Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL): A Showcase of the Field

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Abstract: As an initiative to question the Anglo-centric view of English ignoring the socio-cultural realities, the paradigm of English as an International Language (EIL) has gained space in the scholarly realm. Despite the thriving body of literature on theory, action based studies seem to be largely missing. The main rationale underlying this article is to analyze eight EIL-oriented classroom implementations from the perspectives of practitioners around the world with the aim of not only deepening the understanding of EIL but also offering useful insights for practitioners who may find its assumptions documented at theory level too elusive to implement. Findings evidence pedagogical value including a true understanding and increased awareness of the sociolinguistic realities and complexity of English, positive attitudes towards its cultural and linguistic diversity, skill enhancement, and higher motivation and confidence in using English. The review ends with pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: EIL, TEIL, ELT

İngilizcenin Uluslararası Bir Dil Olarak Öğretimi Paradigması: Uygulama Sahasının Bir Resmi

Özet: İngilizcenin Uluslararası Bir Dil Olarak Öğretimi (EIL) paradigması, İngilizcenin sosyal-kültürel gerçekliklerini ihmal ederek öğretimini savunan İngiliz/Amerikan odaklı dil eğitimini sorgulaması hasebiyle bilimsel arenada geniş yer tutmaktadır. Teori üzerine yapılan çalışmaların sayısı fazla olmasına rağmen eyleme dönük çalışmalar oldukça azdır. Bu makalenin temel gerekçesi, dünyanın çeşitli bölgelerindeki eğitimcilerin gerçekleştirmiş olduğu sekiz adet EIL-odaklı sınıf uygulamasını analiz etmek ve böylece hem EIL paradigmasını daha kolay anlamayı sağlamaya yardımcı olmak ve hem de kuramsal olarak sunulan ilkeleri uygulayabilecek kadar net, somut ve anlaşılır bulmayan eğitimcilere faydalı fikirler sunmaktır. Bulgular pedagojik faydaları göstermektedir: İngilizcenin sosyal-dilbilimsel gerekçeliklerini ve karmaşık yapısını doğru bir şekilde anlama ve bu konuda farkındalık geliştirme, İngilizcenin kültürel ve dilsel çeşitliliğine karşı olumlu tutum geliştirme, beceri gelişimi ve İngilizcenin kullanımı konusunda yüksek güdülenme ve kendine güven. Bu çalışma eğitimsel çıkarımlar ve gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalar için öneriler ile son bulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: EIL, TEIL, İngilizce eğitimi

1. Introduction

We are currently in a post-Anglophone period (Kirkpatrick, 2010) in that the number of multilingual English users has exceeded the number of their monolingual counterparts. This demographic dominance has implications for English use in several domains (Cogo, 2012) and ignited several attempts to question the concepts such as English ownership, NS, and foreign language and re-examine the current ELT practices as well as teacher roles and qualities (Matsuda, 2012). Among the initiatives challenging the normative ELT approach that sets American and British varieties as ultimate goals and uses NS model as a yardstick rather than adopt a pluralist and critical perspective, English as an International Language (hereafter EIL) deserves much attention as the focus of the present review.

EIL, built on the works of Larry Smith in the 1970s, needs to be understood not as a linguistic variety set as a norm for international interaction and teaching but as an English function in contexts where people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds meet for certain needs (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). Thus, teaching English as an International Language (hereafter TEIL) is the consequence of the need to revise the existing ELT assumptions and practices, for the traditional ESL and EFL models are irrelevant for today's language learners and users who do not aim cultural and social integration and thus do not need NS norms to be successful in the changing linguistic interactions (Alptekin, 2002; Garcia, 2013) that are characterised as talks with creative English use and diverse strategies employment such as utterance completion, latching, backchannelling, to list but a few (Cogo, 2012).

EIL paradigm shift has been explored extensively over the last four decades (Garcia, 2013; Lee, Nakamura & Sadler, 2017) in that its nature and key tenets, the changing nature of English and aspects of ELT that need revision, testing assumptions, model programmes, curricula, and courses for both language instruction and teacher education have been documented. Despite this extensive body of literature on EIL and TEIL, the picture is far from complete without empirical studies indicating how these EIL principles could be implemented in actual classrooms. Documenting these kinds of individual initiatives from various education contexts can be of great value to change the attitudes of practitioners as their mindset is one of the challenges of EIL (Garcia, 2013). Therefore, the aims of the present article are twofold. First, several implementation studies on this marginal change at classroom level that otherwise would remain a minority aspect in this field will be revised. Second, useful and sound pedagogical implications will be provided for practitioners around the world to change their mindset and encourage them to leave linguistic perfection aside and prioritise successful communication.

1.1. Exploring the Nature of TEIL

Over four decades several scholars from the EIL camp have set the basic tenets of socio-culturally sensitive TEIL with all its aspects including instruction, teaching materials, teacher roles, assessment, and teacher education programmes. A comprehensive analysis of the existing literature indicates five common themes that are of paramount importance for TEIL: exposing learners to English diversity, adopting a broad culture view, fostering sensitivity and responsibility, being sensitive to local culture of learning, and equipping learners with communication strategies (Matsuda, 2012; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011; McKay, 2009, 2012).

Familiarising learners with English diversity is of utmost importance in TEIL on several accounts. This exposure can avoid "a limited and skewed understanding of who speaks English and for what purposes" (Matsuda, 2012). Learners can have the accurate impression that they are using one English variety, and there are diverse Englishes that they can encounter in the future. This awareness of reality, in turn, is believed to help them challenge their prejudices and foster positive attitudes towards English diversity (Bayyurt & Altınmakas, 2012; Author, date). Besides, this exposure enhances understanding, for it is expected to enable learners to perceive the intention of the other party (ies) in conversations.

Adopting a broad culture view is another key TEIL tenet in that in line with English broadness the cultural content should be expanded. Basically three types of cultural sources need to be used: global culture, a variety of world cultures, and home culture (Matsuda, 2012; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). Global culture that includes issues such as world peace, environment conservation, wars, hunger, to name but a few, can serve as suitable content for fostering a sense of responsibility, global citizenship, and critical thinking. Cultural content should also include a variety of world cultures as this diversity "can

illustrate not only the geographical spread but also the functional diversity" (Matsuda, 2012) of English. Lastly, home culture is valued as an element that learners know best and thus should move on, for learners will both learn from their future interlocutors and inform them about themselves.

Besides, fostering awareness and responsibility is of fundamental importance for TEIL. When EIL issues such as the importance of mother tongue, English diversity, the role of English in the world and so on are integrated into classes, learners have a deepened understanding of EIL and feel more inclined to be linguistically and culturally sensitive and thus to challenge language inequalities as well as have promoted critical thinking skills (Lee et al., 2017). Furthermore, EIL necessitates increasing learners' responsibility feelings by exposing them to global culture that should be understood as content about world issues such as hunger, wars, and environment problems and so on. In this way, learners will turn into responsible citizens with critical thinking and problem solving abilities who try hard to make the world a much better place by attempting to make a change at first local and then global level (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011).

Being sensitive to local culture of learning is also a sine qua non of EIL. It argues that education planners should take variables such as local linguistic landscape, learners' attitudes, local standards, learners' purposes, proficiency level and age, and local culture of learning into consideration while making pedagogical decisions rather than submit to Western-based practices. Taking these practices for granted would do nothing but make them yield to the pedagogical imperialism of NSs, marginalise local language teachers, and thus create huge gaps between national policies and actual classroom implementations (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011).

Lastly, equipping learners with communication strategies is central to TEIL. Adopting the NS model of pragmatics is found irrelevant as there are more interactions between English language learners and a homogenous native speaker community cannot be ensured (Alptekin, 2002).Therefore, language curriculums should develop repair strategies such as asking for clarification, repetition and rephrasing, and allowing for wait time, enhance negotiation strategies such as suggesting alternatives, arguing for something, and seeking consensus, and include various conversational gambits that should be understood as managing turn-taking, back-channelling, and initiating interaction (McKay, 2009). Exposing learners to various successful L2-L2 interactions and helping them identify and develop such strategies will empower them as these will help them facilitate and support mutual understanding in variable, rich, and creative future EIL communication (Cogo, 2012) and manage to avoid and if necessary deal with these possible communication misunderstandings and breakdowns.

1.2. A Review of Eight Actual Classroom Implementations

A seven-year close reading for a PhD study of the existing EIL literature starting from 1970s and finishing in 2018 has helped the researcher conclude that earlier EIL studies fall into mainly four categories: (1) actual classroom implementation and pedagogical model suggestions, (2) attitude, belief, and familiarity studies, (3) teaching materials analysis and development, and (4) a mixture of theory, practice, and perception studies. Yet, EIL classroom implementation is the research niche. Thus, attempting to fill this existing gap and adding to the literature, the researcher chose the first category to select the analysed articles and included basically three types of academic sources for the review: journal articles, book chapters, and PhD dissertations. To determine the to-be-analysed materials, the researcher set four criteria: (1) actual classroom implementations, (2) sufficient research-process-related details, (3) researchers motivated by the same need, (4) inclusion of actual language learners, and (5) focus on several aspects of language instructions and learning outcomes.. Although there were various studies falling in the second, third, and fourth categories listed above, there were a few from the first category then. In the end, the researchers selected eight articles meeting the five criteria listed above from around the world with the aim of identifying their common patterns of findings and thereby offering pedagogical suggestions for practitioners around the world. In the end, the final list covering eight actual EIL-oriented classroom implementations included works from the following academic sources, respectively: *ELT Journal*, *ReCALL*, a PhD dissertation from Turkey, *Arab World English Journal*, *The CATESOL Journal*, and four book chapters taken from *Principles and Practices of Teaching English as an International Language* edited by Aya Matsuda. Table 1 provides information about these analysed field studies.

Table 1.

Reviewed Field Studies

Study (publication year)	N and nation	Age and class	Setting	Research design	Duration	EIL implementation
Galloway and Rose (2018)	19 Japanese	20-22 3rd and 4th year English majors	Japan	Case study	13 weeks	asking learners to prepare short presentations on a variety they chose and evaluating peers' presentations and writing reflections
Lee et al. opt. cit. (2017)	41 Japanese Korean and Chinese	under graduates	Japan	Mixed research method	14 weeks	using videoconference-embedded classroom and engaging learners in reading, discussing, and thinking critically about EIL
Erbay-Çetinkaya (2016)	53 Turkish	18-20	Turkey	Quasi-experiment	12 weeks	using a self-devised 10-week EIL-oriented General English syllabus to increase learner awareness, change attitudes, and enhance skills
Ayuthaya and Sitthitikul (2016)	92 Thailander	first year	Bangkok	quasi-experiment	17 weeks	incorporating World Englishes into EFL classes
Teixeira and Pozzi (2014)	7 international students	under graduate (N=5) and post graduate scholars (N=2)	California	Action research	8 weeks	exploring concentric circles of English through discussing video clips, writing reflections, and making oral presentations
Bayyurt and Altinmakas (2012)	64 Turkish	freshmen and sophomores	Turkey	Case study	14 weeks	implementing a WE/EIL-based oral communication skills course including several WE/EIL issues
Hino (2012)	140 Japanese and Asians	first and second-grade under graduates	Japan	Case study	15 weeks	helping students participate in real EIL world by watching, listening, and discussing news, and developing critical thinking and media literacy
Lee (2012)	23 Japanese	high school	Japan	Case study	8 weeks	promoting students' communicative competence through a WE-informed curriculum

The common patterns of findings from these eight actual classroom implementations suggest four positive TEIL outcomes: (1) a proper understanding of English and EIL, (2) positive attitudinal change towards EIL orientation and tendency to challenge existing prejudices, (3) skill enhancement, and (4) motivating and interactive classroom environment.

1.2.1. Proper Understanding of English and EIL

Increased knowledge and awareness about the creative use of English around the world and its changing sociolinguistic landscape was one of the common positive outcomes. In all eight studies, learners were exposed to critical EIL topics such as the role of English, English ownership, NS authority, NNS English teachers, English plurality, Standard English, stereotyping, language change, to list but a few. This exposure increased learners' familiarity and enabled them to uncover their firm and rigid beliefs about

English. For instance, in the quasi-experimental study of the Author (date), the participants were familiarised with EIL issues through ten different modules via reading and discussing various simplified tasks, having classroom debates, and conducting mini research in their community, and presenting their findings with reports, video clips, and oral presentations. The statistically significant difference between the pre and post awareness scores proved that not only the learners' understanding and awareness of English language use and diversity but also their understanding of culture and cultural variety increased. Furthermore, the participants were observed to be able hold and enjoy intense EIL discussions after getting familiarised with related topics.

Getting acquainted with such issues and helping learners better informed about the sociolinguistic realities and complexities of English is of utmost importance as it can enhance a richer appreciation of EIL orientation by encouraging learners to think critically and open-mindedly. As Matsuda (2012) rightly notes, this awareness is vital as it avoids "a limited and skewed understanding of who speaks English and for what purposes". Furthermore, EIL integration into curriculum is argued to start earlier as "linguistic attitude or linguistic prejudice takes time to reform" (Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul, 2016).

1.2.2. Positive Attitudinal Change towards EIL Orientation

Another common pattern of finding from these studies is positive attitudinal change in learners. This outcome is directly related to the former, for the more they are exposed to EIL issues and think and discuss critically about them, the more willing they become to challenge their existing beliefs about English language. The participants in the studies of Bayyurt and Altinmakas (2012), Lee (2012), Hino (2012), Teixeira and Pozzi (2014), Author (date), and Lee et al. (2017) were observed to have quite negative attitudes towards EIL orientation at the very beginning. Yet, after the implementations, they tended to see issues from alternative perspectives and thus feel motivated to challenge their existing ones. This change should not be underestimated, as for instance 81% of the participants in the study of Lee et al. (2017) self-reported positive effect of the videoconference embedded classrooms in which they had conferences with EIL scholars around the world, discussed related issues, and asked and answered questions in an authentic EIL environment. Similarly, in the study of Galloway and Rose (2018), the participants who were supposed to prepare ten-minute presentations on an English variety they chose and delivered them to their classmates self-reported how this activity helped them understand this variety and "challenge their own preconceived notions of it" in their post-presentation reflections.

A little bit different pattern was found by Author (date). Although Author (date) found higher mean scores of items on EIL orientation and lower mean scores on Anglophone one, she concludes that there still survives the native speaker authority. Her participants accepted that English plurality was a natural consequence of language spread and differences were not something to laugh at; however, their tolerance towards cultural diversity of English was much higher than the one towards language ownership, language diversity and instructional varieties due to their concerns for intelligibility problems and language corruption.

This pattern of finding suggests that increased familiarity with English diversity and EIL issues can promote positive perception towards EIL orientation. And positive attitude as the beginning step for an ELT paradigm shift is what lies in the crux of the matter, for if mindset does not change, it is naive to expect TEIL to be backed by both learners and teachers no matter how positive outcomes it has.

1.2.3. Skill Enhancement

In addition to the positive outcomes detailed above, these studies found positive results regarding skill enhancement. To illustrate, in the quasi-experimental study by Author (date), the researcher found that the 10-week EIL-oriented General English course made a change in the participants' listening, oral production, interaction confidence, critical thinking, and communication strategies. The participants who were exposed to various English accents during the classes as listening and watching materials and conducted individual interviews with foreigners had improved receptive skills at the end of the process in that they could identify various accented Englishes and elaborate on their differences. In addition, their oral production skills were enhanced as they were exposed to the use of communication and negotiation strategies in various language learner interactions. This exposure also increased their interaction confidence as they saw how people with accented Englishes could express themselves successfully.

Besides, as they were exposed to multiple viewpoints, discussed EIL issues from different perspectives via debates and classroom discussions, and analysed various cultures in a sphere of interculturality in which they compared and contrasted home, Anglo, world, and global cultures, their critical thinking skills improved. Here, increased interaction confidence is worth mentioning due to the international prestige of NSs in such education contexts. The more the participants were exposed to various interaction patterns between speakers with different linguistic and cultural patterns and saw how they handled communication misunderstandings, the more they understood intelligibility is much more important than accent imitation and thus developed more confidence in their ability to make them heard in English. This finding is shared by Ayuthaya and Sitthitikul (2016), who also found that positive attitudinal change decreased language learning anxiety. When they started to regard Englishes as different and legitimate varieties rather than incorrect and inferior ones, this tendency "not only affected their self-esteem and confidence in speaking English, but it lessened their fear of negative evaluation as they no longer devalued themselves as being inferior local NNSs" (Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul, 2016).This, in turn, increased their sense of English ownership and erased their hesitation to speak out.

The ability to see issues from multiple perspectives is also valued as a common EIL outcome as it leads to enhanced critical thinking skills. For instance, Hino (2012) made his participants watch, listen, and discuss the same news taken from different medias and in this way they gained cross-cultural awareness, got interested in global issues, learned and used English in a meaningful and authentic context, and practiced critical thinking skills. Similarly, the video conferences with various EIL scholars around the world as an instructional intervention in the study of Lee et al. (2017) enabled the participants to think critically as they had chance to hear and compare and contrast various perspectives.

1.2.4. Motivating and Interactive Classroom Environment

The final positive outcome is the creation of a motivating and interactive classroom environment. For instance, in the 14-week period, the participants in the case study of Bayyurt and Altinmakas (2012) found classroom atmosphere enjoyable and motivating when they learned about new English varieties and alternatives to traditional ELT approaches. Similarly, in the study of Galloway and Rose (2018), the participants were found to enjoy preparing a short oral presentation on an English variety they chose and later evaluated three peers with a checklist, for the implementation "motivated them to learn more about the countries studied, to engage with speakers from that region, or travel there in the future".

Ample classroom discussions were portrayed as another common pedagogical benefit. Particularly, in Lee et al., (2017), the participants liked the interactive nature of the classes as they learned from each other, and interaction confidence and interaction effectiveness increased after EIL implementations. The participants in the study of Lee stated that being exposed to critical EIL issues after a brief input in the form of a reading text, report, or video clip, identifying different English varieties and talking about them, comparing and contrasting cultural elements belonging to home, Anglo, and world cultures, and being in a relaxed classroom atmosphere where the teacher valued their ideas but not their accent imitation all helped them feel less anxious and more motivated to make discussions in English. This interactive nature of the class encouraged the hesitant and less proficient ones to forget their language deficiencies and chip into discussions to make their voice heard.

2. Pedagogical Implications

The analysis of these studies shows that TEIL results in quite positive learning outcomes, including helping learners understand the true nature of English, encouraging them to show tolerance towards linguistic and cultural variety, enhancing their listening, speaking, interaction, and critical thinking, and providing a motivating and interactive classroom environment in which all learners try their best to make themselves heard in English. These outcomes are vital, for language teaching should not be understood as solely the instruction of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Rather, as Cogo (2012, 104) notes, it needs to be seen "as a much wider process involving a whole range of communication skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as communication strategies, pragmatic competence, and language and cultural awareness". However, as the research niche on classroom implementations is quite large, this showcase of field studies is limited, in that readers need much empirical evidence about the outcomes of TEIL for learners other than tertiary level students. Still, this review can be an eye opener for practitioners by providing some pedagogical implications.

First, TEIL argues against methodological correctness in that teachers are suggested to take their local culture of learning and teaching, context, sources, priorities, and needs and aims of their own students into account while making pedagogical decisions rather than let the West impose their methods as the best one (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). Similarly, teachers should not take the implementations analysed in this article for granted. Rather, being reflective and critical of them, they can make modifications and create their own expertise by producing and using classroom-based strategies based on their own experiences. Furthermore, if they themselves report their experiences in the form of teacher research, they could embrace their choices, become productive and thus feel empowered. To succeed these all, as noted by Çelik and Erbay-Çetinkaya (2020), teacher candidates should be trained about how to teach English as a truly international language at education faculties. This training can teach them how to implement EIL perspectives in their classes and encourage them to design their own activities. EIL-informed teacher education could serve as change agents in this regard. Besides, in-service language teachers should also be guided and encouraged to participate in EIL-related professional development activities.

Second, the analysis showed that in all eight studies the participants felt less anxious and developed interaction confidence, which is rare but fundamental for language learners. Here not only the use of various input and activities but also the attitude of the teacher is key. The teacher should not judge learners based on how they say but what they say. This is also the rationale behind TEIL, for it values message and intelligibility above form and imitation (Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012).

Third, the analysis showed that positive attitudinal change was almost common in all analysed implementations. However, no matter how desirable TEIL seems, practitioners should not expect learners to leave their dedication to attaining NS-like proficiency and learning their culture immediately and welcome EIL orientation with open arms. Rather, they should be aware that attitude change itself is challenging and requires much time and thus the success rests with patience (Bayyurt & Altınmakas, 2012; Erbay-Çetinkaya, 2016).

Also, the analysis points to the importance of exposing learners to English plurality, EIL issues, and cultural diversity, for this ensures the enhancement of receptive skills, interaction confidence, a true understanding of English, English ownership, less language anxiety, and motivation to use their own version of English. This exposure should not be limited to only audio materials, though. As Matsuda and Friedrich (2011) propose, practitioners can use not only audio but also textual and visual variety samples. They can employ media texts such as local English newspapers around the world, help students communicate with English users from all three circles, encourage them to meet local English users with small scale research projects, use the Internet and social networking sites to interact with people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and reflect on their experiences. However, as suggested by Author (date), here the practitioners should give an ear to their learners and the nature of their own context. While setting their exposure goals, practitioners should adopt a bottom-up approach and conduct a detailed "environment analysis" by asking their students which variety they want to see and why. For instance, in her study, Author (date) found that the participants were deeply interested in Russian English accent, for Trabzon, the city where the study was conducted, is close to Russia, and as the participants think that they are highly likely to encounter Russian and thus have some social and economic benefits, they wanted the researcher to integrate Russian English accent into listening materials. Thus, intended use, popularity, and possible social and economical advantages are what should determine these pedagogical decisions. These context-sensitive decisions, in turn, clearly indicate the urgent need to produce locally-sensitive course books that can serve well for the particular needs of various education contexts.

3. Conclusions

The existing literature indicates that despite the long EIL history since 1970s, actual classroom implementations need to be taken a step further as they are central to the true understanding of TEIL as alluded above. Thus, the present study was motivated by the need to portray what has been done in the actual field. The analysis of seven implementations showed that TEIL seems a viable option on account of positive learning outcomes, including helping learners understand the true nature of English, show tolerance towards linguistic and cultural variety, become more proficient in listening, speaking, interaction, and critical thinking, and providing a motivating and interactive classroom environment in

which all learners try their best to make themselves heard in English.

Yet, it needs to be born in mind that assessment is a major concern of language teaching as well as classroom instruction. Hence, it seems that field studies on assessment informed by the sociolinguistic change of English could help practitioners draw a holistic TEIL picture, which is otherwise far from complete. Therefore, further actual classroom implementation studies would be conducted with the aim of investigating the outcomes of EIL-oriented assessment practices.

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Note on Ethical Issues

The author confirms that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country (Date of Confirmation: 05/05/2021).