English as a lingua franca in Southeast Asia's Expanding Circle

The use of ELF within Expanding Circle countries and between these and Outer Circle countries

Introduction

Following Kachru's original classification of Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries (1985), Southeast Asia is home to the following Outer Circle countries: Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. These countries were all colonies of English speaking empires and are countries where English has taken on institutional roles and where local varieties of English have developed. The Expanding Circle countries of Southeast Asia are represented by Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Taiwan and Thailand. I have included Myanmar as an Expanding Circle country as, despite being a British colony between 1826-1947, the military regime, which took over the country in a coup in 1962, followed a closed door policy and made Burmese the official language and the sole medium of instruction in schools. English was only taught as a foreign language. In 1984, the Myanmar government cautiously opened up and encouraged the teaching of English, but the 1988 massacre resulted in the closure of the country once more until the 2015 elections, which were won by the National League for Democracy (NLLD) who assumed power until the military staged another coup in 2021.For these reasons, the role of English in post-colonial Myanmar has resembled that of a foreign rather than second language. This is discussed in more detail below under the section on Myanmar.

In this chapter, I shall argue that the roles of English in many of the Expanding Circle countries has extended far beyond that of a foreign language and simply as a school subject. It is important to point out that Kachru predicted this possible increase in use in Expanding Circle countries and stressed that there was no clear distinction to be made between the Outer Circle (OC) and the Expanding Circle (EC). As he pointed out:

> 'The OC and the EC cannot be viewed as clearly demarcated from each other; they have several shared characteristics, and the status of English in the language policies of such countries change from time to time. What is an ESL region at one time may become an EFL region at another time and vice versa' (1985:13-14).

In discussing the institutionalised Englishes of the Outer Circle countries Kachru noted that they possessed three characteristics. These were:

a) they function in what may be considered 'un-English' cultural contexts;
b) English has a wide spectrum of domains in which it is used with varying degrees of competence by members of society, both as an intranational and international language;
c) (and very important) English has developed a nativised literary tradition in different genres such as the novel, short story, poetry and essay (1985:13).

These institutionalised varieties of English therefore have an 'extended functional *range* in a variety of social, educational, administrative and literary domains'. They have also 'acquired great *depth* in terms of users at different levels of society' (1985:13)

In this chapter, I shall consider the roles of English in the countries of Southeast Asia classified as Expanding Circle to see if they fulfil any or all of the three functions ascribed to the institutionalised varieties of the Outer Circle. I shall also show how English increasingly

functions as a lingua franca for English users in these Expanding Circle Countries. I shall argue that the use of ELF means that attempts to provide theories for the development of new Englishes in non-postcolonial settings (along the lines of Schneider's (200 Dynamic Model for postcolonial English), but which fail to take into account this use of ELF and its properties (e.g., Schneider 2014, Buchsfeld, Krautzsch 2014, Buchsfled, Krautzsch and Schneider 2018) overlook the main role of English in these settings today.

Before considering each Expanding Circle country in turn, I shall illustrate how widespread the take-up of English is in the Expanding Circle by providing the numbers of English users in the Expanding and Outer Circle countries of Southeast Asia.

Numbers of English Users

Both Tables 1 and 2 are adapted Bolton & Bacon-Shone (2020). They show their estimates for the percentages and current number of English speakers in the Expanding Circle (Table 1) and Outer Circle (Table 2) countries of Southeast Asia

Table 1 Knowledge of English in Expanding Circle Southeast Asian societies

Society	**Current estimates**	**Approx. total of English speakers**
Myanmar (Burma)	10%	5.2 million
Taiwan	10%	2.4 million
Thailand	10%	6.5 million
Vietnam	10%	4.6 million
Cambodia†	5%	0.8 million
Indonesia	5%	13.0 million
Laos	5%	0.3 million
Total		**32.8 million**

Table 2 Knowledge of English in Outer Circle Southeast Asian societies

Society	**Current estimates**	**Approx. total of English speakers**
Singapore†	80%	3.1 million
Philippines†	65%	66.7 million
Brunei†	60%	0.2 million
Malaysia	50%	15.5 million
Total		**85.5 million**

Before moving to discussing the roles of English in each of the Expanding Circle countries, the influence of the language policies of supranational groupings such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia- Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group of countries upon the take-up of English is reviewed.

Of the countries listed in the tables above, only Taiwan is not a member of ASEAN. The remaining ten countries make up ASEAN. In 2009, these ten countries signed the ASEAN Charter, Article 34 of which states that 'The working language of ASEAN shall be English'. As will be illustrated below the need for English to be heard in ASEAN meetings has proved a major motivation for promoting the study of English in the education systems of ASEAN countries. And English is also seen to be important for establishing an ASEAN identity. As the then Secretary General of ASEAN, Le Loung Minh, argued in 2013:

> With the diversity in ASEAN reflected in our diverse histories, races, cultures and belief systems, English is an important and indispensable tool to bring our Community closer together. […] Used as the working language of ASEAN, English enables us to interact with other ASEAN colleagues in our formal meetings as well as day-to-day communications. […] In order to prepare our students and professionals in response to all these ASEAN integration efforts, among other measures, it is imperative that we provide them with opportunities to improve their mastery of the English language, the language of our competitive global job market, the lingua franca of ASEAN (ASEAN, 2013).

Further motivations for the learning of English in ASEAN are provided by the 2016 inauguration of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The aim of the AEC is to create a single market and production base for the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labour within ASEAN.

The 21 countries that make up APEC have also actively promoted the learning of English. At the APEC Ministerial Meeting some twenty years ago the member economies were encouraged to undertake measures 'to provide adequate knowledge and practical use of English as a working language within the APEC region' (Lazaro & Medalla 2004:278). And at their 2012 summit meeting, the 21 countries that make up APEC agreed to seek ways to increase staff and student mobility between APEC universities. At the same time, the ASEAN Universities Network is promoting staff and student mobility across its 30 universities (Kirkpatrick & Knagg ftch)

The policies adopted by these supranational groupings have, as will be illustrated below, added impetus to the learning of English across the region to the extent that English has become the first foreign language taught in each of the countries under review (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat 2019).

I now turn to discussing the roles of English in the Expanding Circle countries of Southeast Asia. Each discussion will include a brief review of the history of English in each country.

Myanmar

British rule in Myanmar lasted from 1824 to 1948. Originally, Burma, as it was then known, was a Province of India but later became a separate colony before achieving independence in 1948. During the colonial period, English was the language of government and administration. Post-independence, however, Burmese replaced English and it became the medium of instruction in schools. As noted above, the army seized control in a military coup

in 1962 and continued to rule until 2015 when the National League for democracy (NLLD) won victory in democratic elections.

Since 2015, the government has been promoting English, and the military government had also started to reintroduce English, recognising its importance. It is a school subject from the first year of primary school. It has also been made the medium of instruction for science and maths in upper secondary education and as the medium of instruction in higher education. It would appear, however, that the adoption of English as a medium of instruction has been made too soon, as neither teachers nor students have high enough levels of English proficiency to cope with successfully learning these subjects through English. As Drinan recounted in a report for the British Council.

> Using English as a Medium of Instruction (MoI): this is fundamentally not working for teaching Maths and Science as few teachers can use English, let alone, teach another subject in English. Students are not learning or understanding important concepts in Maths and Science. They merely remember the technical terms in English for the tests. Most teachers use a mix of Myanmar (for explanation) and English (for technical terms). (Drinan 2013, cited in Kirkpatrick 2015):

McCormick (2019) reports that, at university level, the inadequate English proficiency of the students means that the teaching method involves reading the English textbooks aloud in English and then explaining them in Burmese.

The opportunities and need for Burmese to use English increased with the victory of the NLLD government in 2015 and the subsequent arrival of international businesses, aid agencies and tourism. The government therefore introduced a number of initiatives to promote the learning of English. Aye (2020), however, reports that levels of English proficiency in Myanmar remain low, with Myanmar ranking 82 out of 88 countries on the EF English Proficiency Index. And opportunities to use English within Myanmar have once again diminished dramatically with the 2021 military coup, as foreign companies withdraw and sanctions are introduced. In summary, the place of English in what was once an Outer Circle remains restricted. The Expanding Circle countries discussed below, all see a greater use of English than current day Myanmar, despite its membership of ASEAN.

Laos

Laos, or the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), is the poorest country under review here and has the United Nations' Least Developed Nation Status, a status from which it hopes to graduate in 2026. After decades as a French colony, Laos became independent in 1953. It inherited French from its time as a French colony and then Russian became the first foreign language taught after the establishment of the Lao PDR in 1975. Lao was (and remains) the medium of instruction at all levels of education, but, after the collapse Soviet empire in 1991, English was introduced into lower secondary. From 2000, the Ministry of Education has promoted the learning of English 'to meet the needs of the socioeconomic development of the country' (Achren and Kittiphanh 2020: 668) and it has since become the most popular foreign language and has recently been introduced as a subject in primary schools. A main motivation for the take-up of English has been Lao PDR's joining of ASEAN in 1997. As Achren and Kittiphanh (2020) note, the role of English in government in Lao has been as a lingua franca as Lao officials have had to work with officials from regional and international agencies in helping Lao modernise. In 1999, a 3-year 'English for ASEAN'

programme was funded by the Australian government. And, as Lao becomes more connected to the international world, the need for English grows. This increased connectedness is evidenced by Laos' hosting of the 8th ASEAN Minister of Education Meeting in 2014, it being admitted to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2013 and being the ASEAN Chair in 2016. English has also been needed to work with a range of international organisations. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has provided English training for the Lao legal system (Achren and Kittiphanh 2020).

The need for English is also felt in Lao's Provinces as a policy of decentralisation takes effect. Achren (2009:152 and cited in Achren and Kittiphanh 2020 676-7) records an official from one of the provinces as saying

> We used to teach English to the staff from the near districts but now we've changed the target group to the far districts because they also need to relate to foreigners. They really need English…Decentralisation has meant that more projects are located there, for example, there are now many NGOs and bilateral projects about poverty reduction. There are target districts among Road Number 9 - this area is developing now. We have community development projects there because it increases trade and tourism opportunities. The road, we call it the 'ASEAN Road' because it links three ASEAN countries. We're not 'land-locked' any more, we're 'road-linked'. So we need staff to go with the projects to the villages and remote areas. They must speak to the villagers for the project and interpret for the foreign consultants. We have not enough staff in the city to help with all these projects so the districts really need to learn.

To help fill this need, English is also taught in all technical and vocational colleges (TVEs) and the creation of private TVEs is being encouraged by the government which realises that English is also needed across the private sector from tourism to transport, from office work to banking.

Problems exist, especially with regard the teaching of English at primary level. Like almost all the countries discussed here, the Lao PDR is multilingual and some 30% of the population do not have Lao as a mother tongue. Many of the children who have different mother tongues struggle when the medium of instruction is Lao and English is taught in primary school and many drop out of school before primary five (UNESCO 2007). The perceived need for English has led many countries to believe in the idea that 'the earlier languages are learned the better', and therefore introduce English into the primary curriculum, typically at Grade 3. Research has shown, however, that English is often not learned when introduced too early, especially when children's mother tongues are not included as languages of education. Results are better when English is delayed until children have developed literacy and fluency in their mother tongues (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat 2019, Kosonen 2019, Benson 2019). What is certain, however, is that English is currently playing increasingly diverse roles in the Lao PDR and that the need to be able to operate with regional and international agencies is a major driving force for this. Similar motivations are also driving the need for English in Cambodia and Vietnam and I discuss the situation in those countries next.

Cambodia

Cambodia has a similar colonial history to the Lao PDR in that it was also a French Protectorate. After independence it was ruled by King Norodom Sihanouk who had been

installed by the departing French. In 1960, he renounced the throne and installed himself as Head of State (Neau 2003). During the Vietnam War, he allowed the North Vietnamese access to Cambodia which led to the American bombing of the country. This, in turn, led to Sihanouk being deposed and the more pro-Western Lon Nol being installed, whose popularity owed much to his anti-Vietnamese stance. His popularity waned, however, as his anti-Vietnamese stance involved halving the Vietnamese population in Cambodia using a combination of forced repatriation and killing, displaying ‘‘virulent ethno-nationalism’ (Heder 2007: 300). The Cambodian Communist Party, the Khmer Rouge, took advantage of Lon Nol’s waning popularity and, under the leadership of Pol Pot, won power in 1975. There followed 4 years of terror. Pol Pot’s brutal regime was ended when Vietnam invaded in 1979 and remained in control for ten years (Clayton 2006). 1991 saw the arrival of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and several thousand personnel associated with UNTAC (Anderson 1999). Parliamentary elections were held in 1993 but, in 1997, the Communist party under the leadership of Hun Sen, assumed power in a coup. Further elections were held in 1998, resulting in Hun Sen becoming Prime Minister, a post he holds to this day.

French and English were the official working languages of UNTAC, but, in fact, English was used far more than French. English was also important as Cambodia had joined ASEAN in 1999. As in the Lao PDR and many of the other countries discussed here, English ‘quickly became indispensable to Cambodia’s rapid transitions and development’(Moore and Bounchan 2020:651). Moore and Bounchan also report that ‘English is without doubt the most common lingua franca in encounters with foreigners both inside and outside the country’ (2020: 655). A Cambodian government minister stressed the importance of English to Cambodia now that Cambodia was a member of ASEAN, saying:

> We need to know English so that we can defend our interests. You know, ASEAN is not a kissy-kissy brotherhood. The countries are fiercely competitive, and a strong knowledge of English will help us protect our interests’ (Clayton 2006: 230)

English is now the first foreign language taught in schools, being first introduced in primary schools, with the usual concomitant problems such an early introduction of English entails. ‘Given the available human and other resources for education in Cambodia, the hurried attempts to promote English language teaching seem to reflect the perhaps over-ambitious goals of political leaders’ (Kosonen 2019: 223). However, English is the language being learned by children in urban settings and Moore and Bounchan question the figures given above in Table 1, suggesting that currently the percentage of Cambodians using English is nearer 10% than the 5% given in Table 1. It is now used in a range of domains: there are English language newspapers and broadcast media and much social media internet usage is conducted in English. Moore and Bounchan predict that the current roles of English will continue to grow as: (i) the lingua franca between Cambodians and non-Cambodian speakers (in political discussions, commercial transactions, tourism); (ii) as a medium of quality education; (iii) in social media (iv) entertainment. They even argue that Cambodia is moving from being an Expanding Circle country (with French as the language) to an Outer Circle one, with English and that ‘Khmer and English are very likely to coexist in a dynamic multilingual environment’ (2020: 663)

Vietnam

As with both the Lao PDR and Cambodia, Vietnam was a French Protectorate, so inherited French as the first foreign language. With the unification of Vietnam after the war in 1975, both French and English were regarded as languages of colonialism and English the language of the enemy. This led to the policy 'of burning and binning English and French textbooks and other related materials in an effort to get rid of colonialist and imperialist legacies' (Nguyen & Nguyen 2019: 188). But within a remarkably short time, English became the most sought after language. The Vietnamese government's 'opening up' to the world by way of their *Doi Moi* policy of 1986 led to an extraordinary demand for English.

> …when Vietnam embarked on economic reforms in 1986…it prompted a nationwide rush to learn English… English classes were crammed with not just students but also professionals such as doctors and engineers as well as retired government officials, senior police, army officers and diplomats. (cited in Ho & Wong 2004: 1)

In a few short years, therefore, English had changed from being the language of the enemy to the language of development and modernisation.

English is currently taught as a compulsory subject from grade 3 in primary school. It is also the most popular foreign language at universities and an increasing number of universities are offering English medium of instruction (EMI) programmes. The Vietnam International University, which was set up in 2003, was the first public university to provide EMI courses. Private universities using EMI have been established and the Australian university, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), set up a campus in Vietnam in 2001. Their courses all use EMI. In addition, international private schools offering EMI from K-12 are 'mushrooming in Vietnam's major cities' (Sundkvist and Nguyen 2020: 689). Sundkvist and Nguyen also note that Vietnam will need more English speakers to participate in regional fora, in particular the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which, as noted above,will allow the free movement of labour between the countries comprising ASEAN.

To meet this growing need for English the Vietnamese government launched Project 2020. This had ambitious goals as it aimed to ensure that all English teachers in primary and lower secondary schools reached level B2 on the Common Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale and all those teaching in upper secondary reached level C1. But as two Vietnamese scholars pointed out

> the government's decision to invest in enhancing the language competence of English teachers is a judicious step toward improving the quality of its English education in general. Nonetheless, teachers under training and educational observers have expressed apprehension toward the CEFR-based levels prescribed for English teachers, claiming that these benchmarks are likely beyond teachers' ability, especially for those in rural areas' (Nguyen, & Nguyen 2019: 195).

There is currently a serious shortfall between the stated aims in terms of teacher proficiency in Project 2020 and the reality. Indeed, the project has been extended to 2025. But what Project 2020 does show is the importance the Vietnamese government has attached to its people learning English. This is needed for Vietnamese to participate in international programmes ASEAN (joined 1995), APEC (joined 1998) and the WTO (joined 2006).

In their review of English in Vietnam, Sundkvist and Nguyen conclude that 'ongoing developments will, in all likelihood lead to increasing level of proficiency in English among a wider section of Vietnamese society' (2020:699)

Indonesia

In multilingual Southeast Asia, Indonesia is the most linguistically diverse being home to more than 700 languages. Yet, the great majority of these had no script and at the time of Indonesia's independence from the Dutch in 1945, only 5% of the population was literate (Lauder 2020). In choosing a language to be the national language for this multilingual nation, Indonesia surprisingly chose Malay, a language only spoken by 3% of the population as a first language (Montolalu and Suryadinata 2007). This was renamed *Bahasa Indonesia* and its promotion and development as the national language has been remarkably successful with over 70% of the population of some 260 million people able to operate in the language.

Indonesia is the only country in ASEAN that does not make English a compulsory subject in primary schools. That is not to say, however, that English is not taught at primary level. It is, after the national language, *Bahasa Indonesia* itself, the most commonly taught language across the school system. It is also increasingly used as a medium of instruction in higher education. The Indonesian Government announced in 2015 that, from 2016, Indonesian universities would teach bilingually, using *Bahasa Indonesia* and English. The EMI programmes are called 'international' and the *Bahasa Indonesia* ones are called 'regular' (Dewi 2017), suggesting that the EMI programmes are considered more prestigious. The policy's aims are to increase English fluency among staff and students so that they will 'communicate in English and all academic references would use English terms' (The Jakarta Post 2015 cited in Fenton-Smith et al. 2017:4). A British Council report on English Medium of Instruction in Indonesian higher education (British Council 2021) states that 'Of the 24 universities which responded to the Manager's survey, 13 stated that EMI programmes were already in place while 11 said that they would be implemented in the future.' And also that 'almost every conceivable subject area in the HE curriculum is being taught in English somewhere.' (Kirkpatrick and Knagg fthc).

'The enthusiasm of the public for the use of Englishes is reflected in nearly all domains of life' (Zein 2019:49). Yet Zein also cautions that the promotion of English in primary school, even though it is not a compulsory subject, threatens Indonesian multilingualism as only five of Indonesia's 700 or so languages are included in school curricula, these being Javanese, Sundanese, Buginese, Balinese and Batak.

English is also taught in what might seem to be unexpected contexts, namely the schools specialising in Islamic instruction, the *madrasas* and *pesantren*, these latter being boarding schools attached to mosques (Kirkpatrick 2020). Some *pesantren* teach English 'for Islamic values' (Fahrudin 2013) where students are, for example, requited to add the Arabic '*Insya'Allah* to sentences expressing future plans to give 'I will go to the market tomorrow,*Insya'Allah*'. English is considered important for informing the world about Islam. A teacher who taught English in a *madrasa* for ten years explained why the students needed English. He argued that a major goal of learning English is to 'provide students with adequate knowledge and skills in using English language in their daily lives (e.g., in conversation)' so that, for example, 'students are able to explain how to perform *shalat*, how many pillars of Islam there are, and what Islam is' (Nashruddin 2015: 76).

The importance of English for explaining Islam was also reported by Dewi in her survey of Indonesian academics' attitudes towards English. Muslim respondents felt that English has a positive effect on their Muslim identity. Representative quotes from Muslim participants were: '[English] is also necessary for us to master English for proseletyising', 'English helps the development of my religion', and 'English can deliver information about my religion' (2012: 22). Non-Muslim participants also had positive attitudes towards English, saying things like, 'I learn English because I want to be heard', 'English can boost our confidence as a nation' and 'English makes me more confident I do not feel inferior anymore' (Dewi 2012: 16-17).

Using English to proselytise is perhaps an unexpected role for English, but shows how Indonesians are using English to promote their own religious and cultural values. Indonesians are using English in increasingly varied ways, including for academic research and publishing, development, technology, trade, tourism, and international and regional diplomacy (Lauder 2020:622). They need English to compete globally and communicate successfully with regional counterparts (Zein 2019).

Thailand

Thailand is the only country discussed here that has never been a colony. Nevertheless, English was introduced to the country relatively early by king Mongkut, who ruled as Rama IV from 1851-1868. Rama IV saw English as a passport to modernisation. Readers may be familiar with the novel by Margaret Landon, 'Anna and the King of Siam', and the subsequent Hollywood musical 'The King and I' both of which tell the story, somewhat romanticised, of an English governess, Anna Leonowens, who was brought to the Thai court to work as an English teacher for 5 years between 1862-7.

The Education Act of 1892 made English a secondary school subject (Draper 2019) becoming compulsory in the 1920s (Kirkpatrick 2020). English then played a role during the Vietnam War, as Bangkok became a favourite 'Rest and Relaxation' (R&R) for American troops. Tourism remains a key domain where English is needed.

Despite being made the principal foreign language in the 1999 Education Act, English proficiency levels in Thailand remain low, ranking 64th out of 88 in the EF English Proficiency Index. But as Hammond, in her recent review of English in Thailand, is careful to underline, Thailand remains a very unequal country and there is a huge socio-economic gap between the Bangkok urban middle class and the rural population; and this gap is also seen in levels of English proficiency and is also generational. The young middle class are much more likely to speak English than their parents or grandparents, providing evidence that the role of English is increasing in Thailand, despite the disparities noted above. The teaching of English in many rural areas is ineffective, however, as many teachers themselves have low levels of English proficiency. Rural Thailand thus represents a stark contrast with urban Bangkok where 'the necessity of English as a means of communication predominates among Thailand's business and professional sectors' (2020 631) And English is also needed in the private health care system as this offers services to international clients from around the world.

As with many of the other countries discussed here, membership of ASEAN and other regional and international fora means there is a need for English and many Thai universities

now offer English courses specially designed to prepare 'students for an integrated ASEAN community' (2020: 635). In addition, many schools have also revised their English language curricula to meet the demands of the ASEAN Economic Community (Jindapitak 2019). The Thai government has also introduced measures to increase Thais' English language proficiency and recently sent 1000 Thai English teachers overseas for short courses. The government has also launched the 'English Speaking Year' programme, the aim of which is to ensure that Thai speakers of English will be able to communicate effectively with non-Thai speakers' (Jindapitak 2019:36).

The need for English to operate within the ASEAN community means that English will function as a lingua franca between Asian multilinguals from within ASEAN. In a study designed to investigate Thais students' attitudes to English as a lingua franca and local teachers of English compared with native varieties of English and native English teachers, Watson Todd and Pojanpunya (2020), found that the students' preference for a native English teacher had actually increased in the ten years since they had conducted an earlier study. They were surprised at these findings as they had expected the students would favour local teachers and have positive attitudes towards English as a lingua franca given the extraordinary increase in international tourism – less than 10% of whom came from English speaking countries -– and the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community, allowing for the free movement of skilled labour across the region. Jindapitak (2019) surveyed 'ELT stakeholders' at a local school (teachers, parents and students) and also found that they felt that the native speakers presented the ideal model. These findings would support Hammond's contention that Thailand remains an Expanding Circle country, depending on Inner Circle speakers for its linguistic norms. Even so, English is being used in more domains than in the past, including at the grassroots level in tourist encounters (Schneider 2014 and see below).

Taiwan

While Taiwan was never a colony of Britain or the United States, the 1860 Convention of Peking, signed after the Opium Wars, opened up Taiwan for British trade. British traders arrived, followed closely by missionaries who set up schools at which English was taught. And while it was never an American colony, Taiwan has been home to an American military base for decades and has close links with the United States. Many of Taiwan's senior government ministers and civil servants have obtained their degrees, many at doctoral level, from American universities. The American variety of English remains the target model (Luo 2017).

The perceived importance of English for Taiwan even led, in 2002, to plans for making English a co-official language. These plans were not met, but English was given 'quasi-official' status and an 'Action Plan for Creating and English-friendly Living Environment' was implemented. Signs were to be bilingual and all government departments were required to have English language websites (Kobayashi 2020).

Taiwan's political position has required it to embrace globalization and to actively seek international allies and partners. This has led to a language education policy that promotes English and which has three main strands: the making of English as a compulsory subject in primary schools from 2001; an English language exit requirement for students graduating

from tertiary education; and the adoption of English as a medium of instruction in higher education (Wu and Lau 2019:157).

English medium of instruction programmes in higher education have increased rapidly in recent years and many prestigious universities offer courses taught entirely in English and these attract international students, with the student split between local and international being about 50-50 (Kobayashi 2020). In addition, private bilingual English programmes have become increasingly popular, especially in urban areas where the urban wealthy can afford them. As in Thailand and the other countries under discussion, the increasing demand for English and the subsequent emergence of private fee-paying education institutions offering English medium education serves to increase the divide between the wealthier urban middle classes and the rural community.

The perceived importance that the Taiwan government attaches to English can be seen with the 2018 publication of a Blueprint designed to develop Taiwan into a bilingual nation (Chinese and English) by 2030. The Ministry identified five policies connected with the Blueprint as listed in the press statement below

> In accord with the 'Blueprint for Developing Taiwan into a Bilingual Nation by 2030' announced by the National Development Council (NDC) on December 6, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has now set 'implementing full scale bilingualization of Taiwan's educational system and cultivating bilingual talents to bring Taiwan to the world' as its goal. To reach this goal, five policies will be launched: 1. adopt a dynamic teaching approach with focus on daily English use, 2. expand human resources required for English education, 3. make effective use of digital technology and promote individualized learning, 4. accelerate the internationalization of the educational system, and 5. relax current regulations to allow for flexible mechanisms. These policies will enhance students' English competencies for both general use, and for use in the competitive workplace. Working together with other ministries and departments, the MOE wants to meet the need to vitalize English teaching and learning, so that English can serve as a useful tool in our society. Only then can the bilingual-country policy be deemed successful.
>
> [https://english.moe.gov.tw/cp-117-21632-46F55-1.html, accessed May 1, 2021].

To what extent these policies might reduce the gap between the urban middle classes and the rural population remains to be seen. But, English is seen to be crucial as, because of its diplomatic isolation, 'ties with the international community are vital for the survival of Taiwan' (Kobayashi 2020: 563).

Domains of English

Having given a brief country by country overview of the roles English is currently playing in these Expanding Circle countries, I now turn to considering domains where English is playing a role in the majority, if not all, of these countries. The first is the domain of higher education and the rise of English medium instruction programmes.

In the final years of the last century the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was established with the view to making Europe more competitive in the global economy (Hultgren 2016). In 1999, the Bologna Declaration or Process set up policies aimed at standardising the courses offered by European universities in order to facilitate

internationalisation and staff and student mobility between the universities. While the setting up of EMI programmes may not have been an explicit aim of these initiatives, they have resulted in an extraordinary increase in the number of EMI courses offered in Europe (Wachter and Maiworm 2014). 'What emerges unambiguously is that, in the Bologna Process, internationalisation means English-medium higher education' (Phillipson 2009:37). Coleman argued that ''it seems inevitable that English, in some form, will definitely become the language of education' (Coleman 2006:11).

Both the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group of countries and ASEAN have followed the example set by the establishment of the EHEA and are encouraging the standardisation of courses to allow for staff and student mobility. This has inevitably led to the increase of EMI programmes in the universities. A further motivation for setting up EMI courses is the belief that they will somehow increase the English proficiency of the students who enrol in these courses. However, there is little research evidence to suggest that this is the case (Macaro et al.) and, if students do not have adequate levels of English proficiency, enrolling in an EMI courses will do more harm than good. Their lack English proficiency will mean that the course content will not be learned, especially when their teachers have not had specific training in the delivery of content through English, as appears to be the case in many of the Expanding Circle countries here. A recent report into the take up of EMI courses in Indonesian higher education 9also referred to above) noted that

> It appears that EMI is being implemented in many HEIs without any explicit policy statement, any provision of training for staff or students, any systematic checks on quality, and even in some instances without the full knowledge of management. (British Council 2021)

Yet, the adoption of EMI courses in higher education across these Expanding Circle countries is increasing at great pace (Bolton and Botha 2020).

At the other end of the spectrum from higher education might be called 'Grassroots' English (Schneider 2014, Meierkord, 2020, Meierkord and Schneider 2021). The increase in tourism in many of the Expanding Circle countries means that locals need some English in order to be able to deal with tourists. Schneider notes that many of these people will have learned their English in direct interactions with tourist rather than in a formal school setting. Their use of English is highly instrumental. They need to conduct business successfully at the grassroots level. Schneider provides this example from Indonesia, where a woman is selling mangoes

> 'Mango good. You pay ten Mama M not happy. You pay fifteen Mama M happy' (2014:6)

There is no doubt that this use of English as a lingua franca at the grassroots level is seen across these Expanding Circle countries. But, of course, this use of English has centuries of history. For example, the need to trade between Chinese and English entrepreneurs led to the formation of pidgin English in China in the 18th century (Bolton 2003). Here is a more recent example of an Indian rickshaw driver touting for business

> Hellow sir! Some rickshaw, some bazaar market, some two rupees, some go and come back. Some silk, some sari, some Ganges. I rickshaw driver. Somebody some friend coming here Varanasi I help you. (Mehrotra 2000:49)

This use of English is a lingua franca shows how people can be communicatively successful despite the use of non-standard forms. While this 'grassroots' use of English may have been around for centuries; what is new is its increasing use in many of the Expanding Circle countries of Southeast Asia.

Moving domains again, this time from grassroots tourism to the legal domain, it was noted above that the UNDP had provided legal training in English for the Lao PDR. English remains entrenched and indispensable in the legal systems in many Outer Circle countries (Powell 2020); but it is also needed in Expanding Circle countries for regional and international dispute resolution. 'Common law performs significant functions in Asian polities, as well in international dispute legislation around the region, and it continues to bestow particular importance upon English….' (Powell and Saw 2021:15).

Popular culture is a further domain where English is playing a role in Expanding Circle countries. Moody has distinguished its role in the popular culture of Expanding Circle countries from its role in the popular culture of Outer Circle countries, arguing that its role in Expanding Circle countries is more decorative than communicative (2020). For example, the huge international hit 'Gangnam Style' performed by the Korean singer PSY, only has two words of English in the song, these being 'sexy lady'. It is also common to see people in Expanding Circle countries wearing T-shirts emblazoned with English slogans, which are, of themselves, meaningless. But as Moore and Bouchan noted above, much of social media and internet usage in Cambodia is now conducted in English, and this would be true of the majority of these Expanding Circle countries.

In the section on Indonesia above, the role English is playing in the religious domain was highlighted. This is significant as it represents an example of people from an Expanding Circle country adopting and reshaping English to meet their own needs. On the one hand, students are learning English for 'Islamic Purposes'. On the other, Indonesian Muslims are learning English so that they can discuss and explain the key tenets of their religion to non-Muslims from outside Indonesia. The role of English here is therefore both intranational and international and provides a further example of how English is taking on new roles within Expanding Circle countries.

An extremely important role of English which is common to all the Expanding Circle countries discussed here is as a means of communication with regional and international agencies. ASEAN's adoption of English as the sole working language of the group added to the fact that English is the most common working language of many regional and international agencies means that, English has become a requirement for these Expanding Circle countries if they wish to benefit from membership of these organisations and to participate in modernisation and development. It is not surprising then that, with the exception of Indonesia, these countries have made English a compulsory subject in primary school. As argued above (and see Kirkpatrick 2020), however, the early introduction of English does not necessarily lead to increased overall proficiency in the language.

Expanding Circle? Outer Circle? Or?

In the Introduction, I listed the three characteristics that Kachru had assigned to the Englishes of Outer Circle. I repeat them here:

a) They function in what may be considered 'un-English' cultural contexts

b) English has a wide spectrum of domains in which it is used with varying degrees of competence by members of society, both as an intranational and international language
c) (and very important) English has developed a nativised literary tradition in different genres such as the novel, short story, poetry and essay (13)

In assessing whether the Englishes of the Expanding Circle countries discussed have taken on these characteristics, I think it can be argued that they possess the first two characteristics – they are used in what might be considered 'un-English' cultural contexts. Indeed, we can argue that the increasing role of English in these expanding circle contexts makes 'un-English' a hard concept to grasp. Perhaps we can say that these Englishes operate in non-Anglophone contexts. The second characteristic has also been attained as there is no doubt that English is currently used in a wide spectrum of domains, with varying degrees of competence, both as an intranational and international language. Both the *depth* and *range* of English use has increased in each of these countries. But it is hard to argue that the Englishes in these Expanding Circle countries have develop nativised literary traditions in the ways that the Englishes of South Asia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines have done. There are, however, examples of writers born in these countries who have moved, often as refugees, and often to the United States. One such is the Vietnamese-American author, Le Thi Diem Thuy, whose writings 'recount the forced displacement and mass violence caused by colonial and neo-colonial inequalities, military aggression and state-sponsored genocide in Southeast Asia' (Lim, Patterson, Troeung and Gui 2020: 807). These authors are optimistic that 'the Outer and Expanding Circles of Asian Englishes will no doubt generate new artistic forms and critical concepts to energise the next wave of literature written in the English language (2020:808).

To conclude, I want to question the current relevance of trying to fit the Englishes being used in these Expanding Circle contexts into the circles paradigm. Or whether it is possible to adopt Schneider's Dynamic Model (2007), in which he posits five developmental stages through which all post-colonial Englishes (PCEs) pass, the first of which is the Foundation stage, when English is brought to the colony by settlers. Schneider himself has stated that the Dynamic Model is not a suitable framework for the description of 'global Englishes' (Buchsfeld, Krautzsch and Schneider 2018). He proposes, instead, the notion of 'transnational attraction' (2014: 112), where English is seen as an economic resource 'a symbol of modernity, a stepping stone to posterity' (2014:28). But this seems simply to state that English is being used more by more people because it provides benefits.

Buchsfeld and Krautzsch (2014) have attempted to extend the Dynamic Model and have proposed an 'extra and intra territorial forces' (EIF) model for the description of non-postcolonial Englishes (non-PCEs) and these would include those treated here.

First, they argue that English as a second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) cannot be strictly separated from each other but should be treated as two poles of a continuum. They further argue that they are not to be viewed as excessively mono-directional and in some cases show a reverse development' (Buchsfeld, Kautzsch and Schneider 2018). But this is also what Kachru argued in 1985. To repeat a section of the quote cited in the Introduction 'What is an ESL region at one time may become an EFL region at another time and vice versa' (Kachru 1985:13-14).

What then, are the 'extra and intra territorial forces' which are at play? Both PCEs and non-PCEs are influenced these extra and intra territorial forces, all but one of which are shared by both. The extra-territorial forces shared by both comprise 'language policies, globalisation, foreign policies and sociodemographic background'. The intra-territorial forces shared by both comprise 'language polices/attitudes, acceptance of globalisation, foreign policies and sociodemographic background'. The only extra territorial force unique to PCEs is 'colonisation' and the only intra territorial force unique to them is 'attitudes to colonisation' (2014: 114).

The extra and intra territorial forces listed as common to both are somewhat vague. Clearly the crucial difference, however, is the lack of colonisation for the Non-PCEs. One immediate difference is that there is therefore no Foundation phase for these Expanding Circle countries, these non-PCEs.

To account for this gap, they argue, following Edwards (2016), that globalisation does the work of colonisation in providing the Foundation phase for non-PCEs. But this is hard to accept, as the great majority of English speakers who bring English to these countries are non-native speakers of English. Those native speakers that are involved will themselves speak different varieties of English. It is hard to see, therefore, how the arrival of different varieties and the varied Englishes spoken by a multitude of non-native speakers could provide fertile ground for the development of a local variety.

What is noteworthy about Buchsfeld and Krautzsch's EIF model is that nowhere is the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) discussed. This is noteworthy as the major function of English of English in these non-PCEs or Expanding Circle contexts of Southeast Asia is as a lingua franca. It is the chosen means of communication by people who do not share the same first language. This use of ELF is seen in a host of different domains and by people of vastly differing degrees of English proficiency, from grassroots usage in basic tourist interactions to arguing legal disputes in international courts. This is why ELF cannot be treated as a stable and single variety. As users of ELF can come from any linguistic background and as any ELF interaction can include speakers from a plethora of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ELF can be linguistically influenced by contact with the other languages of the speakers who use ELF. 'As there is no limit to speakers who use ELF, this, in turn, means that, theoretically in any event, ELF can be linguistically influenced by any of the languages in any ELF speaker's linguistic repertoire. ELF is thus subject to unbounded variation' (Schaller-Schwaner and Kirkpatrick 2020). ELF is a linguistic resource that is not contained in, or constrained by traditional (and notoriously tendentious) ideas of what constitutes a "'language'"(Seidlhofer 2011, p. 81).

I would therefore argue that the most productive way of talking about the increasing roles of English in these Expanding Circle contexts is as a lingua franca, as this clearly is the major function played by English in these contexts. Given the inherent diversity associated with the use of ELF, the emergence of localised varieties of English in these contexts seems unlikely. The major and most fundamental difference between the use of English in these Expanding Circle contexts has been the shift from English as a foreign language to English as a lingua franca. It has been a shift, not from EFL to ESL, but from EFL to ELF.

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