Problematizing the Linguistic Goal in English Language Curricula

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Abstract

The linguistic goal in English language curricula has been debated in the last 50 years. In particular, the idea that learning English means approximating the linguistic behavior of the "native speakers" of the language, a central point in mainstream research in second language acquisition, has been repeatedly and forcefully challenged in sociolinguistics. This critique has taken place in three interrelated "waves." First, in the 1980s and the 1990s, the World Englishes paradigm highlighted the importance of local varieties of English as legitimate pedagogic goals. Subsequently, and as a development of the World Englishes school of thought, a number of scholars underlined the significant role that English plays as a lingua franca in international communication among people for whom it is an additional language. More recently, a multilingual "turn" in sociolinguistics has challenged traditional boundaries between languages and has reframed language learning as a process of enriching one's existing linguistic repertoire.

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This chapter provides an overview of these developments, all of which call for a paradigm shift in the teaching of English in the world.

Introduction

The linguistic goal in English language curricula has been one of the most frequently debated issues in the literature in the field of English language teaching. In this regard, a range of questions have been discussed, such as the advantages and disadvantages of explicit grammar instruction, the inclusion of "culture" in the language classroom, the possible benefits of exploiting the learners' mother tongues, and so on. One aspect that has also received much attention, especially since the mid-1980s, concerns the "model" of English that should be adopted for teaching purposes, with particular reference to the forms and functions of English in its global context. In particular, the question is which models of English are most suitable for the classroom, taking into account the worldwide spread of the language, the many national varieties that exist, the role of English as an international lingua franca, and the fact that it is predominantly used by multilingual speakers. In this chapter I review four approaches to this question: (a) English as a native language, (b) world Englishes, (c) English as a lingua franca, and (d) translanguaging.

English as a Native Language

By far the most traditional and common goal in English language curricula around the world is the imitation of what is believed to be English as spoken by its native speakers, particularly British, but sometimes American, too. In fact, this approach is not just common, but it is also the unquestioned default situation in the vast majority of cases. Here, the teaching and learning of English are seen as identical to the teaching and learning of any other foreign languages. The fundamental principle here comes from the field of second-language acquisition (SLA), according to which language learning means "to internalize the linguistic system of another language" (VanPatten and Benati 2010, p. 2), with the ultimate goal of getting as close as possible to being "nativelike."

This rests on the following two assumptions:

Monolingualism is the norm Everyone acquires one language natively – their mother tongue – and this is the language that they are naturally most proficient in.
The native speaker is the ideal speaker Consequently, the ideal speaker of any language is someone who has acquired it natively.

Therefore learning a language other than one's mother tongue is a special cognitive process, whereby one acquires skills that enable them to get progressively closer to, but rarely fully reaching, "nativelike" proficiency in the "target" language. From this point of view, the linguistic goal in English language curricula is entirely obvious: it is the language as spoken by native speakers of English: "Knowing a second language well means knowing information similar to that of a native speaker of a language" (Gass and Behney 2013, p. 11).

The other assumption underpinning this principle concerns who exactly the native speaker is. In SLA, the concept is almost entirely unproblematic, to the point that it is rarely defined (Han 2004). In *The Cambridge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (Herschensohn and Young-Scholten 2013), for example, none of the 31 chapters define "native speaker," nor is the concept included in the glossary, where we however learn that *nativelike* means "conforming to or within the range of the performance or intuitions of native speakers" (p. 722). "Native speaker" is therefore largely taken to refer simply to a "person who has spoken a certain language since early childhood" (McArthur 1992, p. 682) and, correspondingly, somebody's "native language" is "any language acquired since birth" (VanPatten and Benati 2010, p. 112).

While SLA research largely glosses over, or takes for granted, the definition of the term that more than any other defines the very essence of this field of research, it also leaves an important aspect of this concept equally excluded from rigorous scrutiny: the *social context* within which one acquires a certain language since birth. This, of course, involves a complex intersection of variables, all having significant impact not only on the ways in which linguistic resources become available to an individual (i.e., how they acquire a language) but also, and more importantly, on how they actually make use of such resources as part of the social practices with which they engage. The way SLA research deals with social context is by avoiding to deal with it altogether, focusing instead on "more narrow, quantitative studies of the acquisition of selected morphosyntactic features" (Savignon 1991, p. 271). And, even when its importance is timidly admitted, "universal grammar" (whose validity has never been proven) is invoked as a guarantor of a scientific approach, the study of how people acquire languages (see, e.g., VanPatten and Benati 2010, p. 112).

As Davies (2008) has explained very clearly, the one characteristic of "native speakers" that can be said to have factual validity and is not subject to change is their having spoken a language since early childhood. But this is also arguably the least important variable as far as actual use of language as social practice is concerned. Consequently, this rather inconsequential (especially if taken in isolation) single variable is paradoxically invested with the capacity to reliably determine at least some aspects of language ability (such as syntax and morphology) that are considered uniform in all the people for which it applies. Not only that, but this is also the yardstick against which non-native speakers' language use is judged. So, at the intersection of SLA research and language teaching practices, nativeness, so loosely defined, is at the core of what constitutes the linguistic model in the language classroom.

This brief critique of SLA research (see, e.g., Davies 2003; Cook 2016, pp. 175–230, among many others) is, primarily, a comment on how social context is excluded from consideration, and the question of *who* the native speaker is, is largely approached from the perspective of popular understandings of language. These are based on the essentialist assumption that binds *a* language to a particular nation and a particular territory (e.g., Japanese to Japan, German to Germany, and so on). Therefore, as each language is seen as naturally and indissolubly connected to a nation, the logical consequence is that its best and the purest model is taken to be the way in which it is used by the members of the nation it belongs to: its native speakers. Seen through this lens, learning, say, Italian, means acquiring cognitive skills that will enable one to behave linguistically as much as possible like an idealized version of Italian people. Crude as it may sound, this is the guiding principle of much foreign/second language teaching, very much endorsed in SLA research.

When it comes to the teaching and the learning of English, the existence of its many varieties and its role as an international lingua franca may appear to complicate things considerably. One could question, for example, whether the way English is spoken in, say, Sri Lanka might constitute a valid pedagogic model, at least for Sri Lankan learners. Or whether the acquisition of effective meaning negotiation skills might be more important and useful than being able to reproduce the sounds of an accent, received pronunciation, that "tends to be considered remote from the speech of most Britons" (Upton 2008, p. 238). However, another deep-rooted layperson's notion allows this not to be a particular problem. Namely, the idea that every language, even when it has international currency (e.g., English, Arabic, French), has its own place of origin, where the truest and purest version can be found (Watts 2011). Language, that is, is reified and treated almost as if it was a recipe for a famous dish, whereby one must find the original and most authentic version in order to guarantee the best results.

And so the end result of these popular understandings of language is that in the vast majority of cases, British English (occasionally American English, e.g., in South Korea) is considered to be the best model of the language and the goal in the curriculum.

As Kirkpatrick and Sussex (2012b, p. 2) remark in relation to the Asian context, for example, "Asian Englishes are not an accepted part of syllabuses or curricula." Where other varieties are taken into account, this tends to be in terms of acknowledging their existence, and even then, this acknowledgement does not go beyond the boundaries of the "Inner Circle," i.e., countries where the majority of inhabitants are monolingual speakers of English or "native speakers." In curricula based on British English, American English is the obvious "other" variety. Where its use is admitted, this tends to be in the form of recommendations that learners select one of the two major varieties and consistently stick with it, without mixing them. Other varieties (e.g., AusE) are sometimes just mentioned, without specific advice. As Kaplan, Baldauf and Kamwangamalu (2011, p. 114) note, "The English that is taught in schools tends to be exonormative in the sense that users – teachers and policy-makers – look to British or North American models for linguistic norms."

Evidence for the preference of native speaker models (British or American English) in language curricula abounds in the literature. With reference to Botswana, for example, Alimi (2011) observes how "StBrE is the preferred variety stipulated by the official documents for educational purposes" (2011, p. 314), as a consequence of "the attachment to the colonial legacy" (p. 318). The same factor is the reason why British English continues to be held as the ideal target in many other post-colonial educational settings, such as Malaysia, where the guidelines published by the Ministry of Education recommend that "Teachers should use Standard British English as a reference and model for spelling, grammar and pronunciation" (Ministry of Education, Malaysia 2016), or Brunei, where "the English variety that acts as the theoretical model for education is Standard British English (SBE)" (Omarali 2017, p. 162), just to name a few. Even in a context such as the Indian subcontinent, where English has deep roots, important intranational roles and a rich and well-established literature, and where local varieties of English are generally viewed favorably on the social level, British English still continues to be considered the "best" form of English (Bernaisch and Koch 2016). As Parakrama (2012, p. 122) remarks, "[i]t took us 40-odd years to uncouple the English language from England and the old colonial bandwagon, but the jolly old umbilical cord is still in place, it seems."

In countries with different or no colonial history, the dominance of "native speaker" varieties (again, British and/or American English) is overwhelming. Evidence can be gained both from language education policy, such as in Thailand (Snodin and Young 2015), Cameroon (Atechi and Angwah 2016), Finland (Ranta 2010), and Japan (Toh 2014) and from an examination of ELT textbooks, a domain where research

> has repeatedly shown that materials have traditionally tended to focus on 'established' and standard representations of language, most often presenting British – and to a certain extent American – Standard varieties as the sole valid exemplifications of the English language. (Lopriore and Vettorel 2016, p. 13)

So, as A. Matsuda (2012b, pp. 170–171) observes, "the 'standard' varieties from the UK and the US [. . .] have dominated the ELT profession for a long time, and thus seem 'natural' to most teachers and students" (see also Ali 2014; Su 2016; Tévar 2014, for some country-specific accounts).

The normalization and the naturalization of the "native speaker" model are so strong that the majority of the numerous studies investigating attitudes toward models for pedagogic purposes have shown a clear preference for the same two dominant varieties of English. For example, a study carried out in mainland China and in Taiwan investigating university students' views on phonological and lexicogrammatical norms found that the majority of the participants held the "native speaker" as the ideal model to aspire to (Ren et al. 2016). Similar findings were reported by Snodin and Young (2015) in Thailand, where American English was found to be the preferred model to learn, followed by British English; by Hundt et al. (2015) in Fiji, where participants expressed preference for the same two varieties

(albeit with British English being the favorite), significantly more so than Australian or New Zealand English, despite the relative geographical vicinity of these; by Buckingham (2014) in Oman, where her study found "preference for speakers and accents students understand to be from the UK" (p. 50); and by Csizér and Kontra (2012) in Hungary, where the researchers reported "students' positive disposition toward native speakers as well as their personal aspiration to speak and behave like native speakers of English" (p. 6).

The predilection for British and American English is evident even when research participants show awareness of other varieties and/or of the role of English as an international lingua franca. In a study investigating Taiwanese teachers' attitudes, for example, Luo (2017) found that "while the participant teachers are aware of the notion of ELF, they emphasize the importance of teaching English that conforms to NS norms" (p. 9). Similarly, most of the participants in a research involving EFL teachers studying at a British university, for example, expressed the view that a "standard" form of English was to be preferred to local varieties or to ELF-based models and, tellingly, "[...] [t]his perspective was upheld even when participants acknowledged that it does not really correspond to the reality of Englishes which are in use worldwide" (Young and Walsh 2010, p. 135).

Localized forms of English tend to be seen as "non-native" and hence inappropriate. In Spain, for example, Cutillas Espinosa (2017, p. 29) found that "[t]he general public [...] is not willing to accept a non-native English standard [and] Spanish-accented English [...] is regarded as embarrassing." Another study carried out in South Korea revealed that the participants (teachers of English) expressed "strong rejection and ignorance of [...] Asian Englishes, [which were] stigmatised as 'wrong English'" (Ahn 2015, p. 132). In China, Wang's (2015) research revealed that both teachers and students were reluctant to accept "China English" as a viable goal in the language classroom. Significantly, all these studies involved participants from the Expanding Circle, where English does not play intranational roles and is very much treated like any other foreign language.

What is particularly remarkable about the dominance of the "native speaker" model in ELT, with its narrow focus on the idealized varieties pertaining to one or two specific countries, is that it ignores, and is in stark contrast to, three very important facts about English in the world:

1. Many varieties of English exist in the world besides British and American English.
2. Within a worldwide context, the prevailing role of English is that of an international lingua franca, used in a broad range of domains (e.g., education, science and technology, tourism, literature, etc.).
3. English is more often used in multilingual environments than it is in monolingual ones.

And yet, learners of English "are still being encouraged to aim for the kind of English that British or North American English speakers use among themselves"

(Jenkins 2012, p. 487). The rest of the chapter, therefore, examines the ways in which the "native speaker" model has been problematized, primarily in sociolinguistics.

Problematizing the "Native Speaker" Model

The idea that learning English means becoming as much as possible like a native speaker of the language has been challenged for at least half a century now. Criticism has stemmed particularly from the consideration that the forms and functions of English extend well beyond the shores of Britain or the USA. In particular, the validity and the relevance of the "native speaker" model have been questioned on the basis that:

(a) There are many varieties of English in the world, outside Britain and the USA, which have emerged as a consequence of the spread of the language that took place during British colonialism.
(b) The use of English as an international language by people for whom it is not necessarily their main language is numerically far greater than its use a national language in places such as Britain, the USA, or Australia.
(c) English is not the exclusive "property" of its "native speakers."
(d) "Native speakers" are not necessarily expert users of the language or ideal teachers of it.
(e) "Native speakers" represent a minority of English-using people in the world, and a significant proportion of communication in English does not involve them.

From this perspective, learning English is very different from learning, say, Japanese, Italian, or even a more international language like Arabic. While in these cases the links between these languages and the countries where they are spoken is generally very clear, no such exclusive connection can be said to exist between English and one cultural and/or geographical country or region.

All of this has been discussed extensively in three interrelated academic fields: World Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), and translanguaging.

World Englishes

The central principle in WE is that each one of the varieties of English that developed in different parts of the world as a consequence of the spread of the language that came with the British Empire deserves systematic sociolinguistic description and is also potentially a legitimate goal in English language curricula. The monolithic "native speaker" model is inadequate with regard to the plurality of Englishes in the world and the diverse cultures that they represent. It is irrelevant outside its own cultural base (i.e., the Inner Circle) and should be replaced by the varieties of English used where teaching and learning take place: Indian English in India, Malaysian English in Malaysia, and so on.

The origins of this idea can be traced back to a publication in the mid-1960s, where Halliday et al. (1964, p. 293) observed:

> Where the choice used to be between American (in a few marginal cases) and British English, now it is between American, British, Australian or other regional variants. English is no longer the possession of the British, or even of the British and the Americans, but an international language which increasingly large numbers of people adopt for at least some of their purposes . . . and this one language, English, exists in an increasingly large number of different varieties.

This comment, especially within the context of English language teaching, was rather controversial at the time. So much so that American sociolinguist Clifford Prator felt that this position was altogether flawed and, in a famous paper, called it a "heresy" (Prator 1968). In his view, the main problem with the suggestion that varieties other than the British or the American could be seen as valid teaching models was that it would produce "a tongue caught up in a process that tends to transform [English] swiftly and quite predictably into an utterly dissimilar tongue" (Prator 1968, p. 464). He particularly dissented with the notion that postcolonial varieties of English could be pedagogically viable. With reference to Indian English, for example, he remarked that it was "the most unintelligible educated variety" (p. 473).

Braj Kachru's response to Prator's paper might be considered the location of the roots of WE. In his own paper, Kachru (1976) forcefully criticized the kind of language purism displayed by Prator's critique as originating from ignorance of the fact that postcolonial varieties of English had their own validity as expressions of the sociocultural environments in which English had spread:

> It will [. . .] be appropriate that the native speakers of English abandon the attitude of linguistic chauvinism and replace it with an attitude of linguistic tolerance. The strength of the English language is in presenting the Americanness in its American variety, and the Englishness in its British variety. Let us, therefore, appreciate and encourage the Third World varieties of English too. The individuality of the Third World varieties, such as the Indianness of its Indian variety, is contributing to the linguistic mosaic which the speakers of the English language have created in the English speaking world. The attitude toward these varieties ought to be one of appreciation and understanding. (Kachru 1976, p. 236)

Kachru's paper contained notions that would soon become core in WE: (a) that postcolonial varieties of English were capable of expressing different cultures; (b) that linguistic differences had developed as a result of different cultural milieus (and not as a consequence of imperfect acquisition); and (c) that, therefore, such varieties deserved the same appreciation as British and American Englishes. The essence of the WE paradigm is perhaps best encapsulated in the following citation, from a paper by Kachru's colleague Larry Smith:

> It is important to note that there is a single English language but many varieties. The language of the United States is American English. Certainly speakers of American English are identifiable by their pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, and some vocabulary items but the language (the general orthography, lexicology, semantics, syntax – the grammar, if

you will), is English. It is the same English that is spoken in Singapore, however; Singapore English speakers are also identifiable by their pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, and some vocabulary items. (Smith 1976, p. 38)

Again, these were soon to become central points in the World Englishes. As Bolton (2004, p. 368) observes, there was "an evident concern with monocentrism versus pluricentrism, i.e. one English (with all its geographical and social varieties), or multifarious Englishes (deserving consideration and recognition as autonomous or semi-autonomous varieties of the language)." This remained a debated idea for a long time. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the most eminent critic of it was Randolph Quirk, who was of the belief that outside the Inner Circle, "the relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-native needs to use English (even in ESL countries) is arguably well catered for by a single monochrome standard form that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech" (Quirk 1985, p. 6) and so the tolerant attitudes toward varieties of English was a "half-baked quackery" (Quirk 1990, p. 6).

The pedagogical focus in WE has however remained strong over the years, and a paradigm shift in ELT has continued to be advocated, generally the lines in Table 1 (see also Matsuda and Matsuda 2018, pp. 66–69). A plethora of publications have been dedicated to the subject of the teaching of English as an international language, such as Alsagoff et al. (2012), Gagliardi and Maley (2010), Galloway (2017), Holliday (2005), Kirkpatrick (2007), Kirkpatrick and Sussex (2012a), Mahboob and Barratt (2014), Marlina (2017), Marlina and Giri (2014), Martin (2018), A. Matsuda (2012a, 2017), McKay (2002), McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2017), Sharifian (2009), and Zacharias and Manara (2013). And yet, actual implementation on the ground, i.e., in curricula and in the classroom, has struggled to materialize. In one of the latest publications, A. Matsuda and P. K. Matsuda (2018) comment that a truly WE-informed paradigm shift has not yet taken place "although it has gained some recognition in the professional discourse of ELT" (p. 70).

This has been because of three main reasons. One is the presence of the deep-rooted beliefs about language and language learning discussed above, which still dominate ELT practice. Secondly, the TESOL industry exercises its own influence, given that a one-size-fits-all approach is clearly more advantageous, from a marketing point of view, than a situation where curricula were to take into account different varieties of English and sociocultural settings. The third factor is the lack of recognition of local varieties of English in their respective countries. In Singapore,

Table 1 A paradigm shift in ELT

From	To
Exclusive focus on one variety of English	Exposure to different varieties of English
Focus on the imitation of "native speaker" norms	Focus on communication strategies
Cultural content based on Britain or the US	Cultural content from different contexts
Global English as ideologically unproblematic	Sensitivity to connections between English (and its varieties) and power

for example, the local variety of English has attracted a great deal of attention in sociolinguistics but does not enjoy the same degree of recognition outside academia. Indeed, the government launched the "Speak Good English Movement" (SGEM) in 2000, actively seeking to eradicate "Singlish." Tellingly, representatives of the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Education explained the government position by stating that "While Singlish may be a fascinating academic topic for linguists to write papers about, Singapore has no interest in becoming a curious zoo specimen to be dissected and described by scholars" (Liew and Ho 2008). Even without explicit governmental interventions, local varieties of English don't tend to be considered suitable for teaching purposes, even if they may be regarded favorably in terms of solidarity and other social purposes. Whether this is due to purely pragmatic reasons (the adoption of the same standard English ensures better communication) or a colonial mentality that doesn't seem to wane (Kumaravadivelu 2012; Parakrama 2012), the fact remains that

> Specific proposals addressing the question as to just what might constitute learning goals instead of the increasingly questioned native-speaker model are scarce indeed. When we look at curricula, textbooks, and reference materials to draw conclusions as to what constitutes actual course content, we see that native-speaker models remain firmly entrenched. (Seidlhofer 2011, p. 13)

According to Kumaravadivelu (2012, 2016), what is needed is a decisive break from what he calls the "native speaker episteme":

> Breaking the dependency on Western knowledge production will open up avenues for breaking other lateral dependencies pertaining to teaching methods, the teaching of culture, and instructional materials – three of the pedagogic domains where the native-speaker episteme has a direct bearing on what shapes classroom climate and classroom discourse. (Kumaravadivelu 2012, p. 18)

Kumaravadivelu's perspective is therefore that the entire ELT profession needs to decolonize itself in order to truly have a WE-informed approach to the teaching and learning of English worldwide. Indeed, the decolonization of ELT is at the heart of the WE paradigm, where many of the cultural referents are found in postcolonial writers' taking possession of the English language by remodeling it into different forms that would enable them to express local (e.g., African, Asian, Caribbean) sentiments:

> The old colonies are not wholly free. The British, as every schoolboy knows, gave the world cricket, parliaments, sun hats, boundary commissions, legal systems, roads, mission schools and the English language. But they also left us, disguised as freedom, this dominion of spoons. The English language, like many of the other bequests, is tainted by history as a result. [. . .] The language, like much else in the newly independent societies, needs to be decolonized, to be remade in other images, if those of us who use it from positions outside Anglo-Saxon culture are to be more than Uncle Toms. (Rushdie 1982)

Rushdie's words echoed those of Chinua Achebe, who, back in the 1960s, had famously stated that in order to "carry the weight of [his] African experience,"

the English language needed to be "a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" (Achebe 1965, p. 30).

To conclude this section, it seems appropriate to cite again A. Matsuda and P. K. Matsuda, who point out that "[t]he next generation of WE scholars need to develop new theoretical and methodological perspectives to update the understanding of the complexity of English in the world" (p. 72). In other words, the decolonization of ELT, and the break from the "native speaker" episteme, needs to go hand in hand with a re-conceptualization of English in the world (Saraceni 2015, 2018).

Very far removed from the postcolonial frame, the other related academic field from which criticism of the "native speaker" model has been expressed is that of English as a lingua franca (ELF).

English as a Lingua Franca

Like World Englishes, the field of English as a lingua franca began with pedagogical concerns as its primary drive (see Bayyurt and Akcan 2015, for an overview). This area of research, specifically focusing on the forms and the uses of English in communication among people for whom English is not their main language, began toward in the early 2000s, as a kind of "spin-off" of WE and rapidly developed into a full-fledged field. It shares the WE principle that linguistic variations that depart from "native speaker" norms are legitimate manifestations of language use "resulting in the emergence of innovative linguistic and pragmatic forms" (Cogo and Dewey 2012, p. 19). It also shares the preoccupation that the "native speaker" model emanating from Britain and/or the USA is irrelevant to learners of English around the world:

> [i]n place of the traditional second language acquisition target of native-like competence and adherence to so-called native speaker norms, the goal of the lingua franca curriculum is for students to be able to use English successfully in regional (and international) settings. Learners no longer need to sound like native speakers when speaking English. [. . .] Rather, they need to be able to communicate successfully in multilingual settings. (Kirkpatrick 2012, p. 39)

However, these general principles in ELF are based not so much on the recognition of the existence of different national varieties of English, as on the consideration that native speakers constitute a small minority of users of English in the world, where the language is instead employed more often than not as a means of international communication among people who use it *not* as their main language. Indeed, from this point of view, Outer Circle varieties such as Indian English or Nigerian English may be as inappropriate as British English for students in the Expanding Circle, where English is primarily used for international communication, and where, therefore, the most suitable model would be one which reflects this specific function of English used as an international lingua franca.

Barbara Seidlhofer's (2001) paper calling for the closing of a "conceptual gap" between descriptions of varieties of English in postcolonial settings and a focus on the uses of English as an international lingua franca can be considered, perhaps, the

start of this particular branch of sociolinguistics. This was partly inspired by Jennifer Jenkins's (2000) pioneering work on the phonology of English as an international language, which had identified certain phonological features of English that were "core" and affected intelligibility if pronounced differently and others that were "non-core" and their mispronunciation wasn't problematic (since meaning was easily recoverable from the context). It had pedagogical implications since it demonstrated that learners didn't have to focus their attention excessively (or not at all) on "core" features and it wasn't necessary for them to make efforts to try and follow models such as RP or General American. It was thus important to describe the "common core" of English as a lingua franca to be able to arrive at a full model that would include phonological, lexical, and grammatical norms that could be a "feasible, acceptable and respected alternative to ENL [English as a Native Language] in appropriate contexts of use" (Seidlhofer 2001, p. 150) and would equip speakers of English in international settings with the necessary linguistic knowledge:

> anyone participating in international communication needs to be familiar with, and have in their linguistic repertoire for use, as and when appropriate, certain forms (phonological, lexicogrammatical, etc.) that are widely used and widely intelligible across groups of English speakers from different first language backgrounds. (Jenkins 2006, p. 161)

In the early days of ELF research, therefore, the focus was very much on the identification and description of formal linguistic features of English used in lingua franca situations. However, within a few years, increasingly greater attention began to be placed to the linguistic *behavior* of ELF speakers in terms of meaning negotiation and communication strategies (Seidlhofer 2009, p. 240). "This has largely come about with the greater realization that ELF communication is by nature especially fluid, and that speakers' use of linguistic forms [is] especially variable" (Cogo and Dewey 2012, p. 3). As Canagarajah (2007) observed:

> Because of the diversity at the heart of this communicative medium, LFE [Lingua Franca English] is intersubjectively constructed in each specific context of interaction. The form of this English is negotiated by each set of speakers for their purposes. The speakers are able to monitor each other's language proficiency to determine mutually the appropriate grammar, phonology, lexical range, and pragmatic conventions that would ensure intelligibility. Therefore, it is difficult to describe this language a priori. (Canagarajah 2007, p. 925)

This was an important development both, in general, in terms of a more modern understanding of language and, more specifically, in terms of pedagogical implications. On the one hand, "ELF is not a variety of English with clearly demarcated formal linguistic properties to be set against some institutionalized norm of the so-called standard language, but as the variable exploitation of linguistic resources." (Seidlhofer 2011, p. 110) On the other hand, and as a consequence, "no single set of linguistic and other communicative norms can be put forward as the most suitable for all ELT contexts. Again the implication is that instead of norms, learners need to be taught about adaptation and negotiation" (Baker 2015, p. 201).

As part of the move away from form and an increased emphasis on language practice operated within the EFL paradigm, there is also the realization that

boundaries between languages are more fluid than was traditionally thought: "ELF is [...] marked by a degree of hybridity not found in other kinds of language use, as speakers from diverse languages introduce a range of non-English forms into their ELF use" (Jenkins 2013, p. 31). And so, ultimately,

> What we are looking at in ELF, then, is an entirely new, communication-focused way of approaching the notion of 'language' that is far more relevant to twenty-first century uses of English (and probably other global languages) than traditional bounded-variety approaches, and one that has far more in common with post-modern approaches to language. (Jenkins 2013, p. 37)

Indeed, in a later paper Jenkins identifies three phases of ELF research, whereby in the third one:

> the focus moves again, this time away from ELF as the framework to ELF within a framework of multilingualism. English, while always in the (potential) mix, is now conceived as one among many other languages, one resource among many, available but not necessarily used, with ELF defined not merely by its variability but by its complexity and emergent nature. (Jenkins 2015, p. 77)

Jenkins's observations direct our attention the third aspect of the re-conceptualization of English that has – or, better, *should* have – an impact on ELT theory and practice: the coexistence and co-*use* of English and other languages (see, e.g., Cogo 2012; Hülmbauer and Seidlhofer 2013; Kirkpatrick 2010; Klimpfinger 2009; Schaller-Schwaner 2011).

Translanguaging

Besides the existence of many distinct varieties and the role of the language as an international lingua franca, another striking fact about English in the world is the multilingual environments in which it is used. The often-cited piece of linguistic statistics showing that people for whom English is an additional language far outnumber those for whom is their only language should be considered within the broader context, whereby multilingualism is more common than monolingualism. Or, to put it in another way: multilingualism (not necessarily involving English, of course) is "the normal mode of communication that, with some exceptions in some monolingual enclaves, characterizes communities throughout the world" (García 2009, p. 44), while monolingualism is the exception. This is possibly the fact that most obviously contrasts with the accepted wisdom that still dominates both mainstream SLA and in TESOL, where monolingualism is seen as "normal" and nativeness as the yardstick against which language proficiency is measured (May 2014). The evident paradox here is that the goal of language instruction is taken to be that of turning linguistically normal individuals, i.e., speakers of *one* language, into special, extraordinary, unusual ones, i.e., speakers of *more than one* language. But the paradox is dealt with by disregarding the learner's pre-existing linguistic repertoire as productive and/or by treating it as an obstacle to the efficiency with which

one acquires a second language. The concepts of *interlanguage* and *fossilization* are based on this principle.

In recent years, this has come under renewed criticism in sociolinguistics, where, following on from Williams's (1994) pioneering work on bilingual education, a considerable amount of attention has been dedicated to the fluid interplay of languages that multilingual speakers employ (Pennycook 2016), accompanied by the "increasing recognition of the need to account for plurilingual repertoires becoming the *zeitgeist*" (Taylor and Snoddon 2013, p. 440). The proliferation of terms to describe this phenomenon is indicative of the volume of scholarly activity that has developed about it: *polylanguaging* (Jørgensen et al. 2011), *metrolingualism* (Pennycook and Otsuji 2015), *translingual practice* (Canagarajah 2013), *heteroglossia* (Blackledge and Creese 2014), and *translanguaging* (García and Li 2014), the latter being the one that has caught on more than any other, especially in the context of education. Part of a general reorientation toward language as fluid, dynamic, local social practice as opposed to a universal, static system, translanguaging can be understood as "using one's idiolect, that is one's linguistic repertoire, without regard for socially and politically defined language names and labels" (Li 2017, p. 11), and so this means that the "boundaries between languages, between languages and other communicative means, and the relationship between language and the nation-state are being constantly reassessed, broken, or adjusted by speakers on the ground" (p. 7). In turn, this also presupposes challenging the concept of what *a* language is and, at the same time, what learning *a* language means.

From a translanguaging viewpoint, the "native speaker" model is called into question even more profoundly than in WE or ELF. The primacy of linguistic repertoires over discrete, separable languages implies that "the goals of language learning involve *expanding* the meaning-making repertoires of individuals" (Leung and Scarino 2016, p. 88, my emphasis), which is the exact opposite to the idea of progressively approximating an idealized (but never defined) monolingual "native speaker" status by reducing or eliminating the negative interference of one's "mother tongue."

Concluding Remarks

The linguistic goal in the English language curriculum has been problematized for the last half a century. The combination of (a) deep-rooted layperson's beliefs about language, corroborated by (b) prevailing notions in mainstream SLA research, and exploited by (c) the TESOL industry to its own advantage has meant that a real paradigm shift in English language teaching has not yet fully taken place. In recent years, however, there has also been a call for great *impact* of research outside the confines of academia. While this notion has sometimes been criticized for expecting a too direct and immediate link between research activity and change in social practices, the principle of humanities research engaging with society is certainly a valid one. The way forward then is to establish a fruitful dialogue between, one the one hand, a better and more sophisticated understanding of what language in general and English in particular are and, on the other hand, language teaching practices that

are sensitive to both the global roles of English and local sociocultural realities. Volumes such as A. Matsuda (2017), Marlina (2017), Galloway (2017), McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2017), and Martin (2018) describe how this dialogue is beginning to take place in different parts of the world.

Cross-References

▶ Critical Literacy as a Pedagogical Goal in English Language Teaching
▶ Imagined Communities, Identity, and English Language Learning in a Multilingual World
▶ Promoting Intercultural Competence in English Language Teaching: A Productive Bilingualism Perspective
▶ Pronunciation in English as Lingua Franca

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