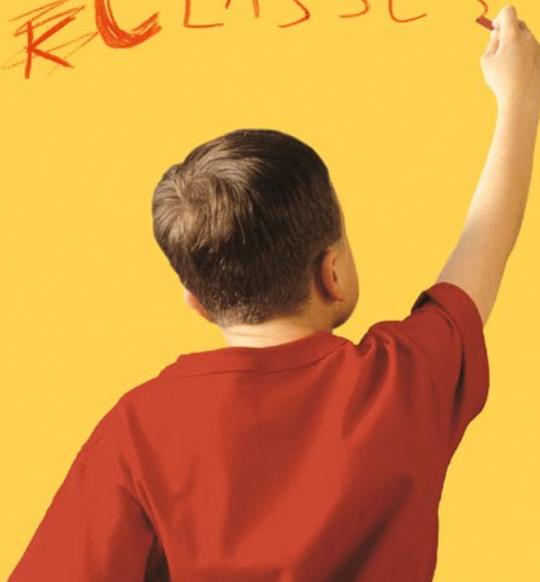


Foteini-Vassiliki Kuloheri

Indiscipline  
IN YOUNG  
EFL  
LEARNER  
~~R~~CLASSES



# Indiscipline in Young EFL Learner Classes

Foteini-Vassiliki Kuloheri

# Indiscipline in Young EFL Learner Classes

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*Dedicated to my husband,  
George*

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# List of Abbreviations and Transcript Conventions

## List of Abbreviations

ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CS	Case study
EFL	English as a foreign language
EFLL	English as a foreign language learner
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as a second language
ESP	English for specific purposes
FL	Foreign language
ICT	Information and communication technology
L1	Mother tongue
L2	Second language
SE	Special Education
TEFL	Teaching English as a foreign language
TEFLYL	Teaching English as a foreign language to young learners
TESOL	Teaching English to speakers of other languages
YEFLL	Young English as a foreign language learner (usually as part of a larger phrase)

## List of Transcript Conventions

.	Falling intonation
,	Rising intonation (showing continuing contour)
?	Questioning
!	Exclaiming emphasis
<b>Bold</b>	Strong emphasis
:	Sound stretching
...	Pause (maximum 3 seconds)
+	Extended pause (more than 3 seconds)
[ ]	Overlap
m:::	Encouragement to continue
( <i>italics</i> )	Notes
(xxx)	Indecipherable utterances
X	Protected anonymity
(~ word)	Unclear word that approximates the item given
“ ”	Others' utterances quoted by speaker
–	Interrupted utterance

# 1

## Introduction: The Globalized TEFL Boom

### 1.1 Introduction

Before developing the actual subject matter of the book, that is the young EFL learning (YEFLL) indiscipline in educational contexts, it would be constructive to see whether it is truly worthwhile to show genuine, systematic interest (especially, in research) in educational problems connected with teaching EFL (TEFL), such as the central one of this book, by briefly mapping the global stance adopted for English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning, particularly in a young-learner context. Therefore, this book seeks to establish an evidence-based approach to the issue of the misbehavior of young EFL learners by first providing data in support of the international demand to raise instruction and learning standards in the TEFL sector and, consequently, to face the particular educational complication promptly and effectively.

More generally, the data here are going to reconfirm the importance of the English language for the development of countries worldwide and for one's self-improvement within this flourishing universal context. During an exploratory journey through this book, the readers and the author will

share common background knowledge with respect to the urgent need to regard TEFL as a significant, autonomous subject throughout the world, to consider important teaching and learning issues gravely and seriously, to examine these issues in detail and, on the basis of findings and conclusions, to target surmounting obstacles and improving the teaching and learning contexts.

Reference to EFL learning with children in individual countries across the globe is supplemented in section three with details about existing indiscipline problems in the learning environments of primary school-age children. So ultimately the book will document not only the focal issue worldwide but also provide international frameworks in which the educational problem can be studied and alleviated.

## **1.2    The Internationalization of EFL**

An extensive bibliographic study illustrated the common understanding of English as a universal language medium. Besides the claim that it is spoken widely as a native language, that is, the third most common mother tongue (L1) after Chinese and Spanish according to Lewis et al. (2015c), statistical figures at the start of the twenty-first century prove that a constantly increasing quarter of the world's population speaks English effortlessly or proficiently (Crystal 2003). In Crystal's writings, English is recorded as the foreign language (FL) taught most extensively in more than 100 countries, in most of which it is also becoming the main FL in educational establishments like schools. Furthermore, TEFL knowledge and experience indicate that the positive stance of a large number of countries to English can influence educational decision making and practice targeted to the acquisition of the language in other territories.

Generally speaking, Crystal ascribed the international status of a language to the development of an exceptional role of that language acknowledged by all countries. Regarding English, he attributed its status to the spread of the British colonial power and the prestige of the United States of America (USA) as the principal twentieth-century power in economy. Following the development of his thinking and his extensive background knowledge, we see him capturing the added weight of

English, in particular, as a lingua franca by placing the focus on the social, cultural, educational, political, and economic value of the language universally, and on the role it plays as the L1 of a vast number of individuals (e.g., in the USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia), as an official language or second language (L2) such as in Hong Kong, Nigeria, Ghana, India and Singapore, and as the preferable FL in the European Union and at the United Nations.

At the dawn of the last decade of the twentieth century, Kachru (1992) also acknowledged the universality of English and put it down to a number of similar factors such as the large number of English speakers who had a different mother tongue, and the variety of sectors in which it was used (e.g., commerce, banking, tourism, technology, and scientific research). To these sectors, Crystal added communication, education, international relations, and travel, and Dahbi (2004) added aviation, petroleum engineering, and diplomacy. Fishman (1992) mentioned popular media, technical publications, and teenage slang too, and underlined the importance of English by referring to the positive role that non-native speakers of it, rather than the English L1 world, play in its expansion. Last, but not least, Brown (1991) identified the emphasis on English as a world language and the resulting sociopolitical issues (e.g., language policy and international varieties of English) as one of the major topics of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), and not surprisingly called the increase of English language use “staggering” (p. 250).

Since then, a large number of authors have been providing supportive data to the preceding claims to the extent that, despite the existence of opposing critiques (e.g., see Pennycook 2007), the notion of English as a global language has become a highly unquestionable fact around the world. As a result, governments sharing the belief that English is a powerful tool for the growth of their countries and the improvement of the standards of their citizens’ lives have been proceeding with adaptations of their educational systems and, in particular, of their EFL learning policies and practices, to current worldwide demands. It is astonishing that this has been taking place even in countries where EFL does not emphasize or enrich, but is perceived to threaten, its learners’ cultures or the local curricula, as is the case in Islamic countries (Fredricks 2007).

A study of local political, economic, and social developments around the world in relation to the globalization of English is obviously beyond the scope of this book. Nevertheless, mention can be made that is indicative of examples of countries that have responded to the need for what can be called the “TEFL boom.” This can further substantiate the existent need for teaching and learning English in creative, well-managed environments, and for studying relevant issues intensely and in reliable ways so that problems can be alleviated, instruction is improved and the aims of a population’s language development and the relevant dependent country’s advancement can be achieved.

Because of the TEFL-centered topic of this book, attention focuses on what Kachru (1992) has called “the outer and expanding/extending circle” (p. 356), where English is not granted official status but is recognized as a universal language and is prioritized as a foreign one. For this reason, no mention will be made to “inner-circle” territories, where the dominance of English is a status because of the mother-tongue feature attached to it (e.g., the USA, Britain, Canada, and Australia), or to “the outer-circle countries” that have experienced lengthy colonization periods, and where English is spoken as a second official language (e.g., Botswana, Cameroon, Gambia, India, Malta, Namibia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and the city of Hong Kong). Readers interested in these two sectors can study other sources such as Abdulaziz (1991), Adika (2012), Brown (1991), Crystal (2003), Kachru (1992), and Nunan (2003).

### **1.2.1 Asia**

Starting from the Asian countries, it is worth pointing out Crystal’s precise claims that all over South Asia English is adopted as “the medium of international communication” and that in the community of young South Asians it is understood to be “the language of cultural modernity” (2003, p. 49). Regarding the Asia Pacific region in particular, Nunan’s (2003) qualitative research on the influence of English as an international language on Asian schools’ educational policies and practices provided a detailed picture of the innovations implemented as a result of the domineering power of it. Nunan’s multiple case study involved the collection

and analysis of 68 guided interviews and of a variety of documents. The researcher identified a common interest in these countries in the reinforcement of TEFL in state education, and the rising importance of proficiency in English for employment, occupational promotion, and university studies.

China, for a start, exemplifies the case of a country that has experienced the influence of an English-dominant culture. Since the 1980s the country's economic advancement has attracted foreign financial activities, technological influences, joint ventures, tourists from overseas, and profit-making imports. This has led largely to a multiplying number of chances to show one's English proficiency (Cortazzi and Jin 1996; Hu 2005a, b) by using it for social and vocational purposes (Nunan 2003). Moreover, China participated in the World Trade Organization and was awarded the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, both of which heavily influenced the course of development and governmental decision making, and led to an increased demand for EFL learning. Soon, large investments were launched for private English language institutes, and the teaching of EFL in secondary schools was encouraged more.

In the early 1990s, elementary school EFL education was introduced too (Hu 2002), with the starting age for learning the language lowered from 11 to 9 in 2001 (Nunan 2003), and started spreading swiftly in the socioeconomically developed areas (Hu 2005a, b). University studies with bilingual tuition (in Chinese and English) started being offered from foreign universities in China (Nunan 2003). Last, but not least, according to Nunan, in September 2001 the Chinese Ministry of Education introduced content-based instruction in English at the tertiary level for certain subjects (e.g., finance, foreign trade, law, and economics).

Moving eastward to Korea, English proficiency has been regarded as such a strong cause of concern in education, government, and business (Nunan 2003) that at tertiary level and in the employment sector, the language has become a requirement. Thus one can understand the reason why some instruction has been provided in both content and language in English at the university level. At the same time, large sums of money have been spent by families for their children's EFL private tuition, and compulsory English instruction was lowered from age 13 to 9; as of 2001, the school policy of teaching English using English was adopted.

Korea's eastern neighbor, Japan, is an additional example of a large investor in school learners' development of EFL skills. According to the 2002 policy statement of the Japanese government (JGPECSST 2002), a series of policies were launched in education, culture, sports, science, and technology emphasizing the significance attached to school EFL learning. More specifically, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has made efforts to realize the aim of improving "an individually targeted teaching approach" through a policy that designates upper secondary schools as "Super English Language High Schools" (SELHi).

Besides doing practical research and cooperating effectively with universities and sister schools overseas, the Ministry entrusted these schools with the responsibility for developing a curriculum focusing on English education and teaching certain subjects in English. Furthermore, it developed a strategic plan to cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities" because, as stated, within the context of globalization in the economic and social sectors and of the use of English as a shared universal language, they considered it necessary for their children's future and the future of the Japanese nation to help the young become skillful at communicating in English. For these reasons, the Ministry forwarded an action plan with the aim of helping English teachers become more qualified, utilizing English native speakers, encouraging overseas study, upgrading foreign language education, multiplying the number of SELHi, and offering English-speaking activities in primary state schools.

With regard to elementary school education, statistics in this country indicate that in 2004 the offering of English programs took place in more than 90 % of the 22,481 schools (Nakamura 2005). Besides this, parental pressure on their young to make an early start in using English became almost a craze with, for example, daily home conversations in the language, enrollment of children in international elementary schools, purchase of English study materials for preschoolers, and parents' participation in English-speaking activities with their toddlers. As a consequence, the market in EFL education for children was expanded and thrived, with a rise in the number of English conversation schools for young learners, new branches of English schools, and the introduction of English classes in nursery schools.

English is a common foreign language in Taiwan as well. According to interview data from Nunan's research (2003), this country was influenced heavily by the status of English as an international language because of its aspiration to become one of the important economic players around the globe. One of the key initiatives taken by the Taiwanese Ministry of Education was the recruitment of qualified native English-speaking teachers to teach English in primary schools in the third grade, with the objectives of filling relevant teaching positions, of improving the learners' abilities and skills in EFL (with a special focus on communicative skills), and of enhancing teaching methods and materials (MERCT 2015b).

Besides this, in 2006 the Ministry established the Overseas Chinese English Teaching Volunteer Service Program in collaboration with the Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission. Its objective was to advance English education, to decrease the urban–rural disproportion in English learning, and to help improve learners' proficiency in the language in line with international standards. Under this program, in 2009, 300 young overseas Taiwanese with exceptional accomplishments were employed, trained, and appointed to 45 schools in 17 counties to teach 2250 students during a summer English camp (MERCT 2015a). Additionally, the Ministry implemented the integration of Chinese, English, information technology, and social studies in primary and junior high school curricula within the framework of the “Nine Year Program” and lowered the school age for compulsory EFL learning from Grade 5 to Grade 1 (Nunan 2003).

Despite being a country with limited finances, Vietnam also has promoted proficiency in English as a requirement for succeeding in studying and in employment (Nunan 2003). The language is compulsory at primary and junior high schools and at the universities. It is first introduced at primary Grade 6 (ages 11–12); the Ministry has been thinking about lowering this age because some private schools introduce it as early as age five or six. There are also a large number of English language schools offering private tuition.

As one travels on westwards in the South Asia-Pacific territory, one reaches Thailand, where the most popular foreign language is again English because it is recognized as a tool for information, news, knowledge, and communication and is believed to be seminal for the

increase of the country's competency. So, in preparation for the year 2015 when Southeast Asia was to become one economic zone with one global language for its business and communication, the Thai government launched the voluntary 2012 English Speaking Year project, part of which was the program to help Thai learners from pre-primary to university age across the country to improve their speaking skills in English through educational tools such as TV, radio, and the Internet (Hodal 2012).

Within the framework of the reforming policies of the Thai Minister of Education in the sector of the teaching and learning of the English language at a basic educational level, the Ministry also focused on the ability to use the language for communication and education (MET 2014b). As a result, the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC) undertook the role of supervising language institutes to ensure quality teaching and learning. Also, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) presented strategies for teaching and learning English from 2013 to 2018 through teacher training, curriculum development, management development, development of media and innovation, organization of various learning activities, achievement evaluation, and research (MET 2013). The Ministry also decided to give Super Premium Scholarships to graduates of a Bachelor of Science program to support their studies for a master's degree. These scholarships, however, were to be provided to upper secondary students of schools where English was a medium of instruction (MET 2011).

The Ministry launched various useful educational cooperative projects with the United Kingdom (UK) too. An example of these is the Thailand English Teaching Program, which helped students learn from native English speakers (MET 2015). As a result, student participants from the UK arrived in Thailand as teacher assistants at educational institutes despite an insufficiency in the required teaching skills. A second example is the Thailand-British Council project on the development of English language skills for teachers and students in vocational education, and on the training of vocational teachers to teach English courses (MET 2014a).

In the private sector, the speaking competency of Thai EFL learners is developed through courses offered by private institutes (e.g., the British Council) (British Council 2010) and by volunteer organizations such

as the “Friends for Asia” (2015). The British Council claims to employ a variety of child-friendly, engaging, fun activities to teach children the language and to help them develop confidence while practicing English and cooperating with their classmates in a safe, supportive environment. The Friends for Asia’s aim is to connect volunteer EFL teachers with Thai learners who otherwise would not have the opportunity to practice speaking English. Instruction may take place at regular schools, children’s homes, orphanages, and Buddhist temples.

In the former Asian Soviet Republics, such as Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, English has replaced Russian as the FL of choice, as a status symbol and as a communication means in the business and commerce sectors. In the diverse multilingual nation of Tajikistan, English language learning was started and promoted so quickly that there is a great demand for native English-speaking teachers. One can comprehend the power of EFL learning in this territory for sustainable economic growth by taking into consideration two factors. On the one hand, there is the upgraded, prestigious ranking and promotion of the English language. On the other hand, there is the claim of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation that their goals conform to the recognized need of the Russian people for a high-quality education, and the need of the economy for a first-rate workforce, for blended educational and scientific/technical studies, useful attainments, scientific improvements, and ingenious activities (MESRF 2015).

A key endeavor that resulted from the preceding perceptions was the so-called “Textbook Project” made possible through a collaboration between the Russian Ministry of Education and the local British Council (British Council 2015). Following an analysis of local EFL teaching and learning needs, the project concentrated on the compilation of contemporary EFL materials, tailor-made to the Russian context, by Russian school teachers trained in text writing within the project framework. The textbooks were focused on Grades 2 to 11, and claimed to foster communicative competence and to be issue- and task-based, effective, and motivating. This project is believed to have influenced EFL teaching and learning across Russia too; an example of this being the original project in the North Caucasus on the theme of tolerance through languages.

Concerning western and southeastern Asia, attention is drawn to the Arab countries. The literature about language learning there reported a reality that can be perceived as controversial. More specifically, in these countries it was decided that Arabic would be used as an official language (Dahbi 2004)—for example, in Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Saudi-Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain (Wikipedia 2015c). This is largely, according to Dahbi, because of its association with Islam (i.e., it is the language of the holy book of the *Qur'an* and the language of praying) and the compelling cultural motivation of individuals to become informed about Arabs and Muslims. Despite this reality, and despite the fact that Arabic is claimed by Dahbi to be learned by an increasing number of children, he gives prominence to English characteristically as “the language of globalization” (p. 628). Especially since the terroristic events of September 2001 in the USA, Dahbi claimed its power appears to be more noticeable through, for instance, the public declarations of American officials against terrorism and the detailed reports in English on TV about the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine.

Consequently, there has been an intense interest in English language learning. Kachru's (1992, p. 355) work helps one understand the controversial reality experienced in the most fundamentalist, anti-Western governments and/or anti-English movements (e.g., Libya, but also Iran and some Asian and African countries). On the one hand, there is an intense dislike for the West and/or the English language, while on the other governments consider it beneficial to use English for presenting views at an international level; even anti-English parents ensure that their children become proficient users of it so that they are armed with this dynamic qualification.

Indicatively, Lebanon, a historically multilingual society because of European colonization and the actions of missionaries (Nabhani et al. 2011), is an example of a Middle East country that favors FL learning as a competency that can increase access to jobs locally and internationally (Bahous et al. 2011). As a result of the country's independence in 1943 and of the influence of globalization on it, the use of English was introduced in the social, economic, and educational sectors (e.g., see Kobeissy 1999). The 1994 National Curriculum made it imperative that, besides French, English be adopted by schools as a first FL and medium of instruction or as a second FL (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999).