

***Perspectives on World English(es): Theory & Practice.***

***A series of discussions around EFL teaching implications  
and the recognition of English varieties in South Korea.***

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These critical responses will discuss the progress and awareness of World Englishes (WE) and global English varieties in the South Korean context where English is taught primarily as a Foreign language (EFL). There are major societal implications and responsibilities for English learners within the country, and instructors aiming to implement WE material must consider these factors before deciding where and when to use global varieties in their classrooms.

The responses included in this paper will raise four key areas of WE and discuss how the South Korean context can welcome them. Firstly, why certain English varieties are held as instructional models and should this be questioned. Discovering how an English variety forms and if South Korea has a variety of its own. Considering if classroom materials can feature increased use of English varieties with the primary aim of increasing learner familiarity. Finally, discussing if English can recover its communicative function from the primarily academic subject it has become.

## **The Selection and Justification of the Instructional Model**

*Scales, J. Richard, D. & Wu, S.H. (2006). Language Learners' Perceptions of Accent. TESOL Quarterly. v40(4). Pp. 715-738.*

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### **Introduction**

There are many variations of English in use around the world and as a result an EFL teacher must make a decision on which varieties will feature in their classroom. Determining which variety is to be used as the main educational model may not a simple choice. This decision 'needs to be based on various factors such as student goals and needs, teacher expertise, and availability of materials and resources' (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011:334), rather than a default selection of 'established' varieties such as AmE (American) and BrE (British).

Accents and pronunciation targets can be topics of fierce debate, with many English speakers proud of their own varieties or the models they have chosen for study, disregarding other varieties as less valuable in the process. Educators in South Korea must question 'why the norm is almost always associated with a native speaking country' (Johnson, 2017:178), and attempt to answer two important questions raised by Scales, Et Al., (2006:715). Should established varieties continue to serve as the main instructional model and why are learners leaning placing preference on certain English accents.

### **Why 'Standard'**

At the heart of the discussion around 'which instructional models' are the differing learning desires from the parties involved. These outcomes can range from 'the language itself, the identities represented by particular accents, for capital and power, or what is believed to lie beyond the doors that English unlocks' (Motha & Lin, 2014:332. In: Pennycook, 2020:228), such as social, professional or financial success in South Korea. This belief may be impacting upon the selection of established instructional models. By determining their primary goal as 'conforming to native speaker norms' (Timmis, 2002:248) L2 learners are setting themselves an unrealistic target that is ultimately unachievable, and are being built up to fail. Despite

there being limitations on their final production of their English, L2 learners continue to strive for 'nativelike' goals and ignore the high probability this learning objective may not be reachable (Hamid, 2014:273). A more worthwhile endeavour could be holding established varieties not as their end goal, but point of reference (McKay, 2002:43), simultaneously continuing their English language studies in 'reachable' WE's instead.

Despite the difficulty learners encounter attaining 'nativelike' proficiency, there does continue to be a market for inner circle established varieties. Young & Walsh's (2010) study on NNES target varieties indicated an 'overwhelming demand' (2010:132) for these varieties, regardless of the fact that 'this does not correspond to the reality of Englishes which are in use worldwide' (2010:123). The non-native English speakers questioned in the study cited their expected 'future contact with an ENS variety' (2010:132) as the main justification for instructional model, which in reality is heavily contextual and unlikely to materialise. As the majority of English users now lie outside of the inner and outer circles (Kachru, 1992:3), altering the viewpoint of NNES to accept their own varieties as 'different not deficient' (Jenkins, Et Al., 2011:284) and move away from the reliance on native norms, in theory should not be an unachievable task. One major challenge, is the familiarity and comprehensibility learners are likely to have with new instructional models. Scales, Et Al., discovered that there was an 'almost perfect correspondence' (2006:727) between 'the accent most preferred' by learners and 'the accent easiest to understand' which may be the model they are most familiar with. This issue could disappear if new varieties made regular appearances in EFL classrooms and familiarity was built with them.

Seidlhofer (2005:159) references established English existing as the variety that instructors have traditionally endeavoured to teach, now being 'difficult to justify' with the majority of English conversations taking place between NNES. Nevertheless, educators in South Korea still find themselves in situations where learners are determined that 'native' forms are what they should be exposed to (Young & Walsh, 2010:131). This could again be attributed to the professional success learners assume arrives with the mastery of established models such as AmE or BrE. These models are believed to emphasise business, formality and politeness, which remain key features of success in Korea, to a greater degree than local or new English varieties.

## **'Standard' Preference and Teaching Implications**

In the South Korean context, the dominant and established 'standard' is general AmE (Rüdiger, 2014:11). The historic ties the country has formed with the US and the influence of US media in the country perpetuates this gatekeeping 'standard'. Shifting to a *communication* focused curriculum similar to EIL (English as an International Language), which would replace grammar-based syllabuses (Scales, Et Al., 2006:735), faces the immovable monolith of the University entrance exam and the 'very important status symbol' granted by AmE ability (Park, 2009:1. In: Rüdiger, 2014:12). The gatekeepers in this setting appear to be the harsh exam culture and social status desire imbedded within the nation, which dictate how learning English is seen and operates.

The 'desire for English' to which Motha & Lin (2014:332. In: Pennycook, 2020:228) refer, manifests itself in the hierarchical nature of South Korean society. English testing is rife and allows those with higher scores in society to display their global appeal. However, this testing does not directly translate into communicative ability, as many citizens are 'still shy of speaking and find it difficult to converse in English' (Fayzrakhmanova, 2016:169). This anxiety can be attributed to a fear of judgement and comparisons against native norms, emanating from a learners initially misjudged goals of 'native-like' language use (Hamid, 2014:273). English represents vital 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1989:17) in Korea. Prestigious companies require applicants to know English but do not ask employees to speak (Fayzrakhmanova, 2016:172), filtering out those deemed worthy by their efforts in English class. A Korean participant in Young & Walsh's study (2010:132) summarises the situation in the country, by stating emphatically that 'most Koreans dream to be a native speaker'.

## **Conclusion**

The selection of an English instructional model in South Korea may be irreversibly entwined with the way society arranges itself, and it is not inconceivable that this is the main issue facing World English(es) in numerous contexts around the world. Learners who strive to learn a particular variety such as AmE is no bad thing, as in many contexts English often

functions as a life changing social passport and teachers must be contextually aware of this. However, teachers and institutions must shoulder part of the blame for reinforcing the 'linguistic hierarchy' (Shohamy, 2006. In: Hamid, 2014:264) which still exists in South Korea, and must begin to include new varieties of English alongside 'established' varieties if anything is going to change.

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## **New Varieties of English: Validity and the Perception of 'lishes'**

Nero, S. (2006). *Language. Identity and Education of Caribbean English Speakers. World Englishes*. v25(3-4). Pp. 501-511.

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### **Introduction**

The distinction between global varieties of English which have emerged through generations of daily localised use, and the 'standard' varieties which many learners, teachers and institutions prioritise raises a number of intensely debated issues. Firstly, at what stage does a creole, a simplified stable version of an established language become recognised as Nero (2006:503) voices, as a new language variety. Could a creole be publicly acknowledged as equal in value to that of a 'standard' variety. Finally, can the deeply interwoven cultural aspects (Rabiah, 2018:1) along with the complex relationships a creole represents (Frank, 2007:2) remain intact if the variety becomes publicly recognised.

Rabiah (2018:6) emphasises that our language is a mirror image of us, reflecting both our own needs and character along with those in our local communities. Language is created from generations of use and is widely recognised amongst its speakers. A serious question can be raised as to why certain communities had their English versions accepted as legitimate on a global stage and others left behind, labelled as 'deficient' (Jenkins, Et Al., 2011:284).

### **'Understanding' Defining Recognition**

The beauty of a modern globalised world is the opportunity to experience culturally different lands, languages and people. To experience these things effectively, requires a level of language 'understanding' to minimise exclusion and alienation. In the English language, this 'understanding' materialises in three forms recognised by Smith (1992:76. In: Nero, 2006:506); Intelligibility (word recognition), comprehensibility (word meaning) and interpretability (meaning behind the word and context dependant). It is when 'understanding' fails at one or more of these points, and how far 'two speech varieties in a

society can differ and still be equally treated as belonging to the same language' (Roberts, 1988:9), the issue of recognition emerges.

'Native' speakers often subconsciously control the recognition of varieties, perhaps offering an explanation as to why an L2 'language learner desires to sound 'nativelike' is closely related to their aim of being easily understood' (Ballard & Winke, 2016:122). NNS's using their own variety, which functions adequately and is understood locally by all those whom they interact with, does not require NS validation. Unfortunately, for L2 learners with aspirations of migration for education or employment, some NS and institutions will judge their English language abilities. Schooling is 'the first, and most influential gateway to society, where language policies indicate if a language is good or acceptable' (Ricento, 2006:21. In: Kaveh, 2020:362). NNS are faced with a choice of adopting 'standard' varieties in a desperate attempt to avoid social and workplace discrimination (Ballard & Winke, 2016:122), or accepting that their 'mirror image' (Rabiah, 2018:6) which reflects their personality and culture may blur or fade. A completely unnecessary dilemma for somebody who has spoken a functioning variety of English their entire lives.

### **South Korean 'lishes'**

It is important to note that countries where traditionally unrecognised English varieties that are 'routinely in evidence, accessible in varying degrees, and part of the nation's recent or present identity' (Crystal, 2003:66) such as India, Jamaica and Nigeria, differ from locations where English is traditionally learnt as a foreign language (EFL). English exists here on the outskirts of mass media, government and commerce (Shim, 1999:247), where 'lishes', defined as the blending of an L1 and English (McPhail, 2018:45) tend to emerge. This 'lishes' phenomenon is not central to one area of the world (McArthur, 1998:14. In: Lambert, 2017:1) and not a modern development. Historically, instances of '*Spanglish*', '*Chinglish*', '*Germenglish*', '*Frenglish*' and '*Swenglish*' have appeared in numerous texts (Lambert, 2017:13) as far back as 1930's.

South Korea's current fascination with English and the 'tenuous relationship' it has with the language (Lawrence 2012:72) is creating what numerous nearby nations have already

experienced, a hybrid form of English (Lambert, 2017:1) termed 'Konglish'. Today, 'Konglish' is used primarily in popular settings such as cosmetic shops, nightclubs, hotels, and shopping malls (Lawrence, 2012:76), holding a seemingly fashionable status. Yet, 'lishes' are still considered 'a poor or stilted English' by users of the terms (Lambert, 2017:6). Deviation from spoken NS norms is considered 'worse, not different' (Hall, 2018:209) highlighting how 'Konglish' does not carry the same value as 'standard' varieties towards educational progression and social status.

Educational prestige and 'standardised' English accents continue to be highly sought after in the country, although never to the point of 'violating the love for purity' (McPhail, 2018:48) Koreans have with their own language, Hangul. The two are kept apart and 'Konglish' is not taken seriously. Many Korean learners are not concerned with the blurring of their mirror image as English creole speakers with identities inseparable to its usage might be, as their identities return promptly with perfect clarity upon returning home.

### **Conclusion and Teaching Implications**

English learners have a 'right to acquire standardised varieties of English' as Nero herself admits (2006:509), and it may be of significant benefit to them should they wish to migrate overseas. However, the burden placed on learners to conform with NS ideals needs to be readdressed. Increasing the level of familiarity, a learner has with global English varieties may not tackle the 'standard' forms of English which many academic institutions deem necessary, but it would begin to recognise English creole languages and emerging 'lishes' as perfectly valid examples of the English language in their own right.

A simple step of including different examples of pronunciation in the classroom, and in classroom materials could go a long way in readdressing who defines a languages validity. Outside of Korea, the meeting point for intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability (Smith, 1992:76. In: Nero, 2006:506) is tilted disproportionately towards 'standard' English varieties, when the majority of English speakers who function daily with their own version, do not want, or need to use it.

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## **'Languaging' in the EFL Classroom and Introducing Varieties Through Materials**

Floris, F. D. (2005). "Using English Literature written by Asian authors in EFL/ESL Classrooms in Asia". *Kata (Surabaya)*. v7(1). Pp. 43-53.

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### **Introduction**

Classroom materials play a major part in a learners exposure to the English language, offering a wide variety of 'advantages and benefits to assist students linguistic, cognitive and social development' (Floris, 2005:43). Increasing the cultural appropriacy of these materials instead of basing them on pre-determined norm-based contexts, would help students discover English in a personal way (2005:52), countering the regular experience of being told what to say, where to say it and how it should be said.

A study by Jayakaran (1993. In: Floris, 2005:44) supported Floris' view that students may lose focus when faced with 'native literary texts' and 'struggle to comprehend unfamiliar foreign cultures'. It should be noted, that this argument faces opposition in contexts where English varieties are not spoken with regularity such as South Korea, and in situations where learners specify their interest in learning in detail about 'unfamiliar foreign cultures' for personal or professional progression.

### **'Languaging' Sub 'Standard' Materials**

The teaching of a 'standard' English norm continues to be the most common approach to English Language Teaching (ELT) and language acquisition in many classrooms around the world (Alvarez, 2007:136). Many English learners are continually faced with the somewhat alien 'standard' English variety in their English language classroom materials. Evidently, the World English goal is not being heard, or is being deliberately ignored by complex educational systems, publishers and perhaps most importantly, English teachers. Global varieties continue to be taught as being inferior to the existing 'expertise' of NS models (Rampton, 1990:98; Lambert, 2017:6) and these models are remaining as the desired, if ultimately unattainable (Byram, 1997:11; Hamid, 2014:273) language outcomes. Teachers

are seemingly unaware of the immense power they wield with their selection of English teaching materials.

An interesting learning strategy proposed by Phipps & Gonzalez (2004:90) is the reframing of a 'language' learner (and as a by-product, language culture), into an 'intercultural' learner using the definition 'languaging'.

'Languaging' is a 'skilled, embodied and situated practice' (Phipps & Gonzalez, 2004:90) encouraging learners to explore differing environments where a language is spoken in different ways to the NS norm. Thus, shifting the focus from the language itself, to include the many cultures that use it. 'Languaging' does not claim that NS models are either superior or problematic to other variationist models, and leaves space for those models to be studied if desired or required. It merely proposes that a larger exploration of the landscapes in which English varieties are spoken, would increase the chances of a learner successfully and effectively interacting with a greater number of people in the future (Byram, 1997. & Byram et al., 2002. In: Alvarez, 2007:133).

Learning from NS-based material for linguistic competence has a time and a place, 'but intercultural competence is a quite different matter' (Byram et al., 2002:17. In: Alvarez, 2007:133). Through 'languaging', learners can be exposed to and practice their English usage against a whole host of varieties, better preparing them for the realities which await them outside of their globally constraining (Alpetkin, 2002:57) NS-modelled classes.

### **Teacher Power and Teaching Implications**

One of the key characteristics of a language teacher is the ability to identify or source materials which can 'act as the learning goal of a course' (Nation & Macalister, 2010:5). In many contexts, this action is performed by institutional bodies and confined by complicated assessment criteria, with the awareness of a learners 'English discovery' (Floris, 2005:52) not valued or taken into account. Teachers must reclaim this power and assess for themselves which materials best suit the varied needs of their learners.

The unfamiliarity of 'foreign cultures' which Jayakaran (1993. In: Floris, 2005:44) highlights, may be the appeal for some, but including multiple varieties of English in classroom materials highlights the multitude of possible routes English can take a learner. The English language is now an international means of communication, with local versions of the language used in vast swathes of the globe on a daily basis. Teachers must play their part in providing an accurate representation of English use, and not continuing the false representation of English being spoken in only the 7 inner circle countries.

### **Korean Concerns**

Contextual constraints must be recognised when attempting to significantly alter classroom materials. In the extreme exam-based society of South Korea, 'knowledge of English native varieties has been disappointingly associated with greater prestige and importance' (Ahn, 2019:297) for some time, contributing to the 'significant increase in the number of native speaker teachers' (2019:298), and as a by-product more native-based texts and literacy classroom tasks. Korean teachers often consider native materials far less demanding (Judd, 1999. In: Alvarez, 2007:129) and express views that there is already too much content to deliver for their subject (Met, 1993. In: Alvarez, 2007:129) with time better suited to delivering grammatical instruction, and test preparation. It is left to the 'native' speaker teachers themselves to introduce 'languaging' into the classroom, and this should remain a key goal of future NS teachers moving to Korea.

### **Conclusion**

To suggest that there is no need (Floris, 2005:44) for native speaker models to feature in literary texts fails to recognise the contextual factors at play in many EFL classrooms and the futures many learners will be heading into. The distinction between EFL contexts where English is spoken within local communities with regularity, and where it is set aside for educational pursuits, must be made.

Kachru and Nelson (2001:10. In: Floris, 2005:45) refer to English varieties as the 'types of English which are identified with the residents of particular places'. Therefore, it may be

worth discussing with the learners themselves, which particular place and with which particular residents they see themselves conversing with most frequency, before determining which variety of English they are exposed to in classroom material. What must remain in sight when bringing about World English(es) change, is recognition that there are indeed contexts in which NS's are desired, NS norms are studied, and NS varieties are culturally important to the learners language discovery and learning environment.

'Languaging' is a productive way forward in this balancing act. With the continued spread of English around the globe, learners will encounter differing 'standards' throughout their lives, and it is an English teachers fundamental duty to expose them to the alternatives. Exactly when and to what extent that happens must take into account the contextual concerns of the learners, the teachers and the countries where these EFL lessons are taking place for WE acceptance to significantly progress.

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## **The Changing Face of EFL and the Future of EIL Instruction**

*Matsuda, A. & Friedrich, P. (2011). English as an International Language: A curriculum blueprint. World Englishes. v30(3). Pp. 332-344.*

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### **Introduction**

Shifting the focus of EFL courses away from grammar instruction, and moving towards an EIL (English as an International Language) blueprint, has been suggested as a way to deal with the over representation and dependency on NS norms in many of today's EFL classrooms. EIL courses focus on conversation negotiation skills, to 'prepare English learners to become competent speakers with others from international contexts' (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011:334).

Most interactions between English users outside of 'inner circle' countries (Kachru, 1992) take place with other non-native speakers of English (Honna, 2016:67). This renders the norm-based instruction they often receive exposed to questioning. As Honna (2016:71) explains; during these interactions English users are unlikely to be talking about situations which frequent EFL materials 'such as visits to London or New York'. The same line of questioning can be applied to the comprehensibility of their utterances, or 'how difficult or easy an utterance was to understand' (Derwing & Munro, 1997. In: Matsuura, Et Al. 1999:50). As it is more likely a learner will converse with another L2 speaker, rather than an English Royal or American President, it is the comprehensibility between L2 speakers which practice and material in classroom should primarily revolve around.

### **EIL Blueprint**

Instruction focused on 'correct' English pronunciation is unproductive if conversing is the main aim of an institution, instructor or course. When the majority of English users are unlikely to encounter native examples in real life, EIL instead encourages the necessary to be intelligible, not to native speakers, but to speakers whom English learners are more likely

to encounter day-to-day (Smith & Nelson, 2006:429). The historical assumption that intelligibility during English interactions was a one-way decision only native speakers had the power to make, is outdated (Bamgbose, 1998:10. In: Nelson, 2008:300). English now features in a large number of global contexts, and the emphasis now lies with all speakers regardless of nationality or 'native' status, who enter into an English conversation. This is essential to recognise in all future EFL/EIL classrooms.

Matsuda & Friedrich (2011:333) claim that although progress is being made, within WE, EFL and EIL landscapes, many pedagogical ideas are not seeping through to ground level where they matter the most. A potential blueprint for EIL instruction is established to tackle this issue (2011:342), which includes; instructional models, exposure to English(es) and their users, strategic competence, cultural materials and awareness of politics. Increasing these five features in EIL classrooms and grounding work on international varieties, avoids learners incorrect impressions that native speakers and varieties are the only versions that exist (2011:338). It encourages learner confidence when interacting with differing varieties (Matsuura, Et Al. 1999:57) and increases their interpretational skills (Smith & Nelson 2006:430).

For many English learners, AmE or BrE are the only instructional models they will experience during their education (Chiba & Matsuura, 1996. In: Matsuura, Et Al, 1999:50), with minimal opportunity to expose themselves to other varieties. EIL classes should be encouraged to reduce this outdated practice. In Japan, 'Japanese students are 'taught American English and expected to become speakers of American English' (Honna, 2016:67), but there is now a growing awareness that this is an 'unrealistic, unattainable, and undesirable program' and that EIL, not EFL should be adopted.

### **Teaching Implications and Change**

In EIL classes English teachers can first, explicitly clarify that the instructional model selected, is not the correct, only, or most important model to study, and that in reality the models they will experience 'may look and sound quite different' (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011:336). Secondly, can inform learners that the selected model may differ linguistically

from other users of English, and to be aware that negotiation of meaning is essential to international English language use (2011:338). Finally, they can construct and facilitate a 'strategic repertoire' learners will require in their future international English interactions (2011:340).

Another important aspect to EIL education would be learners constructing an understanding of different cultures merging together through English use. Honna (2016:74) and Smith & Christopher (2001:92. In: Smith & Nelson 2006:430) give examples of this, by explaining how a Japanese company apology failed to translate across cultures, and how a Turkish taxi driver came into difficulty when an English learner failed to recognise local customs. EIL must not focus strictly on language itself, but be interwoven with the use of it in specific socio-cultural and socio-political environments.

### **EIL in South Korea**

Although there is growing interest from expanding circle countries, it is not yet clear if the ground is fertile enough in all locations for EIL implementation. This is most certainly the case for ELT in South Korea. 'Nativist' speaker desires and 'American English' goals are so deeply engrained in Korean society (Park, 2009:126), creating conflict with the EIL blueprint. Local or regional varieties of English are still viewed as unimportant for study and denied recognition or appreciation (Park, 2006a. In: Park, 2009:127) when compared to American norms.

Ultimately, teaching is 'context bound' (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011:343). The continuing challenge for EFL teachers, is finding ways to introduce EIL ideals into EFL classes where possible (Prabhu, 1990:175). Communicative opportunities are frequently produced in existing EFL approaches. Adjusting them to include EIL communication and interactions students are more likely to encounter could improve overall awareness of WE. Allowing students to practice the use of English as an intermediary language across cultures (Honna, 2016:76) must feature in EFL teaching approaches, both in Korea and around the world.

### **Conclusion**

English use should be 'serviceable enough for interaction in a global market' (Smith & Nelson, 2006:441) not only a NS market. It is the duty of EFL teachers now, to prepare students for an EIL future

There are no issues with selecting a 'native' model for primary instruction, so long as it is made explicit to learners that other varieties exist, are valid and will indeed be encountered. It is the communication and negotiation strategies learners will need to employ in these encounters which requires ample opportunities for practice (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011:339), and should take precedent over far away language norms. A cultural and sensitive understanding that people do things differently in different contexts follows directly behind, and as a result teachers must encourage 'peaceful and patient' conversations (Crystal, 1997. In: Park, 2009:127) when interacting with our international English partners.

If we are to enjoy English as a multicultural language, 'we should be prepared to introduce intercultural accommodation training to ELT' (Honna, 2016:71) in the form of EIL. EFL teachers must make a considered and continued effort to include World English(es) and EIL in their curriculum where possible, practical and plausible (Prabhu, 1990:175). Creating opportunities for learners to 'expand and extend' (Matsuura, Et Al, 1999:57) their uses of English in the international interactions that await them.

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