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Analysis of Students' Attitudes towards EIL: Using a Measurement Scale

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I. Introduction

Hino and Oda (2015) summarize the five objectives for students enrolled in an English as an International Language (EIL) class as follows: Students are expected to:

- 1) acquire an identity as EIL users
- 2) become familiar with linguistic and cultural diversity of EIL
- 3) gain cross-cultural awareness needed for communication in EIL
- 4) establish their own thinking to cope with the varieties of values in EIL
- 5) acquire reading (and some listening) skills in EIL

By adapting the above-mentioned idea, the present authors conduct an EIL class with the following goals in mind as follows:

- 1) To expose students to several varieties of Outer and Expanding Circle *Englishes* found in videoconference as well as in class.
- 2) To raise the awareness of English varieties (e.g. English usage and functions) among speaker scholars and in-class students
- 3) To enhance students' language skills (listening, and speaking) through a variety of activities
- 4) To discuss and explore the pedagogical implications that may help students consider how and to what extent they can integrate insights from this lesson into their own autonomous learning.

Hino and Oda (2015) suggest five ways of teaching EIL:

- 1) Teaching about EIL: The teacher provides the students with knowledge of EIL, such as the global spread of English today.
- 2) Role-play EIL interactions: Drama techniques are exploited in order to allow the students

to practice oral communication through simulated exercises.

- 3) Exposure to the diversity of EIL: Students are given opportunities to be accustomed to the linguistic and cultural varieties of EIL.
- 4) Content-based approach to EIL: EIL is taught by way of concrete content or subject matters.
- 5) Participation in the community of EIL users: Students learn EIL through authentic experiences in EIL communication with appropriate support.

The authors propose the general outline of the class procedure and materials as follows:

Characteristics of a Videoconference-based Class (Sample Class)

- Pre-Class Homework Assignment Questions and Activities
- In-Class Activity 1: Warm-up and Introduction (10 minutes)
- In-Class Activity 2: Expose students to varieties of English usage and users by playing recorded videoconferencing video clips (20 minutes)
- In-Class Activity 3: Small Group / Whole Class Content Discussion (20 minutes)
- In-Class Activity 4: Small Group / Whole Class Discussion: Critical reflection about English language and its users (30 minutes)
- Wrap-up (10 minutes)

II. Purpose of the paper

While teaching an EIL class is one thing, measuring the non-language part (e.g. awareness, interest, attitude, and eagerness) in the same class is another. It is rather difficult to assess this para-language aspect of EIL proficiency, compared with the language part (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation).

The purpose of the paper is to examine the overall analysis of students' responses to an EIL scale as well as a detailed (each individual item, and each individual student) analysis of the responses. This paper also analyzes the non-language part (awareness raising) towards EIL using an objective EIL measurement scale consisting of 14 items. Two groups of students (enrolled in 2018 spring and 2018 autumn offerings) completed the measurement scale twice (before and after taking the EIL class).

Table 1 (2018 EAMQ Results)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
April 2018 (N=8)	4.3	3.3	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.6	4.5	3.8	3.8	4.0
July 2018 (N=16)	4.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	3.8	4.1	3.6	4.4	4.1	4.6	4.3	3.9	2.8	3.9
September 2018 (N=7)	4.6	4.0	4.4	4.6	3.9	3.1	2.9	3.6	3.7	4.4	3.4	2.6	3.0	3.9
December 2018 (N=10)	4.2	4.0	3.9	4.6	4.1	3.0	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	3.9	3.3	3.0	4.0

III. Instrument and method

Measuring the non-language part (e.g. awareness, interest, attitude, eagerness) is rather difficult compared with the language part (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) in language class. The authors used an objective measurement questionnaire, the EMAQ scale (see Appendix), which consists of 14 items to analyze the non-language part (awareness raising) towards English as an International Language (EIL). Two groups of students (Spring 2018 and Autumn 2018) completed the EMAQ twice (before and after taking the EIL class). The responses were analyzed objectively and some interesting results were found.

IV. Results and discussion

Of the 14 questionnaire items, six are of interest. First, Items (1 and 2) are as follows:

- 1) Different varieties of English, such as Hong Kong English, Indian English, and Singaporean English, are acceptable today. (Outer Circle (OC) varieties)
- 2) Different varieties of English, such as French English, Chinese English, and Brazilian English are acceptable today. (Expanding Circle (EC) varieties)

As a whole, the students in both classes thought that variations in Outer Circle (OC) varieties are more acceptable than those of Expanding Circle (EC) ones. They are more lenient about the differences in the Outer Circle countries varieties (probably because they are those variations are rather recognized established quasi-standard English variations). On the other hand, Englishes from Expanding Circles countries are less acceptable. Even though, generally speaking, they superficially claim that we should accept those varieties including Japan's own variety of English.

Next, Item 3 is as follows:

- 3) It is important to understand diverse English accents such as Indian English, French English, and Brazilian English.

Because they give high marks to Item 2 about the acceptability of EC Englishes, they naturally think it is important to understand the accents associated with the EC varieties of English.

Third, Item 4 states:

- 4) I am open-minded about accepting speaking/pronunciation patterns that are different from those of my home country.

Generally speaking, international students enrolled in an EIL/ELF class are rather open-minded about acceptable differences.

Next, Item 10 is as follows:

- 10) Teachers can include the interaction between non-native and non-native English speakers (e.g., French-Chinese speakers) in English listening materials.

In both the spring and autumn classes, students think materials using interactions between EC speakers should be employed as classroom listening materials. They want to understand varieties of English with different accents on their own. For receptive (or comprehensible) input, varieties should be increased for reading and listening. They think that students should be exposed to different varieties as much as possible.

Finally, Item 13:

- 13) English teachers should be native speakers of English (e.g., American or British).

Both groups of students do not care so much about the nativeness or nativism of English teachers.

Of interest are the students who answered both the pre- and post- class questionnaires. First, let's look at the responses of the students enrolled in Spring 2018 from Sweden, Australia, China, and Singapore (see Table 2).

First, Item 1):

- 1) Different varieties of English, such as Hong Kong English, Indian English, and Singaporean English, are acceptable today.

The four students have similar opinions about Outer Circle varieties. They accept the different varieties.

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Table 2 (Pre- and Post- Results)

SPRING 2018	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
SWE PRE	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	2	5
SWE POST	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	5
AUS PRE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	2	5
AUS POST	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4
CHN PRE	4	2	3	1	1	1	1	5	5	4	5	5	3	5
CHN POST	5	3	2	4	2	2	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
SGP PRE	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
SGP POST	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
AUTUMN 2018														
JPN PRE	5	5	5	5	1	2	2	4	4	5	3	2	4	4
JPN POST	5	5	5	5	2	3	2	2	5	4	4	2	3	4
KOR PRE	5	2	3	3	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	3	5	4
KOR POST	3	3	2	4	4	2	2	3	3	2	4	5	4	4
FRA 1 PRE	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	2	3
FRA 1 POST	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	3	3	3	4
FRA 2 PRE	4	4	5	5	5	5	3	3	4	5	3	3	1	5
FRA 2 POST	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	5	5	5	1	2

Next, Items 2) and 3):

- 2) Different varieties of English, such as French English, Chinese English, and Brazilian English, are acceptable today.
- 3) It is important to understand diverse English accents such as Indian English, French English, and Brazilian English.

The Chinese student (CHN) has a quite different response to this item. He has a rather negative attitude towards the differences of the EC varieties.

About Items 4) to 7):

- 4) I am open-minded about accepting speaking/pronunciation patterns that are different from those of my home country.
- 5) It is okay for me to have a local English accent (e.g., Korean-styled English, Swedish-styled English).
- 6) It is okay if people laugh at my English accent when I speak because it is my own English.
- 7) Speaking with a local English accent is a great way to express who I am.

That same Chinese student was completely negative about all of these items because he seems to have little confidence about his English (actually he could have a good command of English). However, thanks to this class or other factors, he has become more open-minded towards differences in English varieties, which may have then influenced his attitude towards his own English accent.

Finally, about Item 13):

13) English teachers should be native speakers of English (e.g., American or British).

The Chinese student feels that nativeness or nativism is important to be an English teacher. Although the Swedish student (SWE) is from an Expanding Circle country, unlike the Chinese student (who is also from an EC country), he does not care so much about the nativism for an English teacher, and does not lose confidence in his English proficiency. This is probably because his native language (Swedish) and the English language are both from the same proto-language (Germanic) and there are many similarities in both. In fact, only the Swedish student is different from the other three students: Australian (AUS), Chinese (CHN), and Singaporean (SGP).

2018 Autumn

Next, let's look at the responses of the students enrolled in Autumn 2018 from Japan, South Korea, and France. First, Item 1:

1) Different varieties of English, such as Hong Kong English, Indian English, and Singaporean English, are acceptable today.

These four students basically have the same opinion about this item (differences in Outer Circle varieties).

Next, Items 2) to 7):

2) Different varieties of English, such as French English, Chinese English, and Brazilian English, are acceptable today.

3) It is important to understand diverse English accents such as Indian English, French English, and Brazilian English.

4) I am open-minded about accepting speaking/pronunciation patterns that are different from those of my home country.

5) It is okay for me to have a local English accent (e.g., Korean-styled English, Swedish-styled English).

6) It is okay if people laugh at my English accent when I speak because it is my own English.

7) Speaking with a local English accent is a great way to express who I am.

A Korean student (KOR) has a negative response to this item (Expanding Circle varieties), which seems similar to the Chinese student in the spring class. And thanks to this class, her attitudes to 4) and 5) have greatly changed. In addition, the Japanese student's responses (6, 7, 8) are rather similar to those of Korean student. When we compare the responses of the Chinese student, the Korean student, and the Japanese student, their responses have something in common. This is probably because they are all from Expanding Circle countries in East Asia.

About item 13):

13) English teachers should be native speakers of English (e.g., American or British).

Judging from the Korean student's responses to Items 2 and 3, she naturally puts more stress on the importance of native speakerism or nativism on being an English teacher. The Japanese student and the Korean student (both from Expanding Countries) have a similar pattern in their responses, and both strongly believe in the importance of nativism for English teachers. On the other hand, the two French students (FRA 1, FRA 2) who are also from Expanding Countries do not so much care about nativeness for English teachers. In fact, one idiosyncratic French student (FRA 2) claims that teachers do not have to be native speakers at all. His opinions have not changed at all.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, one of the objectives of the class is to raise the awareness of the differences and similarities of English as an International Language, and to accept that reality. What is beyond the actual pedagogical practice of EIL/ELF? To enhance students' awareness and to raise their awareness through teaching, but we need an appropriate measurement scale. Using the EAMQ scale, we obtain data and through analysis we use it for the improvement of the class. EIL/ELF assessment is a cyclic pattern for further improvement of the class. For the improvement, even a small change or a little progress in our students which can be found in our class can be used effectively.

To measure the students' awareness objectively, we need a measurement scale. Not only the free writing questionnaire results but also objectively analyzed results are necessary to explore the details of the students' attitudes.

Hino and Oda (2015) say that many of the pedagogical projects focus on raising the students' awareness in the diversity of global Englishes, attempts to develop classroom methodologies for teaching practical communication skills in ELF are still relatively scarce.

Still more, an objective measurement scale for assessing the student's changes in awareness

levels are needed. Based on the analyzed data of assessment results, we can have better pedagogy. Thus, better measurement and better education go hand in hand.

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Appendix: EIL Awareness Measurement Questionnaire (EAMQ) Items

- 1) Different varieties of English, such as Hong Kong English, Indian English, and Singaporean English, are acceptable today.
- 2) Different varieties of English, such as French English, Chinese English, and Brazilian English, are acceptable today.
- 3) It is important to understand diverse English accents such as Indian English, French English, and Brazilian English.
- 4) I am open-minded about accepting speaking/pronunciation patterns that are different from those of my home country.
- 5) It is okay for me to have a local English accent (e.g., Korean-styled English, Swedish-styled English).
- 6) It is okay if people laugh at my English accent when I speak because it is my own English.
- 7) Speaking with a local English accent is a great way to express who I am.
- 8) It is unnecessary to speak like American or British English speakers as long as my English is understandable to others.
- 9) Teachers can use English listening materials that are recorded by people who have different kinds of English accents.
- 10) Teachers can include the interaction between non-native and non-native English speakers (e.g., French-Chinese speakers) in English listening materials.
- 11) Teachers should teach American and British pronunciation as a model in class.
- 12) Teachers should push me to speak like a “native” English speaker.
- 13) English teachers should be native speakers of English (e.g., American or British).
- 14) I can adjust my conversational style according to my interactions with people of other cultural backgrounds.