

Motivation by Stealth?

Kathleen Guillaume

English & Translation Department
Effat University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Buried beneath the conversation or, if preferred, the simmering debate about *if* and *how* we should be teaching English - in some form, to some end – around the world, is the fact that many of our students are not the least bit interested in what we have to teach them. Should we care? At the heart of the problem, and of this paper, is motivation. Should we not look at our students first, rather than continue to hand down and implement policy from on high, from elsewhere? Should we try to imagine what our students' future professional and personal lives will be like and how one of the current 'World Englishes' might be of use to them, one day? A great motivator is culture, in its broadest sense. This paper nods in passing to the theme of 'interdisciplinarity,' considered vital, as well as to that of 'teaching and learning *in the digital age*,' the latter seen as a boon not a bane. The author, nonetheless, feels piques of conscience about the stealth role of English in what is, gaily and glibly, called 'globalized contexts'. What if our pedagogic success comes back and bites us? What if, when we succeed in motivating our students, we are actually playing a dangerous game of acculturation? Inside the lining of success in English, have we sewn cultural hegemony? This paper suggests possible equipoises and pragmatic safeguards.

Keywords: acculturation, cultural hegemony, globalized English, motivation, World Englishes