Reimagining Southeast Asian Englishes as codemixed varieties: does this apply differently to outer circle and expanding circle varieties?

James McLellan,
Senior Lecturer in English Language and Linguistics,
Universiti Brunei Darussalam
OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

World Englishes = codemixed varieties? True / False?

In SE Asia.....

Outer circle (ESL) nations vs Expanding circle (EFL) nations

Theory: 1. ELF: Negotiation vs Misunderstandings

Theory: 2. ‘Attuning’ in inter-ASEAN interactions

Data: sources x 3

Sample analysis

Brief conclusion
MCLELLAN (2010), MIXED CODES AND VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

Examples of texts from Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, Singapore showing influence of several other languages in the repertoires of users in these nations,

Where English is used intranationally,

e.g. Malaysians using English to speak / write / keyboard to other Malaysians

Filipinos using English to speak / write / keyboard to other Filipinos
IN THESE CONTEXTS

where interlocutors share at least two languages, language alternation (code-mixing) can and does occur
IN THE EXPANDING CIRCLE NATIONS,…

Myanmar
Thailand
Lao PDR
Cambodia
Vietnam
Indonesia
Timor Leste,

is English used at all intranationally?
SUGGESTED ANSWER....

No.....

Why should Lao people use English to communicate with other Lao people?
They use Lao.

Why should Thai people use English to communicate with other Thai people?
They use Thai.  (etc.)
BUT…

for *international* communication, e.g. within ASEAN, speakers from the expanding circle nations often have to use English - there is no other choice =

**ELF (English as a Lingua Franca)**

(Kirkpatrick, 2007, 2014)
Normally,…

Language alternation / Codeswitching does not occur in ELF contexts

although some exceptions to this have been found -

BUT

in contexts of ELF communication (e.g. this conference), the influence of speakers’ L1 (and L2, if English is their L3) is still evident
THEORY 1: NEGOTIATION vs MISUNDERSTANDING

• Many studies focus on misunderstanding – communication breakdown and repair – in ELF interactions
• OK, valid, researchable….
• …but perhaps a bit negative
• More positive = accommodation / negotiation
• Matsumoto (2011)
THEORY 2: ‘ATTUNING’


Attuning = one way of accommodating, negotiating for meaning, avoiding or evading misunderstanding

“Listening accommodation” (Deterding, 2013: 17):
“getting used to the patterns of speech of one’s conversational partners”; “accommodation in terms of grammar and word usage”
DATA

Set 1 from BBC’s “Global Questions: The ASEAN way” broadcast on 21/5/17

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p052sq4n

Set 2 from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE); Corpus of misunderstandings (CMACE) from

http://fass.ubd.edu.bn/research/CMACE/home/index.html

[Set 3 (written) conference announcements from universities across ASEAN – not discussed here, no time]
SET 1

• Format: questions posed by audience members to a panel from different ASEAN countries: Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand

• Chaired by (Sudanese/British) presenter Zeinab Badawi, who knows the names of the questioners and their questions, and rephrases them before asking panel members to reply

• Setting: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

• No codeswitching, but a variety of accents and discourse styles
NEED FOR ‘ATTUNING’ - 1

• Cambodian participant

“I believe that crime stemming from landgrabbing could be qualify a crime against humanity because.. its involve the possible transfer of population illegally or imprison(?) many other inhuman act and prosecution. From your perspective, what mechanism of policy again crimes stemming [stemming] from landgrabbing should there be?”
Nurul Izzah Anwar, Panelist

“Yes, er I think the bigger issue that’s linked to deforestation is also the practice of slash and burn, which is basically being practised not just with small time farmers but also big corporations and er most ASEAN countries have corporations who are partly responsible to the forest fires in Indonesia and that caused Indonesian economy what sixteen billion US dollars of losses just for 2015 alone. So for me when you talk about er such a huge problem link to er deforestation the haze I mean it er it affects every schoolgoing children in ASEAN…..
IMPLICATIONS

• No codeswitching by any participant

• Need for listeners - panelists, audience members - to attune to the Cambodian and to the Malaysian English varieties

• Little or no difference in intelligibility between the ‘expanding circle’ and ‘outer circle’ speakers
SET 2

Asian Corpus of English (ACE)

http://corpus.eduhk.hk/ace/

Interactions across ASEAN (= ELF)
NEGOTIATION: ACE CORPUS: S1 BRUNEIAN, S2 LAO

....
S1: so how does it [snake] taste like
S2: er:: the taste (1) is (1) not bad (1) the meat er: the colour look like
   er: the chicken meat
S1: mm
S2: but er: the taste of the meat look like erm: k- crocodile meat
S1: oh it’s is it um:
S2: <2> xxx </2>
S1: <2> elastic </2>
S2: yeah elastic
S1: chewy(.) oh @@ <spel> o k </spel>
S2: it very good
S1: good?
....

Source: http://corpus.ied.edu.hk/ace/index.php?m=music&a=info&id=96
This one is a misunderstanding, caused by codeswitching

(source: Ishamina & Deterding, 2017: 295)

**Extract 6** Female Bruneian1 + Female Maldives:

*Context: FBr1 is talking about religious schools in Brunei.*

FBr1: for a religious school yeah

FMd: so what are what are the subjects ah they study <1> in the yeah yeah </1>

FBr1: <1> in *ugama* school? </1> erm ah they

FMd: you mean government?

FBr1: in the government will be like how you say ah?
CONCLUSIONS

1. The findings support suggestions by other researchers that, in their ELF interactions, SE Asians draw on all their multilingual resources to negotiate meaning and maintain intelligibility.

2. => ELF does not = “English only”

3. This investigation offers further evidence that in ELF contexts there is no meaningful distinction between “Outer” and “Expanding” Circle Englishes in Southeast Asia.
REFERENCES


THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION
COMMENTS, QUESTIONS ARE MOST WELCOME
james.mclellan@ubd.edu.bn