Making English as an International Language Viral Again

Eunjeong Park[1]

[1](*Assistant Professor, English Language Education, College of Education, Sunchon National University, South Korea*)

ABSTRACT: *The widespread of English in the world is obvious. According to Population Reference Bureau, more than 527 million people around the world speak English as a first language, and more than 430 million people speak English as a second or foreign language around the world. In this sense, there have been many different ways to appreciate English globally, such as English as an International Language (EIL), World Englishes, and Lingua Franca. Still, not many language teachers consider English as above in the EFL classrooms. In particular, EIL is practically useful in broadening students' understanding and scope of an English language. Hence, this essay encourages teachers to recognize and understand EIL. It also discusses EIL principles with hands-on examples so that they can appreciate a broader view of teaching and learning English and help their students learn English more flexibly and promote multiculturalism and multilingualism in the EFL context.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

The Since the emergence of English as an International Language (EIL), a lot of language researchers and TESOL practitioners have delved into the research on EIL [1, 2, 3, 4]. EIL is the concept of the English language as a global means of communication in a variety of dialects [5]. EIL is concerned with content (what is taught), the speakers' level of language expertise, its use in interactions, and language learning processes, depending on the speakers' investment and competency [4].

Despite much research on EIL, English is still regarded as "one of the most challenging languages to teach due to its many varieties, its use in cross-cultural exchanges and its lack of a clear cultural basis" [4, p. 21]. Furthermore, practical implementations of English language teaching under EIL do not seem to appear in the outer circle from the Kachru's three circle model (i.e., Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle)[6].In particular, in the EFL (aka. English as a Foreign Language) context, English language learners and teachers are not likely to acknowledge the existence of EIL. For this reason, McKay [7] claims that teachers should play a significant role in the successful implementation of the EIL approach to teaching English and put into practice English language teaching with EIL principles.McKayhas recently maintained that teachers should help students develop expertise in the variety of English that has global currency and power[4]. It is certainly imperative to have willingness and encouragement for EIL-based teaching.

Considering teachers' recognitions and understanding the most essential, this essay discusses EIL principles in order to support teachers' practical use of them in the EFL context, based on Mckay's and Renandya'sarguments about teacher roles regarding EIL[8, 9].

II.   EIL PRINCIPLE 1: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE (OR INTRA-CULTURAL COMPETENCE)

In the current era, English language teachers strive to change a landscape of English in the world today and broaden the scope and the range of English teaching. Mckay's extensive discussion of EIL principles is helpful in encouraging teachers to realize a current trend of EIL [8].

Brownclaims that culture is an essential component for EIL because it is closely related to the interaction between language and thought [10]. Individual culture is expressed in language; thus, culture should be considered as the semantic dimension of language. It may be somewhat difficult for both teachers and students to achieve an adequate degree of intercultural competence. Thus, teachers should first acknowledge what intercultural competence is and how it can be effective to the students. Renandya suggests that intercultural teachers should help the students to raise the awareness of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds [9].

In the same vein, Corbett suggests several learning activities related to the awareness of intercultural competence [11]. One activity aligned with intercultural competence is to use unique national cuisine. All over the world, food represents distinctive countries, such as "American burgers, Indian curries, Italian pasta, German sausages, Irish stew, Japanese sushi, Scandinavian smorgasbord, Scottish haggis, Spanish paella, Turkish kebabs" [11, p. 197], as well as Korean bulgogi and Moroccan couscous. Teachers have students identify a national dish with which they are familiar and research the national dishes of other cultures with a list of items suggested in Table 1:

Table 1. *National dishes*[11, p. 199]

Name of national dish	Your national dish	Another national dish
Which country? Ingredients? Meal or snack? Where is it eaten? When is it eaten? What is it accompanied by? What are its origins? What do people do after eating it?		

Another practical activity is involved in employing food-related idioms. For this activity, corpus data can be used for lexical learning. For example, British National Corpus (BNC) is freely available, and Corbettrecommended food idiom activity by using BNC [11]. This activity inspires students to brainstorm food idioms and acquire them with regard to cultural characteristics and differences in Table 2. An exemplary application would be to have students explore food idioms within their native languages and compare how they are different within the distinctive cultures.

Table 2.*Food idioms*[11, p. 210]

Idiom examples	Other possible food-related idioms
as cool as a cucumber a big cheese the apple of one's eye finger in every pie pie in the sky in a nutshell with a pinch of salt a piece of cake not my cup of tea	

Despite the significance of intercultural competence, the main problem in the EFL context would be that the environment is homogeneous, which is distinguishable from the ESL context. Practically speaking, it may be not feasible for the students to assume the varied populations in the classroom. However, a potential solution for this EIL principle—raising awareness of intra-cultural competence would be to promote the understanding and respect of students' own culture and others' cultures. In this case, teachers may consider the students' different home-based backgrounds as teaching sources for awareness-raising. Due to homogeneity of

culture, it may be preferable to call it "intra-cultural competence." Teachers and students gradually enlarge the scope of culture and language in developing more accepting attitudes toward differences within their own culture and between theirs and other cultures. Teachers may initiate intra-cultural activities by supporting the students to know the self and the other. The activities may contain linguistic and non-linguistic resources by signaling their communicative purposes. Then, the teachers further provide the students with diverse cultural and linguistic information to develop intercultural communicative competence.

III.   EIL PRINCIPLE 2: AWARENESS OF VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

Renandya refers to the promotion of inner circle varieties of English as a traditional role of teachers [9]. It is no doubt that native speaker varieties are widespread in many places and are the most favorable models for language learning. Mckay's second EIL principle is to broaden the scope of language instructional materials and to reflect not only the inner circle varieties but also other varieties of World Englishes, which the students are more likely to come into contact with [8, 9]. In most EFL contexts, students encounter American or British English mostly. They may have a chance to experience Canadian English and Australian English due to the influx of North Americans, Europeans, and Australians. There are some different lexical and structural usages of English with the same meaning. Thus, it would be informative to compare and contrast different forms and functions of World Englishes. Renandya provides an example of Singapore English for business people [9]. Other potential materials include visual-oriented resources, such as movies and animations. For example, a well-known American cartoon, "The Simpsons", would be a perfect resource to exhibit World Englishes because one character uses Indian English. It may be difficult for the students to understand Indian English without scripts at first, but it is valuable to show the prevalence of World Englishes.

One caveat would be language production. Because of the pervasiveness of American English in certain Asian countries, it is unlikely for the students to produce World Englishes, like British or Australian English, unless they practice its speaking. However, the important aspect of the second EIL principle is to help the students foster awareness of the other varieties of English in the outer and expanding circle countries as equally legitimate in the world.

IV.   EIL PRINCIPLE 3: MULTILINGUALISM (OR MULTICULTURALISM) IN THE CLASSROOM

Renandya points out that many English language teaching classrooms has still promoted monolingualism, based on the belief of English (especially American English) as the only language used in the classroom [9]. However, using more than two languages is certainly beneficial for EFL students [9, 12]. Mckay indicates that teachers should endorse bilingualism or multilingualism in the context of EIL because of the advantage of using both English and the mother tongue with ease [8]. This third principle of multilingualism (or multiculturalism) seems rather harder to be achieved in the EFL classroom due to its nature itself. Renandya asserts that it is desirable to equip the students with the ability to use both English and the mother tongue simultaneously [9]. Technology can make this principle feasible in the EFL context. Media and social network services (SNS) enable us to approach other cultures and language more easily. The awareness of multiculturalism would be similar to the first EIL principle—intercultural competence. Applying multilingualism to the classroom practice should be interwoven with the development of intercultural competence.

If teachers have an opportunity to have a foreign student in the classroom, this will also benefit encouraging multiculturalism and multilingualism. Nowadays, many countries have globalized, and it is likely to have different ethnic groups in the classroom. My homogenous English language classrooms used to include a small number of foreign students. I let them share their own cultures with others, and it was effective to boost multiculturalism. Therefore, it will be beneficial to have foreign students in the classroom so that other students can have vicarious cultural experiences and share similarities and differences between the multiple cultures.

V.   EIL PRINCIPLE 4: INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS TARGETING EIL

TheInstructional materials often reflect the culture of native English-speaking countries despite the growing awareness of the role of EIL. The problem of the over-representation of English-speaking culture is

identified frequently in instructional resources. However, it is not easy for teachers to use any materials related to World Englishes because instructional materials should be matched with curriculum requirement in the EFL classroom. Thus, some teachers are often cautious about using culture-related materials. Teachers should be aware of the cultural contents of the instructional materials and be critical about whether they reflect the cultures of EIL [13]. Teachers can utilize three types of cultural information in instructional materials for EIL [14, p. 88]:

· Source culture materials – the learners' own culture;
· Target culture materials – the culture of an English-speaking country;
· International target culture materials – the culture of English- and non-English speaking countries

It is crucial to use the language for cross-cultural encounters and share awareness of one's own culture with others. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their own culture as a way of determining "inter-culturality" [7, p. 88].

In fact, it may be sensitive to use the materials that contain different cultures in terms of the curriculum-based use. To make it work, teachers should be able to use culture-based materials in extracurricular activities because teachers can get more freedom and flexibility of the materials used out of the regular curriculum. In the Asian EFL context, extra-curricular classes are freer than the general ones, but the main objective is to motivate students to learn English with interest and excitement. In this sense, instructional materials play a crucial role in these classes, so teachers should be careful about selecting and using the instructional materials. For example, some of my English language lessons I implemented were involved in multiculturalism. I found pictures of food, etiquette, and cultures from different countries on the Internet and used them to encourage my students to be familiar with various cultures. In the class of food processing and biotechnology, I prepared technical cooking terms, such as *blanching, broiling, and poaching*, which are rarely taught to general students. Instructional materials with specific topics always win only if they are matched to the students' interest and learning goals.

VI. EIL PRINCIPLE 5: SOCIALLY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is based on Western-oriented assumptions and beliefs [15, 16]. Thus, several CLT methods have not been applicable or acceptable in the EFL context. For example, CLT emphasizes small group work for individualized communication. However, the principle of group work has not satisfied collective-oriented classrooms. For this reason, "a socially and culturally appropriate teaching methodology" has been introduced to ESL and EFL classrooms [16]. The teacher's role of using and evaluating teaching methodology in terms of its suitability with the local culture matters. Thus, some considerations of employing the socially and culturally appropriate teaching methodology for teachers are suggested [9, 16]:

· Replacing and reframing the tasks with ones that are more aligned with the local culture of learning;
· Producing more effective learning for the students to familiarize themselves with the new way of
  learning.

The fifth EIL principle may be the most abstract to be implemented especially in the EFL context. The teachers may also have to pay attention to high stakes tests and assessment in particular EFL classrooms. The socially and culturally appropriate teaching methodology seems innovative, but more research and practices may be needed to make it effective.

VII. CONCLUSION

All in all, the five EIL principles examined in this paper provide EFL teachers to critically examine their pedagogical practices and adjust them to keep up with the teaching of EIL. The theory-based EIL tenets would still be daunting to the teachers in implementing and utilizing them in real. New and innovative instructional methodology and materials are not always perfect solutions for the students who learn EIL. However, the EIL principles support pluralistic aspects of standards in language, the value and respect of a variety of languages, and effort to promote "pragmatic sensitivity" [4, p. 21]. It is hoped that more and more EFL teachers recognize EIL and strive to critically examine EIL principles for their students to broaden perspectives on EIL.

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