

# Teaching And Learning World Englishes- A Challenge

## Abstract

The 21st century presents a variety of English used in different sociolinguistic context, rejecting the dichotomy of US (native speakers) vs. (Non-native speakers). The global spread of English has created a challenge before the teachers. There are mainly two models of English: English as a foreign language EFL and English as a second language ESL, but to incorporate "World Englishes" teachers must be aware of the current landscape of it.

**Keywords** :Englishes, Sociolinguistic, Pluralization, we-ness, Linguistic liberation, EFL, ESL, EYL, Global, Lingua-Franca

## Introduction

The emergence of globalization through mass media and business economy extended their reach into new domains throughout the world. The information technology has transformed the notions of literacy, spread all kinds of information worldwide in quite a few seconds and entered into all areas of life like : Research, Engineering, Mechanics, mass media, Economy and so on. People from different parts of the world are now easily connecting themselves to the World Wide Web, using English as a medium of communication which is not a single English but Englishes used by different people in different contexts, as Henry Kahane remarked:"English is the great laboratory of today's sociolinguist".(Bhatt 527) There is now a growing consensus among scholars that there is not one English language anymore, rather there are many, most of which are disengaged from the language's early Judeo-Christian tradition. The different English languages studied within the conceptual framework of world Englishes represent diverse linguistic, cultural and ideological voices.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century moving ahead into the world Englishes presents a variety of English used in different sociolinguistic contexts, rejecting the dichotomy of us (native speakers) vs (non-native speakers) and emphasizes instead we-ness (Bhatt 528). The pluralization, Englishes, symbolizes the formal and functional variations, the diverse sociolinguistic contexts, the linguistic and literary activity and the various identities English has accrued as a result of acculturation (Kachru 1965). People of different parts of the world are now speaking English that best suits their propose and best expresses their cultural current. Words from every cultural sect are now coming to English and the language has become very accommodative and adaptive. In 1798, fed up with the 'gaudiness and inane phraseology of pseudo-classical poetic diction', Wordsworth declared a sort of linguistic liberation – 'to choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate them throughout, as far as possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and at the same time to throw over them certain coloring of imagination to make these situations and incidents interesting by tracing in them 'the primary laws of human nature'.(Wordsworth 1798)

A sort of linguistic liberation associated with this time of the need of global English. The reason may be trade or commerce, science and technology the easy communicative ability and so on. A time to switch over the set norms of linguistic beliefs and practices in the interest of the people world over. As far as the spread of English is concerned,it is increasingly required in all sectors and the most widely spoken and studied foreign language. Kachru has visualized in his model,the spread of new Englishes in three concentric circles.The traditional,historical base of English as the primary language comes to the inner circle,where English is used as a native language(U.K,Ireland,Canada, USA,Australia,New Zealand). The outer circle represents regions colonized by Britain: non-native settings where English plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting(India, Singapore, Malawi). The nations which recognize English as an international language consider the expanding circle where English is

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primarily a foreign language.(Kachru 66-87) The global spread of English or the world Englishes at various social levels and functional domains has created a challenge before the teachers of English who have known the traditional taken for granted linguistic understanding. The linguistic center of English has shifted or shall we say in Yeast's word 'Things fall apart, the center cannot hold'. (Yeats 1865)

The success of standardization depends largely on the ideological strategies and operations used to devalue indigenous 'non-native' varieties against the standard native variety. But the liberation ideology "...confronts and competes with the dominant standard English ideology and produces a competing set of 'values' creating strong pressure in favour of non-standard language varieties."(Bourdieu 1991)

As Braj Kachru says that English is used as a mode of communication across cultures. So emerging Englishes should be welcomed. We have to deploy new critical tools, new norms and develop new methods of teaching.

There is an extraordinary diversity in the methods in which English is taught and learned throughout the world. There are different ways of teaching and learning Englishes pertaining to the difference in culture, syllabus methodologies and outsourcing. It is up to us 'by which model' we want to enter, mean a complex framework which includes issues of methodology and variety but goes beyond these to include other dimensions of the context and practice of learning English. The appropriateness of content clearly depends on the things like the age of the learner and whether English is used as a primary language of international communication or for survival communication with native speakers. There are also other groups like learners, their families, teachers, governments, publishers, technicians involved in the teaching learning process of English having different views.

There are mainly two models of English, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and teaching English as a second language (ESL). The tradition is mainly based on the teaching of classical language throwing light mainly on the importance of learning about the culture and society of native speakers. The tradition deploys discussion at the center of methodology and emphasizes the importance of native speaker language behavior. It focused on the things like grammatical accuracy, accrued a thorough knowledge of literature and native speaker like pronunciation.

"The EFL approaches like all foreign languages teaching, positions the learner as an outsider, as a foreigner, one who struggles to attain acceptance by the target community. The target language is always someone else's mother tongue. The outsider is allowed to visit, but the sole right and authority reserves to the native speakers".(Graddol 82)

The EFL tradition failed because of the inbuilt ideology of positioning the students as an outsider however proficient in the language he becomes. When measured against the standard of native speaker like pronunciation, many EFL learners failed. The learners basically come to learn English as a

foreign language, as a time table subject, as a status symbol to indicate that the family is wealthy enough to provide such facilities. In many places where mere passing is the basis of promotion and graduation the tradition met high levels of failure because the learners restricted themselves up to that level. Later on many transformations like recording of learners experiences and achievements came into existence.

English as a second language emphasizes upon the role of society in which it is taught. There are two kinds of ESL. The first kind of ESL emerged out of the Britisher's need as Alastir Pennycook says "The spread of English has political intentions. English is a tool for new cultural colonization" (Pennycook 1994). For trade, Business, IT and Economics they wanted to, as Lord Macaulay said:

"We must form a class as interpreter between us and billions we govern. A class which is Indian in blood but British in taste". (Macaulay 1835)

The imperial strategy typically involved the identification of an existing social elite who would be offered a curriculum designed to cultivate not just language skills but taste of English culture and value. Literature was brought into the centre and culture and values of western society were taught through poetry or prose. A complex cultural politics was created and for many decades not more than 5% Indians could learn to speak English.

The colonials were not so rigid about the spoken form of English. Many local varieties of English emerged the so-called 'new Englishes' having local accent and context. Many of the 'new Englishes' flourished. In ESL countries children know some English before they enter into the school and the role of school is to teach them the formal and standard variety of English. The situation of these countries is multilingual one and often there is code-switching between English or other local languages. A quite different approach to ESL arise in the USA and in countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand where penetration of immigrants had to be assimilated and equipped with a new national identity. In the UK ESL did not become fully institutionalized until the 1960s. It is often referred to as ESOL (English for speaker of other languages).

The learning of English for ESL students is often a family matter, with different generations speaking with different levels of competence, even different varieties of English and acting as interpreters as necessary for less-skilled family and community members. Translation and interpreting are important skills for ESL users though not always well recognized by education providers.

Global Englishes brings new approaches. The EFL and ESL both represent the twin traditions in ELT with roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But here we have to meet the needs of rather different world in which global English is moving. There are three new models of English, content and languages integrated learning CLIL, English as a lingua-franca ELF and English for young learners EYL. CLIL as David Graddol said has emerged as a significant curriculum trend in Europe. Similar approaches are now used, under different names in many countries. A kind of bilingual education in which curriculum content and English

language are taught together. The English proficiency is not needed as English only remains a tool or necessary language to understand the concepts of the subject. It is also regarded as a means of teaching English through study of a specialized content. CLIL arose from curriculum innovation in Finland, in the mid-1990s and it has been adopted in many European countries. It is compatible with the idea of JIT education 'just in time' learning the ultimate communicative methodology in which subject content and disciplinary language is oriented to problem solving through negotiation, discussion and classroom management.

CLIL required a cultural change of a kind in institutions which became a difficult task for English teachers. They have to work closely with subject teachers to ensure that language development is properly catered and this implied making sufficient non-contact time available for planning and review and English teachers lose their subject as a time tabled space and rather play a remedial role. It is also difficult to implement if the subject teacher himself is not bilingual.

#### **English as a Lingua-Franca**

English as a lingua-franca is the most radical approach which deals with the issues which global English raises. Teaching English as a lingua-franca suggest that the way English is taught and evaluated should reflect the needs and aspirations of the ever-growing number of non-native speakers, who use English to communicate with other non-natives. Understanding how the non-native speakers speak and pronounce English is a matter of research. There are various ways of ELF users and intelligibility is of prime importance. Teaching about the correct pronunciation and grammar and accent to the non-native speakers coming from different cultural background, is a difficult going to be a waste task. Intelligibility is taken as a core, if the language is intelligible, if the people could make out the sense, the objective is achieved. Unlike traditional EFL, ELF focuses on pragmatic strategies required in intercultural communication. The target model of English, within the ELF framework, is not a native speaker but a fluent bilingual speaker, who retains a national identity in terms of accent and who also has the special skills required to negotiate understanding with another non-native speaker.

#### **English for Young Learners**

A survey made of Europe in 2005 showed an increasing percentage of primary pupils learning English and it has been increasing across the world. English has moved from the traditional 'foreign language' slot in lower secondary school to primary school even pre-school and as David Graddol says: "One rationale for teaching languages to young children is the idea that they find it easier to learn languages". (Graddol 89)

The young children are very sensitive growing physically and mentally, their emotional and imaginative needs are different. One of the practical reasons for introducing English to young learners is to ensure that they have longer in their school careers to expertize the language and another is because the time tables in secondary schools now have too many

competing demands. The change in the attitude of learning English which has risen in recent years opens a vast panorama to the teacher on the one hand and a challenge on another. They are not only to teach them the standard norms, in form of English but also introduce them to the world Englishes and the global English which is necessary to interact with the changing global scenario of the world. They have to have understanding of Englishes roaming about the IT world, the information technology world and the world of different socio-cultural contexts. But the EYL also failed pertaining to the necessity of highly proficient teachers having a knowledge and training of child development which is a rare combination to be found. The traditional methodologies used for teaching Englishes worldwide fail to honour the range of social functions and identities that the world Englishes carries out in diverse socio-cultural contexts. So the language teaching methodologies must be culture sensitive and also the "appropriate" use of linguistic conduct. For what is appropriate for one culture may not be appropriate for another culture. The Teachers responsibility is doubled that while teaching, learning and using World Englishes he or she should make acquaintances with not only the conversational context but also the socio-cultural contexts.

Another problem connected with Global English is intelligibility. If different dialects of English will come from different directions, there will be a state of chaos. Every culture or region has an individual accent and its own culture specific words. Just as the progressives stressed upon the intelligibility of the accent rather than the elegance, and London Upper Classes adopting demotic speech forms and speaking of "Estury English" that moves from R.P to the non-standard cockney accent, in the same way a sort of flexibility is required from our part to accede to as Quirk says "...a form of english that is both understood and respected in every corner of the globe where any knowledge of any variety of English exists." (Quirk 1985)

Further, the better way would be to move from intelligibility to comprehensibility, whether it has been comprehended by or not. There are, for example several texts of English that are readily comprehensible, but not interpretable. So Smith frequently argues that contrary to what is being taught to students from grammar textbooks, 'interpretability' is at the core of communication and is more important than mere intelligibility.

So to incorporate 'World Englishes' in English language teaching, teachers must be aware of the current landscape of it. Programmes for preservice EFL teachers tend to focus on the inner circle (Kachru 1997) and would benefit greatly from incorporating a world Englishes perspective. Brown and Peterson (1997) argue that "...a brief introduction to issues surrounding world Englishes is simply not enough. Ideally every course should be informed by the current landscape of the English Language, but having preservice teachers take a World Englishes course early or in their preparation is likely to result in a world view...{that is} more consistent with the socio-linguistic realities of the spread of English as an international language."

The teachers must maintain an insightful understanding of the relationship between linguistic theories, methodology and application. The curriculum, the resource material, the testing procedures are need to be revised and given a fresh outlook.

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