

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is now available not only to native speakers but also to non-native speakers. The user's social and cultural background has an impact on their English. The effect of the mother tongue and society of the users made an impact on English varieties. These variations gave rise to a new type of English known as "World Englishes". World Englishes are varieties of English that are used around the world as a lingua franca. The emergence of world languages made English available to non-native speakers all over the world, rather than just native speakers. According to Kachru (1985), English is divided into three concentric circles, the first of which includes native English-speaking countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. The second outer circle includes countries that use English as a second language, such as Somalia, Cuba, and the majority of the African continent, and the third expanding circle includes countries that consider English to be a foreign language, such as Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, and others.

Thailand is an example of a country that regarded English as a foreign language. Standard Thai is the national language used in administration, education, and the media. Thai also has regional varieties such as northern Thai (e.g., Kham Muang) and southern Thai (e.g., Pak Tai), which are considered variants of Thai (Baker & Wisut Jarunthawatchai 2017). English is their foreign language used in education, which is a compulsory subject in Thailand's education curriculum. Because the Thai language is one of the most important symbols of Thai national identity and unity, English is inevitably influenced by the Thai language. It makes Thais speak English in unique ways. Phuengpitipornchai (2021) argued that "the concept of these linguistic variations in the way Thais use their English has been defined as an emerging characteristic of one of the English varieties, or so-called "Thai English."

Several studies have stated the uniqueness of Thai English. Thai English has a few distinguishing characteristics that differ from their first language background, culture, rhetorical style, and communication norms, so Thai speakers use English to present their identity (Fauziyyah et.al., 2021; Trakulkasemuk, 2012). This study shows the characteristics of Thai English, which are influenced by the Thai language.

This research is based on a preliminary study, and the writer found the Thai English is unique because of the unique pronunciation, intonation, and code mixing. Two undergraduate students from the English Education Department at one of the universities in Tasikmalaya participated in an international teaching practicum in Thailand. They were assigned to teach secondary school for around five months. They stated that when they were taught English, they were taught standard English, but the students still speak using Thai English. They claimed Thai English is difficult to understand. The participants did not get what Thai people say because they speak English but are affected by Thai language. There are some words that are differently pronounced by Thai English speakers and confused student-teachers to understand them. It is because some words or sounds are very different from Standard English. They use English as a medium of communication in the teaching-learning process. Based on the previous study from Fauziyah et al. (2021) investigated language attitudes towards Thai English, this study aims to investigate about student-teachers' perceptions towards Thai English in the EFL classroom.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the formulation of the problem: what are student-teachers' perceptions about the uniqueness of Thai English?

1.3 Operational Definitions

1.3.1 Thai English:

It is a variety of English that is affected by the Thai language and culture. It makes Thais speak English in unique ways. Because they barely use standardized English. Thai English indicates that Thais want to represent their identity and culture.

1.3.2 World Englishes:

World Englishes are varieties of English that are used around the world as a lingua franca. The emergence of World Englishes made English no

longer exclusive for native speakers but also being globally for non-native speakers. It is because of the numbers of non-native speakers is bigger than native speaker. So, English influenced by non-native speakers' first/national language.

1.3.3 Student-teachers' Perception:

Student-teachers' perception is opinion about something from student-teachers' perspectives. This opinion mostly based on student-teachers' knowledge and experience. It usually about something they have been experiencing and learning. It is mostly subjective answer.

1.3.4 Teaching Practicum

Teaching practicum is practice for teaching in a school in several months to give student-teachers' teaching experience/

1.4 Aim of the Research

This research investigated Indonesian student-teachers' perceptions towards Thai English in EFL classrooms. This is based on student-teachers' experience taught abroad in Thailand for around 5 months. This also investigated the uniqueness of Thai English. The distinctive characteristics of Thai English based on student-teachers' experience interaction with Thais people.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1. Theoretical Uses

This study contributes to complement the literature of World Englishes especially Thai English. This study provided about uniqueness characteristics of Thai English to enriched readers knowledge about Thai English. This study explored student-teachers' perception towards Thai English used in EFL Classroom in Thailand.

1.5.2. Practical Uses

This study provides readers with students' opinions based on their perception and experience as student-teachers about Thai English. It is also to facilitate consideration for the readers when they want to use Thai English as a learning tool. This study also can be used as teaching materials for teachers in the future. It also can use as references for researchers who investigates about Thai English.

1.5.3. Empirical uses

The results of this study provided an empirical knowledge of student-teachers' perceptions of Thai English's uniqueness. It shown the benefits of an international teaching practicum in Thailand for getting to engage with Thai students in an EFL classroom. This study also provides uniqueness characteristics of Thai English that found by the Indonesian student-teachers.