World Englishes in the EFL Teaching in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract
Teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) in the universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is limited within the traditional boundary of Standard American or British English. Since EFL curriculum in higher education is strictly rule-governed the scope for other varieties of English is neither recognized nor encouraged. This does not mean that there is no scope for including World Englishes into EFL teaching. The experiences in the EFL teaching show that non-native speaker (NNS) populations of KSA need efficiency in English language for either job purposes or for communicating with other NNS populations, or pursuing higher studies. The young Saudi learners, who use English as means of communications for teaching, trade, tourism, politics, and media, exhibit keen interest in learning Englishes other than the standard format. This paper takes an overview of the English language learning in KSA. It investigates the status of World Englishes and how it will contribute to enhance students' awareness if the EFL teaching takes into consideration other forms. It discusses the need for World Englishes in learning and teaching EFL at the university level for making a case for understanding other varieties of English. The paper shows the possible drawbacks in incorporating World Englishes into the classroom EFL teaching. It also shows how the World Englishes can be infused into the teacher's training and EFL teaching programs. Finally, the paper, after examining the healthy trends in other countries, recommends for including the World Englishes into EFL curriculum in order to motivate Saudi learners to explore the possibility of going beyond 'only American or British variety'.
KeyWords: World Englishes, EFL, curriculum, KSA American English, British English, NNS Population, Varities of English

Introduction

English has emerged as the major foreign language to be taught in schools, colleges and universities in the Middle Eastern region, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) (Liton, 2012). In recent decades, KSA has experienced unprecedented social, economic and political development. In order to meet the developmental needs, the Ministry of Education introduced English as a foreign language (EFL) in school curriculum in 1925 (Al-Ahaydib, 1986). The development of EFL teaching in KSA is based on two policy documents that were envisioned to clearly define the aims and objectives for EFL. The documents show the objectives thus: "to equip the students with at least one of the living languages, in addition to their native language; to help them acquire knowledge of arts and sciences from other communities; and to help them take part in the service of Islam and humanity" (Al- Hajailan, 2003).
This paper takes an overview World Englishes in EFL teaching in KSA. It explores the possibility of including World Englishes in the EFL curriculum. The paper also assesses the benefits and significance of bridging the gap between English that Saudi students learn and the World Englishes that is exploited around the world.

English in Saudi Arabia

As against the second language varieties that are institutionalized in India and Nigeria, the English varieties in KSA and Japan are primarily performance based (Alshumaimeri, 1999). This is significant because the role and functions of English in the educational, administrative, and socio-cultural context of KSA where it is used as a NNS variety, is quite different. In practice, there is a big difference between performance varieties of English and that of institutionalized varieties (Kachru, 1992).

The fundamental features of the performance based English varieties contains: (a) a nativization process of the registers and styles has been put in place; (b) in the socio-linguistic context of a country, varieties have a wide range of uses; (c) they should possess a range of register and style; and (d) they should have a body of nativized version of English that has developed as localized variety containing formal and contextual characteristics (Kachru, 1992). Because of their distinctive features of these fundamental features, Indian English, Ghanaian English and Nigerian English are the varieties known all over the world.

In KSA, English has a sound and a perceptible presence in the Saudi educational system because of some distinct features: English is taught and learnt as EFL, and as discussed before, English is essentially a performance based variety. Given the urgent need for it, EFL, in the first place, is used as a means for communication, diplomatic exchanges, bilateral trade, and tourism. Above all, English is a medium of instructions in educational institutions and universities in KSA. Second, KSA is a leading country in the Middle East in employing a large number of foreigner teachers, doctors and other professionals who stay here for a long time. In educational institutions, hospitals and business establishments, Saudi people need to communicate with the NNS of English from countries, for example, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippine, and Sri Lanka (Alshumaimeri, 1999). Above all, English language is a medium of instruction for various courses in the BA program, for example, medical science, other science subjects, engineering, business administration, information science, and diploma courses of intensive English. At present, English language proficiency is one of the eligibility criteria for admission in programs like medicine and dentistry, and in higher degree, the need for English language is prerequisite. However, Saudi students as well as a great majority of foreign teachers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sudan are unaware of World Englishes, and hence, seek to imitate native accent like those of Americans and British, which they consider as Standard English.

Saudi students, on the other hand, believe that gaining proficiency in Standard English is the ultimate goal and these foreign teachers are well short of a native speaker's efficiency, hence they lack confidence.

Teaching EFL at the university level in Saudi Arabian is limited within the traditional boundary of Standard American or British English (Alshumaimeri, 1999). Since EFL curriculum at school level and in universities is strictly rule-governed, the scope for other varieties is yet to be recognized. The EFL teachers are asked to follow the prescribed curriculum while designing teaching strategies both for classroom instructions and evaluation. Scholars and students who have gone to the US and other western countries under the King Abdullah Scholarship Program have helped in shaping this mindset among Saudi students and academics. The academic environment of KSA, therefore, is totally unaware of varieties of English such as Malaysian English, Philippine English, Indian English, and Singaporean English. In such a situation, enabling the students to learn the desired levels of proficiency in English language is not only an unrealistic goal but is also a contributing factor in the stigmatizing the patterns of local users (e.g. teachers and students), which may lead to a "culture of complaint" rather than "a culture of confidence" (Bolton, 2012).

Status of World Englishes in Saudi Arabia

Kachru (in Quirk and Widdowson, 1985) has done the characterization of English, on the basis of how it is communicated all over the world, into three coordinated circles: the Inner circle, the Outer circle, and the Expanding circle (see Figure-1). Under the Inner circle come the countries, for example, Britain, USA, Canada, and Australia, which are treated as native speakers. Those who represent the Outer circle use English as a second language, and where it is given official recognition. For example, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Nigeria, Philippines and Singapore come under the Outer Circle. Brazil, Egypt, France, North and South Korea, Indonesia, Japan and Saudi Arabia come under the Expanding circle. In these countries English is uses as a foreign language.

Figure1 Braj Kachru's Three Concentric Circles
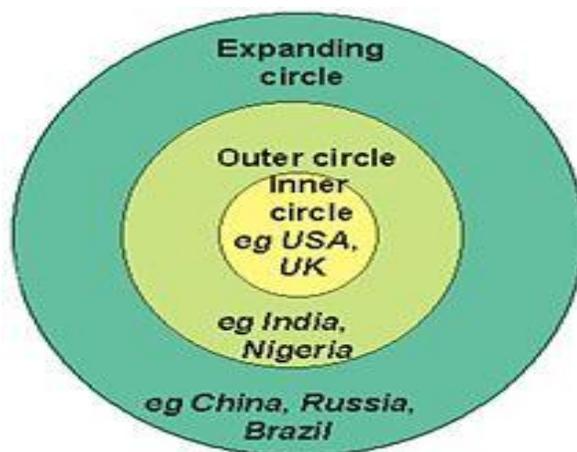
KSA comes under the Expanding Circle where English is taught as foreign language (Kachru in Quirk and Widdowson, 1985). In KSA, English language varieties can basically be categorized as performance varieties (Kachru, 1992). Saudi EFL teachers are mostly trained in native speaking (NS) environment that affects English language teaching in their home countries. The NNS Saudi teachers inculcate American or British or Australian English in classroom teaching.

This does not mean that there is no scope for including World Englishes into EFL teaching. It is has been observed that the focus of EFL teaching of NNS communities is to prepare them for using English for academic and job purposes or for communicating with other NNS communities in the absence of NS communities. For instance, the Saudi learners use English as means of communications for trade, tourism, politics, and media (Alshumaimeri, 1999). Young Saudi learners show keen interest in going beyond the standard format. Broadening the classroom EFL teaching, therefore, will contribute to enhance students' awareness of other forms of English. Learning and teaching EFL at university level in Saudi Arabia has reached a point where there is a need for subtle change from the traditional EFL teaching policy towards World Englishes, and should look beyond 'only American or British variety'. In principle, NSS varieties of English differ from NS varieties, which pose a challenge in the teaching of English language.

Since EFL curriculum in higher education is strictly rule-governed the scope for other varieties of English is not recognized. In the English curriculum of KSA, a single set of grammatical patterns and basic vocabulary forms are prescribed (Strevens, 1992). McArthur (2003) observes that Standard English is generally considered "the variety most widely accepted, understood, and perhaps valued within an English speaking country." Today, along with China, Greece, and Brazil, KSA is credited to have the continuously expanding numbers of English learners in the world (Crystal, 2003). English curriculum in Saudi universities is heavily loaded with linguistics and translation as the core subjects.

The role and functions of English language are believed to be determined by the people's attitude towards it. There is a positive feeling among the people of KSA towards English. A great majority of Saudi population believes that English is very important to the future prosperity of the country, and that this language is required in various domains of development. For example, a number of empirical studies carried out in the last two decades on the Saudi people's attitude toward English language in general and learning it in particular show a high percentage of acceptance to it (Saudi Gazette, December 11, 2012).

Need for World Englishes

The numerous studies on the need for World Englishes focus on the basic features of national or regional Englishes, giving due importance to the linguistic details of self-determining varieties of Englishes (Bolton, 2012). Globalization has changed and continues to change the English language (Sacks, 2002; Steger, 2003; Friedman, 2005) in the spread of English across Arab culture, increasing number of NNS, the emergence of other varieties of English, the communication among NNS, and conditions for admission into medicine and dentistry. Kachru (1985) states that English language encompasses "a unique cultural pluralism and a linguistic heterogeneity and diversity". There is, therefore, a need for English language learners to be ready for communication with the speakers of those varieties of English that are different from their own (Jenkins 2006). Moreover, a contextual change towards assimilating other varieties would

have a positive effect on learners' ability to acquire English because it would enhance their confidence level and encourage them to communicate in the target language (Cook, 1999).

Another positive factor is the rapid growth of the Saudi Arabian economy during the last two decades, which is no longer entirely dependent on oil revenues. In addition, KSA is playing a major role in supporting the world economy by contributing the international organizations. Due to this, the development of the Saudi economy has fetched international recognition and significance, making it a growing market for Asian and European countries. This has given rise to an opportunity for KSA to maintain a sound diplomatic relationship with countries of both NS and NNS. Economic as well as diplomatic relations, therefore, pose an urgent demand for human resources who are well versed in English language.

Without doubt, English is considered as a tool for modernization, advancement, and technological transfer, a viable means of invigorating and developing the economy of a nation. Besides, as a vehicle for global communication, it helps in incorporating advancement in science and technology into the national economy. Hence, keeping the growing significance of globalized nature of economy in mind, the policy-makers and other stakeholders in KSA are well aware of the importance of English, which can play a big role in the development of the country vis-à-vis international relations and scientific-technological advancement (Saudi Gazette, December 11, 2012).

Graddol's (1997) points out three major issues closely related to the idea of "world standard English". First, there is a possibility that English would be broken into many different languages. Second, there is a possibility that the American and British English would be taken as models of standard. Last, there is a high prospect for the emergence of a new world standard English. Graddol, rejecting David Crystal's idea of a Global Standard English, envisions a "polycentric" prospective for English standards. In support, Graddol presents various reasons including the economic and socio-political changes for global spread of English (Bolton, 2012).

Visible Drawbacks

Given the socio-cultural background, it would not be viable for KSA for using the Inner Circle Standard English as the medium of classroom instructions. Widdowson (1994) observes that Inner Circle Standard English "is not only a means of communication but also a symbolic propriety of a community, expressive of its identity, its conventions and values." Another visible drawback is the possible "nativization" of English in KSA, which is often followed by the "Englishization" of homegrown language, and which could further pave the way for complicated forms of linguistics patterns, e.g., lexical alteration, code-switching and code-blending, and discourse and syntactic transformations. It seems likely that academics in KSA have been reluctant to put World Englishes into practice, knowing that though the greater recognition bestowed upon it in Asian and African countries in recent times, myriad obstacles for applied linguistics still exist in areas such as pedagogic principles and practices. The official attitude plays an important role, for example, academics in Hong Kong and the Philippines have begun to admit local varieties of English and reject American or British varieties. In contrast, educationists, students and officials in KSA wholeheartedly follow and welcome the American English as the sole standard. Hence, the official rejection of local English has surely affected the spread of World Englishes in this country.

On the global level, a very subtle problem is the center-periphery supremacy, which is termed as "English language industry" (McArthur, 2001). It affects, like any other commonwealth country, KSA since it relies heavily on textbooks and academic publications from the US and UK, the two countries possessing and controlling academic text publishing industry. Another visible drawback is the sheer neglect of literature and heavy dependence on only-linguistics approach in academic curriculum of universities in KSA, a country that follows the US and UK in teaching applied linguistics in its EFL curriculum, which failed to consider bridging socio-political vacuum through neutral applied linguistics. For example, there is not a single literature course from level one to ten of the BA English Program at the prestigious King Saud University, and hence lack of local literature like that of "Indian Writing in English" shows the outcome of such a one-way approach. EFL teachers both in the Expanding Circle as well as Outer Circle encounter various obstacles in terms of facilities, conditions, and resources for further research in the academic environment in KSA similar to those in the western institutions. Academics of EFL in the Expanding Circle find it difficult to have a say in major publications and journals.

Infusion of World Englishes

If World Englishes is infused in teachers' training programs, it will help change the learners' opinion towards the language and prepare them to realize the distinction between two the languages. Brown (1993) has shown the benefits of infusion of World Englishes into the TESOL programs. Kachru (1988) offers three fundamental components: (a) that there exists a repository of models for English, (b) that putting in place the localized varieties have realistic bases; (c) and that English is the language of all regions and peoples.

The perspective of World Englishes needs to be introduced in teacher training programs since it helps eliminate linguistic bigotry and ethnic jingoism (Skutnabb-K, 1988). There is a need to create a class of English learners, who could pay attention to other varieties e.g., Indian English or Philippine English (Phillipson, 1992). A mutual collaboration and cooperation among English institutions in NNS countries can help share key information related to their localized varieties. The infusion of World Englishes into EFL programs can help local as well as expatriate teachers to be familiar with other varieties that are used all over the world. Also, there is a need for new varieties of teaching models and methodologies to infuse international intelligibility into Saudi learners.

During the last fifteen years, the infusion of World Englishes, alongside national languages and local languages, into the public places of the major cities of the world has received greater attention. Ross (1997) has pointed out the example of a Milanese suburb, where a hairdresser's shop is called *Smart Set*, a pub is named as the *Wonder Bar*, a designer shop has a name *Noblemen*, and a car park reads *Wind Parking Garage*. McArthur (2000) observes that in a survey of street signature in Uppsala city of Sweden and Zurich of Switzerland it was found that about 45% of Uppsala visual graphics and 58% of Zurich visual graphics used some kind of English, which is either bi- or multi-lingual signature. Under the Uppsala visual graphics, the signage varied between English-only or Swedish-only, English and Swedish, English and French, English and Italian, English, French and Swedish, Turkish/Arabic, and Turkish/Arabic and Swedish. Other notable works on the use of English in the signage of Expanding Circle cities include the studies of Schlick (2002) on Udine of Italy, Ljublijana of Slovenia and Klagenfurt of Austria, Dimova (2007) on Macedonia and MacGregor (2003) on Tokyo. In the studies mentioned above, English language signage is used to varyingly describe 'creativity'

(MacArthur, 2000), 'prestige and wealth' (Dimova, 2007), 'prestige, style and modernity' (Ross, 1997), and 'an extension of Japanese' (MacGregor, 2003).

The infusion of World Englishes into TESOL programs can encourage the future teachers of English to learn and evaluate with utmost zeal as to how this language is used in various parts of the world. It can open up a new landscape of learning for them into which they can see that there are other varieties in addition to gaining knowledge about various models and methodologies of teaching (Brown, 1993). Moreover, it will help future teachers of English to broaden the repository of language varieties they have already learnt. Lastly, more research studies should be carried out to support future teachers of English, who can put in place novel approaches and strategies to better the universal distinctness of their varieties of English. Hence, the infusion of World Englishes into TESOL programs in KSA will surely be a significant step (Alshumaimeri, 1999).

There has been an increasing recognition to the World Englishes among academics and linguists of Asian and African countries that are under the Outer Circle. The academics in the US have shown interest to come up with clear acknowledgement to the growing importance of World Englishes. However, the academics in Europe, unlike those in the US, have yet to endorse the World Englishes with a positive feedback.

Recommended Classroom Instruction

In the classroom instructions, there is a need for the English language teachers to meticulously plan their teaching situations (McKay, 2002). First, they should determine the instructional goal, which must be based on that situation and should give due acknowledgement to the learners' current English usage (El-Sayed, 1991). Second, English teachers should expose learners to other varieties of English in order to create future academics, who could be well-versed in World Englishes (Matsuda, 2003). Third, teachers can design instructional tasks that help motivate Saudi learners to learn other Englishes and interact with those who communicate in other varieties of English. Last, they should adopt a balanced approach whereby they must show cultural sensitivity to the situational diversities in which English is learnt and used" (McKay, 2002).

In the Saudi EFL Classrooms, teacher can rise awareness through instructional activities and tasks activities/ tasks by following reflection literacy, which aims at creating an understanding of reading and writing among Saudi learner (Han,2003) The EFL teachers can help the students develop analytical sense to lean other varieties of English spoken around the world . More importantly , teachers can introduce global setting in which English is used for creating a deeper understanding of the English in Saudi class \room context, cultural sensitivity is very important and EEFL teachers are little recusant to plan lessons that are focused on culture. The students are shy or uncomfortable in when they are exposed to culturally and religiously sensitive contents such as dramatic video clips with music and semi-nude women (Mekheimer, M.A.A. & Dosri, H. A., 2011).

In a paper, Kachru and Nelson (1996) have examined the measures and approaches that can be adopted to put in place the World Englishes in the language classroom, advising several visionary techniques, which might be applied in teaching English over different educational environment, which includes teaching of new literature in English, teaching of discourse pragmatics and multicultural education. Brown (2000) has conducted a survey to explore the resources for teaching and research in the field of World Englishes, suggesting various areas of teaching techniques and agenda for applied linguistics research. With reference to applied

linguistics research, he suggested to focus on empirical studies of attitude development and change, textual studies on multicultural communities and longitudinal studies of values and attitudes, and which also includes research on areas of World Englishes that can help in second language acquisition. In addition, similar instructional research, which should focus on the comparative classroom-based studies, and which includes assessment of learning/teaching materials, on the three circles can be taken. Brown (2000) recommends a proactive role for the scholars of World Englishes in exhibiting leadership skills, designing texts and curricula, publishing papers, and organizing conferences and workshops to disseminate information to the English language professionals worldwide (Matsuda, 2002).

In the Saudi classroom instruction, English language teachers need to make it clear before learners that prescribed English variety is just the one variety and motivate them to introduce idioms and phrases of their native language for enriching the conversational dialect of English with colorful and creative elements" (El-Sayed, 1991). Both learners and teachers can have access to the International Corpus of English, which offers learning materials on various regional and national varieties of English. The learners and teachers can also watch TV Channels of NNS countries that telecast news and other programs in English language, for example, NDTV (www.ndtv.com) from India in which the anchors communicates in Indian English. Lastly, English language teachers need to impart instructions by focusing on motivational and intercultural skills which will support learners to be able "to communicate intelligently and learn a wide range of similar expressions from their native language (Jenkins, 2006).

Conclusion

As an Expanding Circle country, Saudi Arabia can adopt their own variety of English (Arabinglish or Saudinglish, for example), not just American English. Like Hinglish as in India or Singlish as in Singapore (Al-Abed et al, 1996). The policy making bodies can adopt a balanced approach to give space to other varieties of English (Alqurashi, 2011). Teachers in KSA, as they come from different cultural backgrounds, can implement World Englishes in EFL classroom instructions (Ibrahim, 2010). Today, the linguistic experiences of young learners in particular are becoming increasingly diverse, and, in this context, their linguistic worlds are not limited to physical space alone, but it roams about electronic space, educational travel and migration, holiday tours, media awareness and involvement, knowledge of popular culture, and the virtual space of the Internet (Bolton, 2012). One of the most exciting range of current research in the field of English language are those that are concerned mainly with the perilous arenas between and within particular linguistic communities, in which the usage of English is placed in proximity with other international, national, regional, and local languages. For a variety of social and historical reasons, the dividing line between Outer Circle and Expanding Circle contexts have become obscured vis-à-vis global contexts.

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