negative influence in the individual answers in terms of personality and status of the participating experts (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). According to Sackman (1975), the Delphi method is generally fast, inexpensive, easy to

understand, and versatile in the sense that it can be applied wherever expert opinion is believed to exist.

Generally, while a three round Delphi is typical, single and double round Delphi studies have also been completed. Research by Gottschalk (2000) identifies one - round Delphi studies as a reasonably reliable mean of data collection. The researcher believed the number of experts in each panel to be appropriate, based also on previous literature by Debecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson (1975) supporting the researcher's choice, suggesting that using the minimally sufficient number of respondents is a viable option for certain specific cases. While some researchers believe that the more participants there are the better (suggesting that as the number of judges increases, the reliability of a composite judgment increases), there is very little actual empirical evidence on the effect of the number of participants on the reliability or validity of consensus. Therefore the number of the experts for this study is a satisfyingly enough number to constitute a representative pooling of judgments adequate for this particular research topic. On the premise of the "non-fixed" nature of the Delphi technique, the strategy used in this study was somehow innovative (because of the use of a single- round questionnaire and two panels of experts from two different areas of expertise).

Regarding any set standards of selecting Delphi subjects, there is, in fact, no exact criterion currently listed in the literature concerning the selection of Delphi participants. That is, "throughout the Delphi literature, the definition of [Delphi subjects] has remained ambiguous" (Kaplan, 1971, p. 24). Concerning the appropriate number of subjects to involve in a Delphi study, Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson (1975) recommend that researchers should use the minimally sufficient number of subjects and should seek to verify the results through follow-up explorations.

Ludwig (1994) notes that the number of experts used in a Delphi study is "generally determined by the number required to constitute a representative pooling of judgments and the information processing capability of the research team" (p. 52). In sum, the size of Delphi subjects is variable (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975).

Regarding the criteria used to guide the selection of Delphi subjects, individuals are considered eligible to be invited to participate in a Delphi study if they have somewhat related backgrounds and experiences concerning the target issue, are capable of contributing helpful inputs, and are willing to revise their initial or previous judgments for the purpose of reaching or attaining consensus (Pill, 1971; Oh, 1974). Helmer and Rescher (1959). The two panel's roles in this study were intrinsically subordinate to each other.

Instrument development

The number of the experts in each panel was determined by a qualitative criteria rather than a quantitative one. The researcher believes that, for this particular study, a large

numbers of respondents may generate an excessive number of items and ideas, making the summarizing process difficult. A small number of panel members enabled the researcher to effectively summarize the information without excessive dispersion (Linstone, H. A., & Turoff, M. (1975). In the case of this particular study, it was essential to first understand the motives behind ASEAN Charter Article 34 (English shall be the working language of ASEAN) in order to formulate appropriate English language teaching strategies.

The three panelists in the first Delphi phase were drawn from specialists in ASEAN studies from the Center of ASEAN Studies at Chulalongkorn University. The criteria of selecting the three panelists were their expertise as administrators, researchers and lecturers in the area of ASEAN studies for at least 5 years. They could provide insights and had showed keen interest in the ASEAN issue.

The questions for the first phase Delphi were:

1. ASEAN Charter Article 34 states: "The working language of ASEAN shall be English". Why do you think the choice to adopt only English and exclude all other national languages of ASEAN from any official function was taken?

Do you agree or disagree with this decision? Why or why not?

2. Do you believe that some countries will benefit more than others from ASEAN Charter article 34 (the working language of ASEAN shall be English)? (Yes/No)

If so, name at least one: (don't have necessarily to be ASEAN countries)

3. (If you believe that some countries will benefit more than others from ASEAN Charter article 34), in which particular area do you believe they will? -Economy and Business -Culture -Education -Labor -Society -Others (specify)

The experts in Second Phase Delphi were in the field of English language teaching. Their expertise and reputation of at least ten years in the field of English language teaching at higher education level made them the right pundits to analyze the issue.

The questions posed were the following:

- 1) What should the role of English language in ASEAN be?
- 2) What should the English curriculum most appropriate for ASEAN be?
- 3) What should the teaching methods would most appropriate for the ASEAN context?
- 4) Which teaching materials should be the most appropriate for the ASEAN context?
- 5) Please indicate other issues which may be important to raise for ELT in the region.

Expert evaluation of both questionnaires

Before being submitted to the selected panels of experts, both questionnaires were validated by three experts. The item objective congruent (IOC) index was employed. Three experts in the area of English language teaching in the ASEAN context were selected to be experts to validate the content of the questionnaires for the two panels. Even though a

majority consensus of approval was reached, various recommendations and remarks were made by the IOC panels, on the basis of which the researcher had to correct and modify some specific points. For the first panel questionnaire an IOC consensus was reached. After having collected the data from the First Panel on ASEAN, the researcher formulated the Second Panel Questionnaire. In this case, the same group of experts the questionnaire, and suggested some modifications, such as appropriateness of language use and specific terms explanation to be included. The researcher revised the questionnaire accordingly.

Data Collection

In this Delphi study, two different questionnaires were used. One formulated exclusively for the first panel of experts and a second one constructed on the basis of the results collected from Phase One and submitted to a second panel of experts. In both cases, a consensus among the panelists was aimed at. Rather than gathering all the experts together for an oral discussion, the experts provided written responses to the questionnaires. This was an advantage since the experts possessing the knowledge and expertise were not in close proximity and thus three aspects of advantage of Delphi suggested by Dalkey (1969) and Delbecq et al. (1975) could be attempted :1) anonymity, 2) written responses, and 3) controlled feedback.

Results

First Phase Delphi Results

The responses from the First Panel revealed a uniform consensus on the fact that having a common language will make it easier for the citizens of ASEAN to communicate with each other within the community, at least for official functions. The mentioning, in one form or another, of “English as being the undisputed language of choice internationally” was in fact brought up by all of the experts of the First Phase Delphi Panel. This indeed highlights the notion that, in the experts’ view, the choice of English as the sole working language is the most suitable and practical one for ASEAN.

Experts agreed that some countries within ASEAN would in fact benefit more from ASEAN Charter Article 34 (like the Philippines and Singapore) and therefore would have a substantial advantage over the other member countries, at least in the beginning. But however all concurred over the fact that the ASEAN community consists of such a diverse variety of national languages, that only English offers the most valid and appropriate tool of communication within the union.

English, being the global language of choice in our current historic period, is by far the most suited and efficient choice for the role of “working language” within ASEAN”. In our highly globalized world, the most appropriate mean of communication for an

association of nations such as ASEAN, is in fact English, since it acts as an “harmonizing” mean of communication. The experts’ overall consensus, in summary, asserts that English is by far the most pertinent and suitable option of “working languages” amongst all (at least for the ASEAN context). English is the “universally accepted language of our times”, and therefore the most efficient and pragmatic choice for the optimal functioning of communication.

Second Phase Delphi Results

The Panel reached a uniform consensus on almost all of the questions posed, but nevertheless revealed many interesting insights perspectives to the issue of English language instruction in the ASEAN community. English should serve multiple roles in ASEAN, not only for general communication but communication in the workplaces as well – English as international language.

Teaching methods should be eclectic depending on the context, but outcomes should be specified in terms of level of proficiency and desirable behavior. A consensus was also reached over the use of “Authentic Materials. Because we are striving towards one identity and one community in order to be a part of the world community, understanding of diversity among ASEAN countries should be raised and at the same time we should be able to know our own identity. Therefore the materials should be authentic focusing on ASEAN culture”.

On the open-ended final question, the experts suggested that teachers should provide students with relevant inputs, design real-world tasks for students to practice and come up with appropriate means for assessing their performances. More project-based curriculum should be used to allow students to work as a team and practice the skill of leadership, how to lead, negotiate, make decisions, solve problems and compromise. Students should be trained not only the language skills but workplace/job skills of leadership, how to lead, negotiate, make decisions, solve problems and compromise. Technologies should be integrated in the instruction, allowing students to access and search information and practice the language on their own. English instruction should focus on variety of use of English. World Englishes should be focused as we want to use English as a working language. So the focus on a certain accent may not be as important as the pragmatic aspect of the language”.

Conclusion

Discussion and Recommendation for Future Research

The wisdom collected from both panels, highlights a wide consensus on the need of a unifying language for ASEAN, and therefore the teaching policies of this mean of “harmonization” should focus on a wide range of cultural, social, and practical issues aimed at thriving in the new community. Consensus was easily reached through a single round, since all the experts see English language as an indispensable tool for unifying all the nations of ASEAN. The consensus highlights the important role of English and provide the rationale of why English.

This position has also been recently reflected by the statements made by former ASEAN secretary general Surin Pitsuwan, who, in an interview published on the Bangkok Post newspaper on 10 Sept. 2013, stated: “All ASEAN business is conducted in English. But Thai youths are lagging behind in this increasingly important tool of communication in ASEAN. English could hold the key to improving Thai education, which is currently lagging behind that of Thailand's regional neighbors. I insist that with a higher proficiency in English today, Thailand's competitiveness will increase many times over tomorrow.” This statement challenged the views of language educators on to how English should be taught. On this line, Kirkpatrick (2008) states that “we have moved beyond the postcolonial period and are now in the ‘post-anglophone’. Now it is the age of the multilingual society”. International intelligibility replaces native-like proficiency as the major goal. English is now an Asian language and it is commonly used as a lingua franca throughout Asia by so-called non-native speakers in order to communicate with other non-native speakers”. Therefore when these speakers use English, they need to be able to talk about each other’s cultures in English.

The second Delphi phase seemed to suggest some solutions on the what and how.

1) As for what to teach, the experts mentioned World Englishes, ASEAN cultures, workplace/job skills of leadership, and how to lead, negotiate, make decisions, solve problems and compromise. In addition, the focus of teaching should be to raise awareness of others and students’ own identities as suggested by one of the experts: “We are striving towards one identity and one community in order to be a part of the world community, understanding of diversity among ASEAN countries should be raised and at the same time we should be able to know our own identity. Therefore materials should be authentic focusing on ASEAN culture”.

2) For the aspect of how, language teachers should be able to select the teaching methods and materials suitable to the context by using relevant inputs, authentic tasks and appropriate means for assessing their performances. In the ASEAN context, encouraging learners and raising their awareness of the new community can increase learner motivation and enjoyment. This in accordance with extensive literature by Kirkpatrick 2010 (English as a lingua franca in Asia. Which model of English should we teach and When Should We Teach it?) “If English to be taught primarily as a lingua franca, and based on a local model, materials are to be based on local and regional cultures, and this does not implies that local and regional English teachers who speak the model to be taught and have knowledge of the cultures are the most appropriate teachers. Therefore an ELF curriculum for ASEAN that includes Asian cultures and literatures in English could validate local varieties of English. Within the ASEAN context, ELF and the multilingual varieties of English should validate locally trained and linguistically proficient multilingual teachers.

Further research should therefore focus on processes for developing specific authentic materials for the ASEAN context, based on the feedback received from Delphi Phase 2 results. This is in accordance with the suggestion from the experts that the focus on communication should be evident and the stress on the interaction abilities and communicative strategies of the speakers may have important implications for the English language curriculum and classroom, especially in contexts where English is being learned as a tool for lingua franca communication.

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