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Thai Variety of English (TE) Appeared in the English for International Communication (EIC) Students' Writing Tasks, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya (RMUTSV), Songkhla

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ABSTRACT

The two purposes of this research were 1) to investigate the Thai English (TE) appeared in the writing tasks of students in the course of English for International Communication (EIC) at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, RUTS, Songkhla; and 2) to identify the use of TE performed in the writing tasks by the students in the EIC Course. The subjects were 36 EIC twilight program students who studied Writing I Course (1-2018). The research instruments were audio recordings, feedback writing checklists and semi-structured interviews. The statistic used in data analysis was the percentage. The findings revealed that the TE features functioned as expressions of repetition for emphasis (42.48%), confirmation (24.32%), politeness (14.08),and gender (12.08%) and formation of a new TE based on their group discussions in the pre-writing activities for (6.02%) and others as (1.02%). Meanwhile, the various characteristics of linguistic functions varied in the social functions, and the kinds of activities, topics and settings. In addition, it was found that the linguistic motivations were mainly employed for effective communication i.e. for better understanding, conceptualizing, explaining difficult English concepts, reprimanding, as a tone-softener and as a language of youth. Finally, this result is implied as significant because it will enable providers of the writing course to recognize that TE occurs at all levels of writing tasks and activities in particular in the pre-writing discussions and must be given appropriate attention as it can be transferred to the writing products. It will also serve as a reference point for future research into language changes or shifts in Thailand.

Keywords: Thai Variety of English (TE), Students' writing task, Pre-writing activities

1. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the impact of English on an international language (EIL), English as a global language, World Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) are regularly mentioned. Since English is used worldwide, majority of its users now is not the native speakers, but non-native speakers from different cultures and language backgrounds (e.g. Kachru, 1982; Crystal, 1997; Jenkins, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2004). Thus, the concept of nativisation (Kachru 1986) mentioned in World Englishes approach, its use and users are increasing in outer and expanding circles. Like in Thailand, Thai is our own national language and it is strongly maintained and recommended in all educational and government sectors, but English is inevitably used widely in our country and competent Thai users are numerous (Kangkha, 2017). Furthermore, English in Thailand is taught, learned and used for a long period of time based on some standard of native speaker (British or American English), there is evidence showing that, to a certain degree, Thai English has developed its own character which is called as a nativisation or new varieties of English (Kachru, 1983a). This always takes place within the contexts of those countries in the outer circle.

The label varieties represent specific characteristics of language use, such as language habits, shared by members of a given group in a certain context. The term is similar to dialects. While varieties are neutral, dialects are regionally related. Gelderen (2006, pp. 6-7) delineates this term

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into three distinct sub-labels: regional, social, and register Regional varieties (or dialects) are distinguished by regions, such as New England English in the Northeastern U.S.A. Social varieties (or sociolects) are typical to a certain social group, such as Black American or African American English in America. Finally, a register (or jargon) is a characteristic specific to professions, such as computer engineers, and in baseball games. Other relevant yet overlapping terms are styles and accent. While styles are perceived as formal and informal, the notion of accent is limited only to pronunciation, or use of different vowels in pronouncing same words or utterances, i.e. British and American accent. The formal style, Standard English often relates and refers to writing, or the use of correct forms of English; whereas, the informal style is thought of as colloquial or spoken English. According to Schneider (2011, p. 16) language variation is varieties which are defined as the language forms of the single language that are specific to a certain group of a community. It can be said that language variation refers to the way speakers may communicate the same meaning by using variants within the same language (Kangkha, 2017).

Thai Variety of English or Thai English (TE) as in this study refers to the way the speakers/writers have switched from the English language to Thai language or its related dialects' words, phrases, and clauses to make their interlocutors understand the speakers of English correctly by using the outstanding features of their characteristics of L1 i.e. accent or grammar. Thai Variety of English (TE) is a subset of Thai English Code Switching (TECS) which refers to the phenomenon wherein the speakers have shifted from the English language to the Thai language or from Thai language to English language in their course of conversation. The switchers may use Thai or other related Thai language dialects (Nuer, Isan, Tai and Yawi, and so on). However, the realization, innovation and translation loanwords in Thai are not counted as TECS because they are sets of coinage and naturalization for the Thai language. Thais have always spoken them naturally with Thai accent (Kangkha, 2017). Apart from characteristics of TE gathered from the written data, distinct phonological features produced by Thai speakers are also discussed. The following is a summary of prominent distinctive features of TE. The studies on TE literature (Chutisilp, 1984; Watkhaolarm, 2005) list several common language contact processes effective in TE, namely transfer, translation, shift, lexical borrowing, hybridization, and reduplication (Bennui, 2013).

As a consequence, it is reasonable and invaluable to investigate the linguistic features of lexico-semantic and discourse markers in terms of their functions, motivation and the existence of TE used by the EIC students in Writing 1 course to expand the view of TE development in written activities provided in this course. Therefore, this paper aims to provide information about TE, English in the expanding circle, as a possible emerging variety of world Englishes. In the first section, an overview of English in Thailand: the use, users, and its status as an influential international language is discussed. Then, information on distinctive features of TE gathered from many studies is presented. Finally, a conclusion on how TE can be viewed as a new variety of World Englishes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review is dealing with three approaches World Englishes, Markedness Model, and Conversational approach used to explain the language utterance appeared in this study. Those interrelated theoretical frameworks are as follows:

2.1 World Englishes Approach

Kachru's seven paradigms to World Englishes highlight the approach of this study. Each one is described including: (a) Models of Non-Native Englishes; (b) Contextualization and Lexical Innovation; (c) Three Concentric Circles of English; (d) Bilinguals' Creativity and Contact Literature; (e) Cultural Contact and Literary Creativity in a Multilingual Society; (f) Transcultural Creativity in World Englishes and Literary Canons; and (g) Nativisation of Mantra as Identity

Construction in Anglophone Englishes (Kachru, 1985). His idea discusses English in the Expanding circle which involves the regions where the performance varieties are used. English here lacks the official status, so it is used as an international language. This circle yields the term "norm-dependent" since English users here strongly rely on the native English models as their local norms which have not yet emerged (Kachru, 1985; Jekins, 2003).

Focusing on the Nativisation of Mantra as Identity Construction in Anglophone Englishes in literary studies, the notion of "mantra" concerns messages and mythology. Nativising mantra in World Englishes indicates distinctiveness in the linguistic, literary, and ideological creativity of a bilingual writer. Anglophone Englishes refer to varieties of English in the Anglophone region of Asia. Speakers of Anglophone Englishes are of three groups –L1 users (Australia and New Zealand), L2 users (India and Singapore), and FL users (Korea and China). Asia now becomes the largest region of English users, so the term "Anglophone Englishes" is more appropriate than "Asian Englishes."The nativisation of mantra requires three linguistic processes for identity construction: locating the bilingual's creativity within the contexts of linguistic and cultural pluralism that feature such speech communities; treating the linguistic construction as a cohesive text representing structural, discourse, and cultural hybridity; and distinguishing the bilingual's competence in the light of a linguistic repertoire bearing certain relations to textual structure (Kachru, 1985).

In this study, the models of non-native Englishes (Kachru, 1983a), contextualization and lexical innovation (Kachru, 1983b), the three concentric circles of English (Kachru, 1985,1992a), the bilingual's' creativity and contact literature (Kachru, 1986,1987), the cultural contact and literary creativity in a multilingual society (Kachru, 1992b),the transcultural creativity in World Englishes literature (Kachru, 1995), and the nativisation of mantra as identity construction in Anglophone Englishes (Kachru, 2003) are crucial frameworks as local and regional for this study. Thus, this World Englishes Approach is most practical to explain and understand, particularly the TE features embedded in the TECS features i.e. the TE in monolingual Thai (Kangkha, 2017).

2.2 Markedness Model

According to Myers-Scotton (1998, p. 23), the RO set is a theoretical construct of so- called "rights and obligations" upon which speakers can base expectations in a given interactional setting in their community. The RO set accounts for codes of behavior and norms that are established and then maintained in social communities. In other words, the RO set is another term for norm, which has more than an arbitrary relationship with the RO set, while the RO set is indexical rather than symbolic. This means that linguistic choices can be considered a type of negotiation in the sense that speakers make their own code choices as a goal-oriented actor. Therefore, each linguistic code choice offers different benefits; the speaker would choose the one giving them the most benefits relative to its cost. Marked and unmarked linguistic code choices are indexical of different RO sets between participants in a given interaction type (Myers-Scotton, 1988). In addition, the markedness model distinguishes four functions of code choice based on Myers-Scotton (1988); (a) Code- Switching as Unmarked Choice (Sequential unmarked choice i.e. a CS from one unmarked choice to another, results in different RO balances when there is a redefinition of the exchange between participants. The switch of linguistic choice encoded the emerging unmarked relationship between participants and their recognition of this relationship; and Overall switching as the unmarked choice i.e. a switch to another unmarked choice with no changes at all in the situation. This type of switch usually occurs between bilingual peers when the participants want more than one social identity to be salient in the current exchange.); (b) Code-Switching as a Marked Choice (Code-switching as a marked choice i.e. a switch to the marked choice to negotiate different RO sets between participants. The switching can be either positive or negative depending on the situation, and Permissible marked choice is a switch to a marked choice that encodes RO sets, but is considered unmarked in the context. There are two types of this switch: a switch for differential purposes, and a switch due to the lack of linguistic

proficiency in the unmarked choice). This Markedness Model is normally used to mark the spoken language but it can be applied to mark the linguistic features used in written tasks in this study.

2.3 Conversational Code Switching Approach

Gumperz's (1982) ideas of conversational CS have developed into the "interactional model" or "conversational analysis of CS." In this particular analytical framework, situations are predetermined, but they are interactively achieved by the participants in conversations, that is, the meaning of a given switch has to be interrupted with reference to language choices used in the conversational interactions by the speakers, such as how the social factors such as identity and attitudes are presented, understood, negotiated, and accepted or rejected in the process of interaction. Furthermore, Gumperz argued that in terms of the communicative aspect, CS associates group identity with communicative style. It is symbolic, and it does not predict the actual use of CS, and that CS signals contextual information equivalent to what in monolingual settings is conveyed to prosody or other syntactic or lexical processes. It has a communicative function in actual conversations; specifically, it serves as a contextualization cue, and it is commonly used in quotation, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, and so forth (Kangkha, 2017). This Conversational Approach can be applied to identify the function of linguistic features both in written and spoken tasks in this study.

In this study, three approaches were used to analyse the language realization of TE They are Markedness Model (Myers-Scotten, 1993, 1998), the Conversational Approach (Gumperz, 1982) and World Englishes Approach (Kachru, 1983a). The first two models were used to support the analysis of the TE that appeared in conversations, and to identify the linguistic functions, whereas Kachru's World Englishes Approach was the main approach to further analyse the identified TE in terms of localized and nativised TE within this context. First, the linguistic feature was originally set as an objective of this study. The lexico-semantic and discourse features with the TE utterances embedded in TECS were analysed using Kachru's World Englishes Approach (1983a) and Gumperz's (1982) notions. After that, the identified lexical and discourse levels were further analysed in terms of the Thai varieties of English using the Kachruvian Approach of World Englishes. Second, the identification of linguistic functions was also considered as the second main objective of this study. The lexico- semantic and discourse features which were analysed in addressing the objective were further examined in terms of their linguistic functions. Hence, the linguistic functions of the conversations, speech acts and discourse markers were analysed by applying the Conversational Approach and Markedness Model. Before the linguistic functions were analysed, the types of TE were classified under the framework of Markedness Model. Meanwhile, the Kachruvian Approach of World Englishes was employed to clarify the social meanings according to the two scholars' notions. Lastly, the linguistic motivations were identified from the TECS/TE employed throughout the participants' activities.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology can be described as the following:

3.1 Research Population

In this study, the participants are 36 students who have been enrolled in Writing 1 a compulsory course in academic years 2/2018 at Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya (RUTS). There are 10 males and 26 females with age between 18-19. All the participants follow the EIC a twilight programme for upgrading proficiency in English.

3.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments include:

    3.2.1.   Writing Feedback Checklist (WFC). It was separated into 3 parts as follows:
        3.2.1.1   Linguistic features
        3.2.1.2   Linguistic functions
        3.2.1.3   Participants' Opinion
    3.2.2.   Audio recording
    3.2.3.   Semi-structured interview

3.3 Research Procedures and Data collection

There were five steps in conducting this research study. The step details are as follows:

    3.3.1.   Studying and analyzing the objectives of Writing 1 a compulsory course.

    3.3.2.   Designing and pre-evaluating the three written assignments and activities, and semi-structured interviews This was followed by submitting the research tools to the three experts, and then editing as the experts' recommendation and suggestion.

**Edited according to the recommendations and suggestions made by the experts.

    3.3.3   Proceeding and feedback-giving the three written assignments and activities, into the writing feedback checklist. In case, if there were unclear features of language the researcher would call the participants for further clarification. Finally, the participants took the semi-structured interview as a whole picture.
    3.3.4.   Collecting and analyzing the data from all mentioned research tools, the researchers selected each statistic matched to data patterns, but mainly focusing on percentage.
    3.3.5   Drafting and reporting all collected and analyzed data into the format of the research report.

4. FINDINGS

The findings revealed that the TE features functioned as expressions of repetition for emphasis as (42.48%), confirmation for (24.32%), politeness for (14.08), gender as (12.08%) and formation of a new TE based on their group discussions in the pre-writing activities as (6.02%) and others as (1.02%). Meanwhile, the various characteristics of linguistic functions varied in the social functions, and the kinds of activities, topics and settings. In addition, it is found that the linguistic motivations were mainly employed for effective communication i.e. for better understanding, conceptualizing, explaining difficult concepts in English, reprimanding, as a tone-softener and as a language of youth.

4.1 Data from The Tape Script of The Grouping and Pre-Orientating To Write Assignment Activities To The Students

The procedures of writing assignment consisted of four main steps which include: grouping and pre-orienting students for writing assignment activities; brainstorming writing activity into mind mapping; drafting and decoding messages into pages; and giving writing feedback and reflecting the students' assignment. The following examples were from the tape script of brainstorming activity.

Example 1 Expression of Repetition for Emphasis

SS1 โอหรือยัง โอนะๆ คอนเฟิ ร์มไหม โอไหมๆๆ เขียนเลยนะ
à-rĕu yang · oh ná ๆ · kon ferm măi · oh măi ๆๆ · kĭan loie ná

SS2 เราโอจ้า เขียนเลยเดี๋ยวไม่ทน เวลา
rao oh jâa · kĭan loie dieow mâi tan way-laa

SS1 โอนะ
oh ná

In example 1, SS1 tried to orient the members with the overall process of designing their group's assigned task in writing activity 1. Next, SS2 accepted his approved idea, and he was ready to follow. Then SS2 responded to support SS1's opinion by uttering "เราโอจ้า: rao oh jâa" (for "It's okay") to confirm the message. This TE uttered also indicated politeness, but it did not indicate the gender because the Thai final particle of "จา : jâa" could be used for both male and female. Finally, SS1 also confirmed SS2's ideas and the group members' by using the TE "โอนะ: oh ná".

Example 2 Expression for Confirmation

SS 1 เร็วๆ หน่อยเดี๋ยวไม่ทน please, please, please
reo reo · nòi dìeow mâi tan please please please

SS2 Please please อะไรกนั เร่งอิตาย
Please please à-rai gan · râyng ì-dtaai

In example 2, SS1 warned his group members to be more careful when they have to submit the brainstorming activities in the form of mind-mapping. Immediately, SS2 reacted by repeating the information for emphasis, and that it was an overreaction uttering in TE "Please please อะไรกนั เร่งอิตาย".

Example 3 To Shape a New Dialect Variety and Politeness

SS1 Come on แค๊ปๆๆ หน่อยต๊ะ คัมตะๆ to assign our role in group first

SS2 Come on kâep kâep nòi dtá · คัมตะๆ to assign our role in group first SS3
Come แล้วจ้า แค๊ปแล้วจ้า
Come láew jâa · káep láew jâa

In example 3, SS1 started to work by calling his group members together to brainstorm. The TE utterances that he used "come on, kâep kâep · nòi tùh kam-dtà kam-dtà assign our roles first" means "Come on, hurry up please and assign our roles first". Then his TE features were mixed with the southern dialect and Thai central (แคบๆ หนอยเถอะ- kâep kâep · nòi tùh); and he uttered unconsciously the English language and the southern dialect (คมตะๆ- kam-dtà kam-dtà). It was a way to shape a new dialect variety or TE between Central Thai and Southern Thai dialect. Finally, SS3 reacted to confirm SS1 by using "Come láew jâa · káep láew jâa" with politeness.

4.2 The Data from The Brainstorming Writing Activity into Mind Mapping

The following examples were from the brainstorming writing activity into mind mapping.

Example 4 Conversational function (Interjection)

SS1   เขียนไปเลยไหมวา "our country has crazy and dictator leader" เอาไหมๆๆ

kǐan bpai loie măi wâa our country has crazy and dictator leader ao măi
ao măi ao măi

SS2   เฮ้ย...oh no เอาอยา งน้ัน เลยเหรอ..เฮ้ยไม่นะ..มันดู so แรงส์นะเธอ

hóie oh no ao yàang nán loie rěr hóie mâi ná man doo so raeng ná ter

In Example 4, SS1 started to discuss the question, and offered to answer, but she checked with his group members whether it was the appropriate answer. SS2 also softly interjected in Thai "hŏh" that he felt that he would also like to address the question. Immediately, SS2 signaled not to do it by interjecting Thai word "hóie oh no".

Example 5 Discourse Markers (Interpersonal Level)

SS1   ใครก็ได้please take a photo of mind map เร็วเดี๋ยวไม่เหมือนเดิมเราจะไดด๋ได้

krai gôr dâai please take a photo of mind map reo dǐeow mâi měuan
derm rao jà dâai doo dâai

SS2   ใครละ เอา เธอก็ได... ̊ ช่วยๆ กน้ั

krai lá · ao · ter gôr dâai · chûay chûay · gan

In Example 5, SS1 requested all group members to take a picture of a mind map, and all the members agreed with SS1's idea. Then, SS2 asked her close friend to take a group photo by counting in the Thai language (Ok… walking nèung … sŏng … sám … Selfie) and using the word "selfie".

Example 6 Speech Act Function (Representative)

SS1   สรุป เอา ตามน้ันะ วา our favorite political party is…..ใครไม่เห็นด๋วัย

sà-rùp · ao · dtaam née ná · wâa our favorite political party is krai mâi hěn
dûay

SS2   จริงๆ แล้วเราไม่ชอบทุกพรรค เลยเธอ...แตถ่าใหตอบวา who is the best

now..เราว่า same same you said ก็ได้นะ

jing jing láew rao mâi chôp túk-pák · loie ter · dtàe tâa hâi dtòp wâa who
is the best now rao wâa same same you said gôr dâai · ná

In Example 6, SS1 switched to TECS utterances to qualify the messages to the group members in order to conceptualize the answer to the question. Then, SS2 felt a bit heisted but supported SS1's idea finally.

4.3 The Data from The Drafting and Decoding Messages into Pages

The following examples were from the drafting and decoding messages into pages.

Example 7 Express TE a Thai writing style into English writing

SSn   "I have father, have mother, have sisters, and have grandmamma."

                                                     Assignment No. 1 (My family)

Example 8 Express the TE a Thai writing style into English writing

> SSx "In my future…nothing special "เรื่อยๆ. ขอโทษครับนึกค า ไม่ออก complete degree…marry…have children and travel around the words and finally go to temple."
>
> > ***Assignment No. 3 (My Ambitious)***

Looking into the bold types, these TE writing styles are generally seen also in other kinds of informal TE in the class Writing 1 (Assignment 1-2-3). Therefore, the study of these features of TE in other genres are interesting for writing class even in the step of drafting and decoding messages into pages.

4.4 The Data from Giving Writing Feedback and Reflecting the Students' Assignment and The Semi-Structured Interview

The following examples were giving writing feedback and reflecting the students' assignment and the semi-structured interviews.

Example 9 Express the TE a Thai writing style into English writing

> "Many teenagers love **the new political party than the old one**, because we **are the same ages, same opinions and same styles**."
>
> > ***Assignment No. 2 (Your Favorite Political Party)***

Example 10 Express the TE a Thai writing style into English writing

> "My family has four people, my father, my mother**, sisters two people**, and me."
>
> > ***Assignment No. 1 (My family)***

Example 11 Express the TE a Thai writing style into English writing

> "I don't wanna expect much in my futures, I just wanna **live easy easy chill..chill**.. Like my life today… No competitive."
>
> > ***Assignment No. 3 (My Ambitious)***

In the analysis of the bold types, these TE writing styles are generally seen also in other kinds of informal TE in the class Writing 1 (Assignment 1-2-3). Therefore, the study of this feature of TE in other genres is interesting for writing class.

Example 12 Opinion towards Assignments in Writing 1 Class

> SS1 "*I love the second step "brainstorming writing activity into mind mapping" because I can share and draw what my ideas about the topic and my friends accept my them every time I am happy…and I did this part better than the others steps too.. Hahaha.*"
>
> > ***Interview 22 November 2018***

Example 13 Opinion towards Assignments in Writing 1 Class

> SS2 "*Don't know what exactly the TE is but I think when I wrote "I have sisters two people… I guess the teacher got what I meant but she corrected me hihiaha.. Now I remind -I have two sisters… Grammar correctly…*"
>
> > ***Interview 22 November 2018***

Example 14 Opinion towards Assignments in Writing 1 Class

> SS3   *"When I wrote "I have father, have mother, have sisters, and have grandmamma" I understood my writing and meaning but when think about grammar...I a bit shocked."*
>
>   ***Interview 22 November 2018***

From the examples shown, it can be said that the writing assignments including with four main steps namely grouping and pre-orientating the students for writing assignment activities; brainstorming writing activity into mind mapping; drafting and decoding messages into pages; and giving writing feedback and reflecting the students' assignment are matched to students' need and interesting topics. However, the students did not know the meaning of TE because they realized that the teachers could decode their messages. Therefore, the study of the features and functions of TE are interesting for writing class. In general, the study of the features and functions of TE are interesting and added values for language teaching and learning as the TE still becomes a period of development.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Findings indicated that TE occurs at all levels of writing task activities particularly in the pre-writing discussions demonstrated in sections 4.1, 4.2 , 4.3 and 4.4 above. And thus can be transferred to the writing products. This serves as a reference point for future research into language changes or shifts in Thailand. In sum, this study is significant because it will enable policy makers to recognize the fact that TECS/TE occurs at all levels of appropriate attention must be given in this regard. It will also serve as a reference point for future research into language changes or shifts in Thailand i.e. large scale of TECS/TE population; language pair between Thai dialects and English; typology of TE; the indigenous language and the educational advancement based on the balance of the use of English and other languages in the Thai educational system at all levels; and the influences of governmental language planning and policy on the language choices of individuals as members of society. In particular, TE features have been spontaneously developed in its own right, with underlying similarities to other New Englishes, along with the uniqueness of Southeast Asian Englishes, and Thai English. Finally, it will add to the existing literature on the study of language use in education. However, further research is deemed as necessary to explore possible implications in other areas of study and the possible improvements that can be made in order to further develop the concerns raised in this study.

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