English Language and the Changing Linguistic Landscape: New Trends in ELT Classrooms

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Abstract
The history of English Language Teaching (ELT) has shown that this fast growing field is facing unprecedented challenges posed by the recent developments in the status of the English language as a world's leading language and the eventual change in the linguistic landscape. This paper provides an opportunity to examine the impact of the phenomenal spread of English in recent years and its eventual dominance in the international arena as seen in the practice of English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. The paper reports the implications of the recent growth of English for crucial ELT practices and areas such as learner identity, code selection in classroom, teaching methods, syllabus design and material development. It draws on issues pertaining to English as a lingua franca theory in an attempt to address this debatable topic and consider the necessity of taking into consideration the emerging trends in ELT classrooms globally.

Keywords: global English, Englishes, English as a lingua franca, English language teaching, learner identity.

1. Introduction

This paper draws on the implications of the rapid growth of English and its rise at the international arena from an ELT perspective. It attempts to examine the crucial changes brought by the phenomenal spread of English to the practice of teaching English all over the world, particularly in the ESL/EFL settings. It is understood that the rapid proliferation of English in the world in recent years has been accelerated by various factors, including the use of English in education and the eventual speedy growth of internationalization of English and education. Thus, it is imperative to examine the impact of the growth of English on its teaching and learning, and the necessity of revisiting some fundamental concepts, beliefs and practices in the ELT field. With the increasing demand for English by speakers of other languages, together with the strong connection between English and the Internet and its applications, there have emerged new realities that challenge the traditional teaching practices. For instance, learners of English today have become more innovative with diverse learning strategies, opportunities, resources, and objectives (Cook, 2003). Moreover, the proliferation of the accessible new media, including social media, has created better learning and language practice opportunities for individuals who use it in learning language activities, and engage in active communication nationally and internationally, and interact in English with speakers of diverse linguistic backgrounds and experiences around the world (Crystal, 2002). In addition, the situation has further been more complex with the emergence of the phenomenon of varieties of Englishes. Practically speaking, with the pressing issues pertaining to the dominance of English and the world's changing linguistic landscape and the limitations of the traditional definition of 'native speaker' to appeal to the current situation, it is difficult to hold the same traditional language teaching perceptions and practices. This requires reconsidering the views and practices held about ELT, especially what concerns the language learners and the type of language taught to them. Furthermore, another indication of the changing scene relates to the fact that when English is spoken almost everywhere in the world, there is an urgent need for revising our approach to the materials we use in our classes and the way we assess our students as well. Moreover, the English language learners' actual needs must be addressed and taken into consideration when it comes to what variety of English should our students learn today. Because developing an understanding about their actual needs and views about what kind of English they would want to learn will keep teachers more focused and to the point (Gross, 2016; Jenkins, 2014).

2. The Story of English: An Overview

The growth of English, and its spread all over the world in recent years has created interest in the language and sparked research among scholars, linguists, researchers and practitioners alike making it a multidimensional intellectual subject matter. Traditionally, historians of language have divided the history of English into three major periods namely, Old English (450-1106), Middle English (1106-1500), and Modern English (1500-). In this regard, Winkler (2007) remarks that "the periods of Old, Middle and Modern English are arbitrary divisions bounded by important political or cultural events" (p.174). In the same vein, Baugh and Cable (2002) suggest that "like all divisions in history, the periods of the English language are matters of convenience and the dividing lines between them purely arbitrary" (p. 50).

While Old English is marked as a period of high inflections, Middle English is described as a period of remarkable changes and instability, and the Modern English as a period of continuous change and variation, dominance and expansion. It is noteworthy that the peculiarities of each period in the history of English language are of significance in understanding the changes

witnessed by the language, and in recent years the debate among scholars has focused on this issue. In this context, Gross (2016) comments that "any generalisations about the English language need to acknowledge the diversity hidden by those two words and also the debates about changing perceptions of how the status of English should be described" (p.2). On the other hand, Crystal (2002) argues that historical approaches to English alone are not sufficient to explain the story of English around the world in the modern time and as such a broader perspective is deemed necessary. In the same vein, Winkler (2007) calls for a broader perspective by taking into consideration the importance of examining the historical factors of linguistic implications on English language system within the context of language use and the way people experience it. Suggesting an additional outlook to the research paradigm in studying the history of English language, Winkler argues that "a better way to look at the shifting varieties of English is to think of a continuum of overlapping varieties all of which have been changing but to different degrees" (p.147).

It can be argued that viewing the different stages of the growth of English as changing varieties provides a new and wider outlook to the history of English that enables the examination of events that have linguistic consequences on the language, especially when examining the development of English in the modern period. In other words, adding the perspectives of variation and change to the study of the historical developments of English provides social dimensions for interpreting any modifications to the linguistic system of the language. This is imperative because the circumstances that accelerated the growth of English language at the present time have implications on the lives and experiences of millions of individuals around the world.

3. Observations and arguments

The eventful history of English has revealed the language's ability to change, grow, deal with different circumstances and influence the world's linguistic landscape as well. Throughout its history, English has shown a remarkable ability to grow and change, and this tendency for growth and change is one of the secrets behind its survival and expansion. Culpeper (2005) observes that "English is constantly changing, and all parts of the language have been affected. These changes have occurred for a variety of reasons" (p.19). Thus, it can be argued that the ability to grow, change and deal with various circumstances and conditions over time gives English an additional advantage of becoming the most influential world's major language. This pertinent fact is acknowledged by Cook (2003) who reports that "whereas, in the past, English was but one international language among others, it is now increasingly in a category of its own" (p.25). The current international status enjoyed by English is an unprecedented notion that did not happen over a night. In fact, the period of the seventeenth century was a decisive point in introducing English as an international language with Britain venturing into colonization. Millward and Hayes (2012) suggest that until 1558 English was limited to its homeland, however, "within the next hundred years, the English were to acquire such far-flung colonies as Bermuda, Jamaica, the Bahamas, British Honduras, the Leeward Islands, Barbados, the Mosquito Coast, Canada, the American colonies, India, St. Helena, Gambia, and the Gold Coast" (p.222). Therefore, there are a number of terms now in use in the literature to refer to English as a global language such as "English as international language (EIL)" (e.g., Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002), "English as a world language" (e.g., Mair, 2003), "English as a medium of intercultural communication" (e.g., Meierkord,1996), "English as a lingua franca" (ELF) (e.g., Seidlhofer, 2004) and "English as a global language" (e.g., Crystal, 1997).

Furthermore, Crystal (2002) states "in due course, there developed other standard varieties of English as a mother tongue, each with its own complex social history" (pp.233-34). As a remarkable development, the aftermath of colonization and internationalization of English is not realized in the only two national varieties of English: the British English and later the American English, but as 'Englishes'. Englishes is defined as "national varieties of English with their own rules and norms, e.g. Australian English, Indian English, Singaporean English, American English (Cook, 2003, p. 127). Furthermore, Cook states that this distribution of English is described by the Indian scholar Braj Kachru's model as one in which English exists in three concentric circles: the inner circle where English is the native language of the majority – the language enjoys dominance (as in USA, UK, Australia, and Canada). In the outer circle, which refers to the ex-British colonies, English is either official or having wide use coverage (in countries like India, Singapore). Finally, the expanding circle where English functions as a second language covering a wide range of use such as education, technology, science etc... (This includes countries like Korea, China, and Japan). Figure 1 describes the global status and distribution of English as suggested by Braj Kachru.
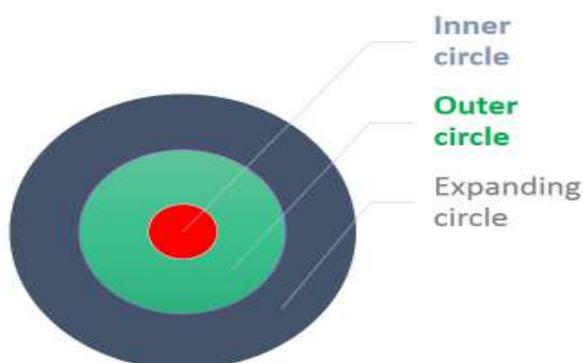

Figure1. **Braj Kachru's** *representation of distribution of varieties of English: Englishes*

The emergence of Englishes has earned English further expansion in land and speakers, broadening its scope of use and applications and making it a global language with discrete varieties. Describing an aspect of the global status of English, McCrum (2010) argues that there is a form of English spoken somewhere in the world which not necessarily a typical form of Standard English, but rather a universally recognized variety of English- it is 'Globish'. The notion of World English depicts national varieties of English where its non-native English speakers (NNESs) use it nationally and internationally for varieties of communicational purposes. The development and emergence of globally used English is another indication of the changing nature of English. According to Brutt-Griffler (2002), "the history of World English has been one of language change", and as a result, "distinct varieties arose not accidentally or occasionally but systematically" (p.14).

This rapid growth of English in the international arena in recent years is also supported by many social, political, cultural and technological factors as suggested by researchers. Cook (2003) reports that:

> The rise of international corporations, linked to expanding US power and influence, ensures an ever-increasing use of English in business. Films, songs, television programmes, and advertisements in English are heard and seen in many countries where it is not the first nor even a second language, both feeding and reflecting this growth (pp. 25-26).

Furthermore, "the spread of the world's English in sport, advertising, films, tourism and international finance continues to enjoy a supranational momentum" (p.250). Thus, the current status of English reveals its fast proliferation and dominance in functions and use at the global level. With over 400 million as first-language speakers, and more than billion as second/foreign language or additional language users at the present time, English has contributed to the world's changing linguistic landscape and the way people perceive and experience language. It is anticipated that by 2050 approximately half of the world will be proficient in the English language and that more varieties will emerge (Ates et al., 2015). This means the number of people who speak English in the outer and expanding circles will witness significant increase. This is substantiated by this quote:

> The members of the expanding circle who do use English are an increasingly significant group who operate in an increasingly global economy which has an impact on the economy in all countries… [and] the Internet, mobile phones and other technology increasingly establish the potential for use of English which is quite independent of the controls offered by traditional educational systems, publishing outlets and radio/television (Brumfit, 2002, p. 5).

Concerning the question 'who speaks English today?' Jenkins (2015) notes that speakers of English language were traditionally categorised under the norms of native English speakers (NESs), second language speakers (ESL), and foreign language speakers (EFL). The current status of English suggests that this tripartite classification of speakers is limited and does not reflect the actual situation, especially "when we come to look more closely at the traditional three-way categorization and, especially when we consider the most influential models and descriptions of English use, we will find that the categories have become fuzzy at the edges and that it is increasingly difficult to classify speakers of English as belonging purely to one of the three". Furthermore, "the categorisation also ignores a fourth group of users, namely those who speak English as a lingua franca-ELF" (Jenkins, p.10).

The notion of ELF and its impact on the diverse language learning context across the globe is another emerging trend in the ELT practice that awaits researchers' extensive attention. Generally, a lingua franca is a language used for communication by native speakers of different languages. Galloway and Rose (2015) refer to lingua franca as "a language used for communication between speakers of two mutually unintelligible languages" (p. 255). A lingua franca then is a language that offers communication opportunity between native speakers of

different languages. Explaining the condition for being a lingua franca, Crystal (2003) argues "to achieve such a status, a language has to be taken up by other countries around the world" (p.4). When a language is used as a lingua franca it facilitates communication among speakers who do not share a common code and in fact English language today functions to serve such a goal at the global level as acknowledged by researchers. According to Davies (2005), "one of the reasons why English has become the global language that it is today is that it has in many parts of the world been used as a *lingua franca*" (p. 61). Cook (2003) refers to English as a lingua franca as "a variety, or varieties of English used as a means of communication between non-native speakers" (p. 127). It is a pertinent fact that the perpetual change and growth of English is an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of language. Thus, it is imperative to read and examine the current history of English language (HEL) from a wider perspective that transcends the account of historical events of linguistic implications only. There is an urgent need to approach the current status of English from a wider perspective taking into consideration the impact of the rise of English on its users and learners as well as the implications for language planning and language policy in diverse settings and linguistic realities. In this context, an area that awaits researchers' extensive attention is the implications of the current status of English on the English Language Teaching (ELT) practice worldwide and the new trends that may emerge as a result of such development. Thus, an examination of the consequences of the rapid growth of English in recent years on the language teaching and learning practices and experience is necessary in identifying the possible new trends and learning cultures and opportunities as well as challenges in the ELT classrooms. Moreover, an applied linguistics approach is deemed appropriate in examining the changing scenes and emerging realities in the ELT context today, in the sense that applied linguistics takes language as it is experienced by people in their daily life activities as its prime objective. In other words, the applied linguistics perspective on language attempts to provide practical solutions for issues relating where language is implicated in people's daily life activities rather than establishing abstractions about its representation in the mind away from people's actual experience. Seeking solutions and decisions where language is implicated makes applied linguistics the suitable discipline that can broaden our understanding about the tremendous changes English language has brought to the ELT world.

4. Implications of the current status of English
Research findings suggest that there are no immediate competitors to English as present on the horizon. This indicates that English will continue to dominate international communication and the media in the foreseeable future and become the language of global communication for users to meet their needs (Sasaki et al., 2006; Ates et al., 2015). The future of international English seems to rely on the overwhelming number of non-native speakers using English for international communication and on the development of computerized corpus data for empirical research on this area. An example of such computerized data is Voice Corpus, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English which was jointly developed by Oxford and Vienna Universities (Al Hassan, 2017; Kuo, 2006). Additionally, the current status and dominance of English has impacted EFL/ESL classrooms in a number of ways ranging from pedagogy to classroom research. The following section will look into English language teaching (ELT) and the pedagogical implications of English as a lingua Franca on EFL/ESL classroom.

4.1 *Language pedagogy: ELT*

The ELT practice is one of the areas directly affected with the notion of the global spread of English. The spread of English has drawn considerable insights into the way languages are perceived, approached and learned especially in the case of English itself. The global status of English has sparked debate among researchers due to the wide scope of English use and application. For instance, Brutt-Griffler (2002) remarks that:

> closely identified with the globalization of English Language Teaching (ELT), and arising out of its scholarly tradition, the understanding of World English has pivoted not so much on theoretical linguistic questions but on practical and even ethical issues of English spread (p.5).

The rapid growth of English has made it an international language needed by learners and users of diverse linguistic backgrounds and objectives. In this context, Cook (2003) argues that "changes in the distribution and balance of languages, and in particular the growth of ELF, have both reflected and influenced the populations and purposes of language learners" (p.30). On the other hand, Jenkins (2015) observes that there is recently an increasing volume of research into ELF and that it is useful to treat the subject by establishing and understanding the similarities and differences between it and other notions such as EFL and World Englishes. In this regard, research has attempted to address the implications of ELF for the higher education. In other words, researchers' growing interest in the globalization of English and education motivated them to explore the role ELF plays in education globally.

The new trends now emerging in response to the rapid growth of English mean it is necessary to reconsider the way English is learned and taught, attitudes towards learners, the materials used, the assessment styles, techniques implemented and above all the teaching philosophies we develop and adopt in our classes in both ESL and EFL settings. Thus, it is within this context that it has become imperative to consider the shifts of fashion in the teaching methodologies of English in the wake of emergence of new learner populations and learning objectives. A pressing issue, for instance, is pertaining to whether Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLTM) still holds as the most dominant and suitable teaching approach. One may ask questions such as: what is the most effective pedagogical approach to teaching Englishes today? And is it necessary to consider new teaching approaches and practices that appeal to the new classroom realities? Moreover, is there any necessity for considering the emerging varieties of English into the syllabus and materials currently used?

The growing demand for English by its diverse learners in the context of the global spread of the language is unprecedented and will have implications for the whole learning and teaching process. Such a development in an area like ELT and learning in which English is so much active makes it necessary to examine the existing testing and evaluation practices and see if that is reflective of the objectives of learning the language. In other words, the assessment outcomes should reflect the actual reality of the learning and teaching practices. With learners being exposed to varieties of English and the growing necessity for addressing the role of ELF in higher education (Jenkins 2014; Smit 2010), it is imperative to design tests that appeal to the new situation which reflects a learning situation that goes beyond the traditional learning settings. As far as current

testing English practice is concerned, the existing trend does not resonate with the current status of English and the changing learning contexts as Jenkins (2015) observes

> No matter how much effort is put into making English language teaching more appropriate to the context of teaching, if the examination boards continue to measure students' success in English against native speaker norms, then little is likely to change. This is because of the well-known fact that tests have a **washback** effect on classroom teaching: that is, the language and skills that are tested in examinations are the ones that teachers choose to teach and learners desire to learn, otherwise they have nothing to show for the efforts they have made. (p.125)

Another implication of the current status of English is the hot debate concerning who teaches English best? This divisive issue has at its heart the two opposing views regarding whether native speakers know English and can teach it better than non-native English teachers or the latter is better suited and placed to do the job (Galloway & Rose 2015).

Another new trend that is gaining momentum in the applied linguistics intellectual discourse is the very concept of 'native speaker' of English, or who is a native speaker of English today? It has been observed that the rapid growth of English and its transformation into a dominant international language spoken by almost a quarter of the world's population is an unprecedented phenomenon. Referring to English diaspora and its consequences, Crystal (2002) reports that "no other language has ever been spoken by so many people in so many places. And when a language, like a nation, exercises a new-found influence in world affairs, several things happen" (p.10).

People take a look back at the traditional definition of native speaker and see if it fits in with the current status of English. Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.351) note that traditionally, the definition of native speaker included three conditions. Thus, native speaker is (a) a person who "learns a language as a child and continues to use it fluently as a dominant language, (b) can "use language grammatically, fluently and appropriately", and is able "to identify with a community where it is spoken". The traditional definition of native speaker, however, is limited to the conditions of an individual's personal history in acquiring a language, knowledge of grammar and the ability to signal cultural association with the speech community.

Cook (2003) believes that the three conditions which used to define a native speaker do not reflect the current status of English due to many factors and reasons. With the wide distribution of English, many of its users are expert bilinguals having the same linguistic abilities as the traditionally defined native speakers. In addition, the traditional definition of native speaker overlooks the issue of proficiency, the difficulty in measuring native speaker's 'implicit' knowledge of language, as well as the size of vocabulary a native speaker may have. In many instances, non-native speakers' proficiency is found to outperform the traditionally-defined native speakers'.

It is worth mentioning that the active use of English by the expert non-native speakers in both outer circle and expanding circle does not necessarily involve native speakers. In fact, the urgency for revisiting the concept of native speaker is a call for more new trends in the ELT context especially with the growing diverse populations of learners. This is imperative because, "the new situation means that, for a large proportion of the world's population, the learning and use of

English as an additional language is both a major language need-often upon which their livelihood depends-and also one of the salient language experiences of their lives" (Cook, 2003, p. 26). Moreover, a significant development that motivates emerging new ELT trends is the fact that learners of English attitudes towards the language are changing due to which learners construct new identity. An understanding of such a development is needed in taking the ELT practice in the right direction.

4.2 Relationships with other languages: language death

Another emerging trend in relation to the global spread of English is pertaining to the changing relationships and boundaries drawn between languages in the world. With English turning to a powerful world's major language in a category of its own, there is a great concern about the destiny of many minority languages. In addition, the spread of English has brought considerable insights into the issue of language planning, language and education, and language education. The importance of serious documentation of the linguistic realities in light of the spread of English needs to take into consideration the right of other languages and culture to exist, sustain and flourish. As in certain contexts English language is viewed and treated as a 'killer' language due to its threats and negative impacts on indigenous and local languages. It could endanger the some of these languages as the vast majority of population will automatically codes witch to English for utilitarian and pragmatic purposes.

5.   Concluding remarks and personal reflections

English has an intriguing history, high susceptibility for change and growth as it has always shown tremendous flexibility for co-existence and mutual influence with other languages. The current status of English as a world's leading language in many vital areas such as the Internet, international education, business and communication has created tremendous insights into language teaching and learning practices. The 21st century is marked by new trends in learning and teaching the language which creates the urgency for paving the way for these trends to run and nourish. The emerging trends in the ELT context is a wide stream of a new generation of learners learning and using growing varieties of English in new learning contexts and circumstances where the traditional views toward English and its learners have become old fashioned. This idea was supported by Galloway and Rose (2014) who offered a strong academic rationale for introducing varieties to leaners and stressed the value of the exposure to a diversity of accents in ELT. If teachers are able to expose learners to multiple accents of English, which would enable them to ameliorate the opposite effects and promote their critical faculties (Sung, 2015). However, this idea is contested by scholars as they believed that the call for teaching the growing varieties is rather theoretical than empirical because learners and teachers' views as stakeholders on these varieties seemed were not taken on board. They described this call as "intellectual debate" (Al Hassan, 2017). Nevertheless, teachers and practitioner should raise learners' awareness of the existence and realities of international and global Englishes which are realistically spoken in both the outer and expanding circles (Al Hassan, 2017). Leaners' perspectives on these varieties could be useful and offer insights into teaching and learning (Sung, 2015). But there is a problem in establishing the legitimacy of such local varieties, and institutionalizing their use (Sowden, 2011). Additionally, these varieties do not reflect the reality of the use of English as international language (EIL) or the nature of language change (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011).

To sum up, this paper is considered as an attempt and opportunity to examine the impact of the phenomenal spread of English in recent years and its eventual dominance in the international arena as seen in the practice of English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) / English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. The paper reports the implications of the recent growth of English for crucial ELT practices and areas such as learner identity, code selection in classroom, teaching methods, syllabus design and material development. It draws on issues pertaining to English as a lingua franca in an attempt to address this debatable topic and consider the necessity of taking into consideration the emerging trends in ELT classrooms. Key pedagogical and non-pedagogical implications in relation to the phenomenal spread of English and its potential insights to EFL/ESL classroom in the twenty first century were discussed and debated.

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