

Implications of World Englishes in the Countries of Expending Circle

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Abstract

The ever-increasing popularity of English make it widely be accepted as lingua franca, and inevitably trigger its diverse utilization in different regions and cultural context. According to the degree of English penetration, countries are divided into three groups, and the expending group, which tend to passively be a mere norm-receiver, still believe in Native-speaker ideology, despite the rising recognition of WE around the world. In this essay, the English learning situations as well as the challenges for the promotion of world Englishes in the Expanding Circle will be discussed.

Keywords

World Englishes; Expending Circle; Native-speaker Ideology.

1. Introduction

Over the last several decades, world Englishes (WE) has been set as a fixed term in the explanation of the localization of English appears around the world. Before the 1980s, research related to English under the global context adopted a particular normative lexicon to distinguish “native speakers” from “non-native speakers”. Consequently, a series of entries for the description of English have been created, including English as a Native Language(ENL), English as a Second Language(ESL) as well as English as a Foreign Language (EFL), to divide English into different categories (Bolton, 2018). Nevertheless, in the recent three decades, world Englishes has been increasingly recognized with multiple forms and been employed as a default descriptor to the researchers who define English diversity as a linguistic issue.

While the concept of WE have gain popularity, its promotion in countries of expending circle where English is taken as foreign language could be problematic and poses significant challenges to TESOL teachers.

2. The Developing Trend of World Englishes

2.1. Status of English Utilization

By the late 18th century, the spread of English has been significantly prompted by the British Empire, on the basis of its colonies and geopolitical dominance. The normalization of English was driven by mixed factors, including economy, science and diplomacy, art and school education in that period. In the continuing colonial progress of British, English, was employed as the first language in countries like North America, India, and Australia as well as some regions in Africa. Still, many political institutions have to adopt English as their official language when they are attempting to develop their own indigenous languages in the post-colonial period, to avoid difficulties (Romaine, 2006). While in the 20th century, the spread of English began to be driven by the united states, as after the Second World War, the U.S. became the country of superpower with economic and cultural dominance around the world. Also, the introduction of broadcasting in English represented by BBC undeniably accelerated the globalization of English (Graddol, 2006). By the 21st century, English became the mostly

employed language in its literacy compared with any other languages around the world have ever been (McCrum, MacNeil & Cran, 2003).

Currently, just as a contemporary report describes, English has already been an indispensable part of life as it appears in “advertising, blockbuster movies, pop music and a vital tool for success.” “Except English, no other languages dominate international business, academia, media, the Internet, and international air/sea traffic.” (Gvelesiani & Tvaltvdze, 2014) With the trend of globalization, economy has always been the main motivation for English-speaking countries, especially America and Britain, to globally prompt their language, out of the consideration that the publicizing of their native language is to some extent equal to stimulating their international businesses. However, they are losing their absolute dominance of English, despite their unwillingness, when it is adopted around the world. By the end of the twentieth century, the number of English users was estimated conservatively from 700 to 800 million and there were about two million people in the world with certain English competence (Braj, 1992). Three linguistic circles can be implemented to the spread of English on the basis of the countries’ history, sociolinguistics and literature. The Inner Circle was defined as countries where people use English as their mother language, such as America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. People there are born in the English-speaking environment and English is their first language. For the countries where residents regard English as their second language, represented by India, Malaysia and Singapore, they are allocated into the Outer Circle. People there are generally learn English as the official language and they need to use English in different occasions of their life, such as at schools, courts, etc. As for the people who use English as their primary foreign language, including Chinese, Japanese and Korean, they are in the Expanding Circle, where the usage of English is unpredictably soaring (Braj, 1992). The residents in this circle could rarely access to the English-speaking environment except for in the classroom. However, the learners there are still enthusiastic for English-learning due to the interest in the target cultures, the job requirements and the ever-increasing markets of international trade. The global English speakers are generally divided into these three groups, and this concept is continually developing by the linguistic researchers .

2.2. Concepts about World Englishes

Although WE have been clearly identified in the academic era can just date back to 1980s, actually, from the mid-1960s, English has already been widely discussed in its varieties of utilization. In the work of Holliday, McIntosh and Stevens (1964), English was defined beyond the private property of British and Americans, but a global language used by escalating number of speakers with different backgrounds, which is an inevitable trend along with the expenditure of English. It is unavoidably localized in various regions and the mass English-learning groups. Then in the next decade, the consideration about adopting English as an international auxiliary language (EIAL) instead of making distinguish between EFL and ESL has gain its popularity, as It could be more compatible with the status of English as a *lingua franca* (Smith, 1976). Gradually, a main shift in the English studies has been conducted, English has been accepted for its plurality in the entries of “varieties of English”, “new Englishes” and “world Englishes”, and the last term has been considered most inclusive and well-established (Bolton, 2018).

The diversities of Englishes are not only restricted to the verbal expressions, but also reflected in new English literatures to define multiple social groups, and this linguistic pluralism can be considered as a result a multiculturalism and societal interaction (Braj, 1992). There are three crucial dimensions in the theoretical World Englishes: “the speech community, the native speaker and the ideal speaker-hearer.” (Kachru, cited in Braj, 1992)

3. The Native Ideology of English in Expanding Circle

3.1. The Notion of Native Speaker

Native speaker is generally defined as a human being who speak a language as his first language, and that language is his native language (Bloomfield, 1933). The emphasis is that the native language should also be one's first language. The notion of native speaker, stated by Ferguson (1982), was initiated in the linguistic field as the native speaker was always entitled with a special place where it was the only "true and reliable source of language data". Actually, it has been argued by linguists including Chomsky (1965) that grammatical competence, rather than linguistic performance, is indeed the linguistic resources of the ideal native speaker. Naturally, the linguistic data from native speakers have been served as standard authentic materials for L2 learners to imitate. Also, the Native-speaker norm has been adopted as the criteria to evaluate the language competence of L2 learners.

At the same time, native speakers are characterized by multiple factors, including knowledge, competence, and instinct. For instance, five features of native speakers are summarized by Stern (1983) as (1) subconscious recognition of regulations, (2) expressions of meaning out of intuition. (3) adjustment of communicative strategies according to the contexts, (4) a variety of language skills, (5) utilization of individualized language.

However, in the recent years, the norm of native speakers has been challenged. Since native speaks should be the group of people who acquire the target language as their first language, a L2 learners, or a bilingual speaker can never be a native speaker (Cook 1999). Also, non-native speakers, in this norm, would always be deficient learners, due to their differences with native speakers.

3.2. The Reasons to Adopt Native Speaker Model

From worldwide perspectives, although the varieties in English used to be considered as the deficiency in English, they have gain the acceptance in SLA research and L1 elements has been considered as playing positive role in L2 acquisition. However, native speaker ideology is still adopted in expanding circle. It can be seen from the example of South Korea where English plays a large proportion of all levels of examinations, including college entrance exams as well as various school-based exams. As a result, South Korean has invited American and British teachers to interact with its learners via satellite in order to improve their English competence. Also, in some Korean families, the mothers will move to English speaking countries with their school-age children at the expense of financial and emotional sacrifices, only for the development of their children's English in a native way (Mufwene, 2010).

One of the reasons can be the initial purpose for people in expanding circle to learn English. For quite a long time, the motivation for English learners in expanding circle is to communicate with the native speakers and getting native-like competence their major goal in EFL (Jenkins, 2006). Even though English has been normalized in the recent decades and not confined to the purpose of interacting with Inner Circle, but also globally international, even the intranational communication, the Native-speaker paradigm cannot be reversed immediately. Native-speakers, to some extent, are entitled with historical authority. This, plus well-codification feature of English as native language (ENL), give rise to the argument for its inherent superiority over those recently developed localized paradigm (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Also, the commercial promotion of the publishers and international ELT institutions can positively contribute to dominance of native ideology (Kirkpatrick, 2006). English education has already become a mature commercial industry around the world, and people involved in it, for example, the developers of the English textbooks has already work under the native ideology for several years, together with the diversity of other English norms, they could be reluctant to modify their textbooks into different versions according to their nativized Englishes, which may

require great effort. Therefore, they will largely keep promoting native norm for the commercial benefits. In addition, in some aspects, British and American English is still more powerful than other nativized Englishes in the multiple aspects such as media and publishing (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

At the same time, the lack of the cognitions towards WE can also be an important reason. In the investigation of He and Zhang (2010), some students in Expanding Circle do not have strong aspiration to the native model; actually, they just have not assess to the concept about WE. This is compatible with the situation in Rubdy and Saraceni's (2006) statement that some adoption of native model is a consequence of a lack of alternatives rather than a conscious decision.

3.3. The Implications of Native Speaker Ideology in Expanding Circle

The employment of native speaker model in the Expanding Circle can be beneficial in some aspects. For learners who learn English in order to communicate with native speakers, learning about the culture of America or Britain, or just out of the interest of the movies or books from that two countries, following the Native-speakers norm can be an efficient learning path (He & Zhang, 2010). However, this kind of learners are just the minority of the great number of English learners in the Expanding Circle. Under the context where English is normalized around the world, up to 80% of the English conversation is conducted between non-native speakers (Prodromou, 1997). Therefore, it is unnecessary to strictly follow the developmental path towards native speakers. In addition, for most L2 learners, the native speaker model is unattainable. Being native-like necessitates immense language environment, such as living in these countries for a period of time or are taught completely by native speakers. For most L2 learners, it is difficult to achieve such optimal learning conditions. At the same time, for learners who set being native-like as their target, they are more likely to lose their confidence and be reluctant to use that language, as their language could be much more "deficient" than native speakers, even though their goal could be "an impossible target" (Cook, 2002). Also, the adoption of norm undervalues the local teachers, as they cannot teacher following a model which they themselves cannot represent (Kirkpatrick, 2007a). They are struggling to make them more and more native-like, which could be a strong burden in their career. This, by contrast, will severely impair their self-esteem (Medgyes, 1994). The authority of local teachers struggles in the native-dominated field, even though this scheme overlooks the distinctive characteristic of the successful L2 speakers when electing a nearly unachievable target for L2 learners (Cook, 1999). Also, for some learners in the expending circle, their adoption of native norm is not just out of their personal choice, but also because that their recognition towards WE is limited. He and Zhang (2010) suggested that the English in China should be considered equally compared with the native English, so that students would not overly attach importance to the native norm. The current situation may not be result of clear consideration, but a consequence of the learners' lack of chances to access to the updated information about WE or other newly developed concepts.

According to the argument above, we could draw a conclusion that the reliance on native speakers in EFL can be problematic and even be a hindrance to L2 learners non-native teachers (Graddol, 2006). In the countries in the Expanding Circle, most of them take English as their L2, and their teachers are L2 learners as well. Therefore, insisting on the native speaker model will pose negative effect on the EFL learning in the Expanding Circle.

4. The Implications of WE in Expending Circle

4.1. The Difficulties of the Promotion of WE

Even though theoretically, taking the Native-speaker norm can pose negative impacts on EFL education in the Expanding Circle, still, it could be difficult to promote WE paradigm.

First, both teachers and learners lack the recognition of WE. In the recent several decades many countries in the Expanding Circle devote themselves into the promotion of English education under the model of native speakers. Therefore, it might be hard for the learners as well as teachers to reverse the traditional concepts. For example, in the study of Kirkpatrick (2006), the nativized and WE models are not acceptable in China, due to their strongly firm belief, especially from the policy-makers of China, in standards and correctness. Although with time passed by, currently, there could be more tolerance towards varieties, the fully promotion of WE ideology still needs a long way to go.

4.2. The Challenges for TESOL Teachers

With WE being increasingly acceptable, diverse English utilizing approaches would emerge as a result of the localization of English according to the different sociocultural background. Then, it can be a challenge to decide which variety could serve as the standard English in that context, a version which is not only supposed to be intelligible, but also compatible with the local culture (China's foreign). As Berns (2005) questions, how are linguists able to handle the realization that the varieties of English are not just confined to the versions in the Inner Circle, but also the regional varieties, including the countries in the Expanding Circle, on the basis of their linguistic performance, which can also serve as a pedagogical model? Although learners in Expanding Circle are generally "norm-dependent" (Kachru, 1992), with the recognition of English varieties, they would not struggle on their accent, making it to be native-like, and accept their own English accent confidently. This can be rewarding, however, from another perspective, different accents may arise in the same region, and it could be a challenge to standardize the accent within the region.

Additionally, the obscure boundary between linguistic errors and innovations can be a problem in the implementation of WE. In this aspect, Kachru (cited in Hamid, Zhu & Baldauf, 2014) identified the new context for the utilization of English as well as systematicity can be two crucial features to distinguish errors from innovations, which are also interpreted as "mistakes" and "deviation". Also, Bambose (cited in Hamid, Zhu & Baldauf, 2014) has further built the rubric for innovation in five dimension: (1) the new form should have a group of users; (2) it should be spread in certain regions (3) it should be adopted in public (4) it should be formulated and (5) it should be acceptable to the local context. Also, the measurement of the usage of the new expressions can also take account the statistics from the Search sites like Google/Yahoo (D. Li, cited in Hamid, Zhu & Baldauf, 2014).

Despite the multiple measures to identify the innovation in the English localization process, TESOL teachers still face significant challenges in their teaching practice. Although it was not until a new expression be widely adopted in the society can it be regarded as "innovation", the emergence of the socially conventionalized forms must be on the basis of the individual linguistic behavior, and the shaping of a new socially adopted linguistic item from an individual expression necessitates a long period of time (Hamid & Baldauf, cited in Hamid, Zhu & Baldauf, 2014). In addition, in the countries of Expanding Circle, the development of the nativized English is just at the initial stage, and there are multiple varieties in English which are ready to be codified. Therefore, for teachers in those places, they would definitely encounter with the challenges in judging if a certain new expression is the localized variety in the initial process, or just a linguistic error.

5. Future Potential Changes

Although currently, the localized of English in Expanding Circle still faces many challenges, both in the concepts and in the practice. However, people's attitudes toward WE are becoming positive. According to the survey of He and Zhang (2010), many students begin to agree that English is just a method to communicate, and it is unnecessary for them to acquire native-like

pronunciation, and they just have to perfectly acquire all the grammatical knowledge from native speakers but just a certain level which can help them avoid misunderstanding and embarrassment in communication. It still requires a long time for the codification of their own English varieties in Expanding Circle, however, with the acceptance of the concepts of WE, different varieties of English may arise in Expanding Circle in the future.

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