

Critical Perspectives on Global English: A Study of Their Implications

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Abstract

This study examines the critiques of the global spread of English, that is, criticisms of the socio-political and linguistic impact of English spread, and investigates their theoretical, sociolinguistic, and pedagogical implications for non-English speaking countries. Firstly, it inspects Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism and the key issues in his account: the spread of English in relation to cultural imperialism, inequality, and the ELT industry. Then, it further discusses the critique of the effect of English on language death and language change. The third section assesses the notion of English as a so-called 'killer language' while Section Four explores the development of New Englishes, and the concept of the ownership of English claimed by non-native English users.

Keywords: Global English, linguistic imperialism, the spread of English

1. Introduction

The unprecedented global spread of English has given rise to heated debates about its socio-cultural and politico-economic impact on non-English speaking countries (e.g. Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Tsui and Tollefson, 2007; Mazzaferro, 2008; Saraceni, 2010). In response to the controversy, this study intends to offer a close examination on the critiques of the socio-political and linguistic impact of English spread and more importantly, to investigate their implications on the development of English language and English language teaching in non-English speaking countries. Therefore, not only the criticism and debates on issues of global English but also their theoretical, sociolinguistic, and pedagogical implications for non-English speaking countries are inspected in each section. First, in the second section, it examines Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism and the key issues in his account: the spread of English in relation to cultural imperialism, inequality, and the ELT industry. The third section discusses the critique of the effect of English on language death and language change. The notion of English as a so-called 'killer language' is then assessed. In the fourth section, the focus is on the issue of New Englishes and the concept of the ownership of English claimed by non-native English users.

2. English Linguistic Imperialism

Among all the criticisms of the global spread of English, Phillipson's (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism* is one of the most influential and controversial works in which he critiques the causes and impact of English spread. He claims to uncover a conspiracy behind the global spread of English and English language teaching.

What Phillipson proposes is a linguistic counterpart of imperialism in Galtung's (1988) imperialism theory which analyses the world by making distinction between a dominant Centre (the powerful western countries and interests) and dominated Peripheries (the underdeveloped countries). It is claimed that the norms imposed by the dominant Centre have been internalized by those in power in the Periphery in order to legitimate exploitation. Language as the primary means for communication plays an essential role in the Centre's cultural and linguistic penetration of the Periphery. Therefore, by transmitting norms and ideas of the Centre through language, linguistic imperialism is not only a distinct type of imperialism but also pervades all the types of imperialism. In other words, linguistic imperialism is a subtype as well as an integral part of cultural imperialism, along with media-based, educational and scientific imperialism.

Phillipson (1992: 47) defines 'English linguistic imperialism' as follows: '*the*

dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. English linguistic imperialism is a subtype of ‘linguicism’, and is defined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988: 13) as ‘*ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language.*’ Two main mechanisms legitimate English as the dominant language: ‘anglo-centricity’- the ethnocentrism of original English users, referring to the practice of judging other cultures by the standards of one’s own, and ‘professionalism’- referring to seeing methods, techniques, procedures and theories followed in ELT as sufficient for understanding and analyzing language learning (Phillipson, 1992: 47-48). Phillipson argues that the unequal allocation of power and resources between core English-speaking countries and periphery-English countries has been affected and legitimated by anglo-centricity as well as professionalism in the field of ELT. The English language has been promoted in order to serve the interests of the Centre.

Thus in Phillipson’s theory of linguistic imperialism, English is placed at the core of the socio-political process of imperialism where the dominant Centre controls the economic and political fate of the dominated Periphery. In short, what he attempts to uncover is how English has been promoted and supported by a range of institutions promoting the structural power of English linguistic hegemony.

According to Pennycook (1999: 150), what Phillipson’s view lacks is ‘a view of how English is taken up, how people use English, why people choose to use English. Thus, the power of Phillipson’s framework that is also its weakness.’ Phillipson’s notion of linguistic imperialism has been criticized by writers such as Davies (1996) and Bisong (1995) for his over-emphasis on the domination and effect of the English language, for neglecting other factors in the process of English spread and for his self-confirming hypotheses (Fishman, 1993). Criticisms of Phillipson’s argument can be generally divided into two categories: empirical examination and theoretical debate.

Scholars from post-colonial countries have also questioned Phillipson’s claim of English linguistic imperialism. It is argued that linguistic imperialism should not be over-generalized and needs to be scrutinized contextually. Bisong (1995) evaluates Phillipson’s claims by examining the following questions in the context of Nigeria: Has English succeeded in displacing or replacing other languages in the post-colonial countries? Has the dominance of English caused local culture to be undervalued and marginalized? Why did writers literate and fluent in their mother tongues write in English? Through these pragmatic and relevant questions, Bisong argues that in

Nigeria English, like other indigenous languages, is one of the linguistic choices and it functions as a pragmatic instrument without endangering indigenous languages and cultures. He then criticizes Phillipson for failing to perceive the complexities of the sociolinguistic situation in Nigeria and for attempting to over-generalize the situation in one part of the Periphery.

In *Post-Imperial English*, a volume of empirical research on status change and English in post-colonial countries from 1940 to 1990, three interlocking questions were raised in order to seek empirical evidence for Phillipson's linguistic imperialism (Fishman, 1996): Was English still 'spreading' in the non-English mother-tongue world? Was the continued spread in any way directly orchestrated by, fostered by, or exploitatively beneficial to the English mother-tongue world? Were there forces or processes contributing to the continued spread of English? From case studies of English in various former British and American colonies, Fishman concludes that the continued spread of English was related more to their involvement in the modern world economy rather than to the English mother-tongue world. In addition, English in most former British and American colonies was no longer a reflection of externally imposed hegemony, but part of the everyday discourse following its own commonsense needs and desires. Although English can be linked to social stratification (e.g. a functional division of labor between English and the local vernaculars) and the increasing use of English in the future is foreseeable, English and local languages can actually complement each other by satisfying different needs and having different social functions.

Rubal-Lopez (1996) argues that Phillipson's focus on the relationship between colonialism and the spread of English excludes potentially significant factors for analyzing the spread of English worldwide. These include details and characteristics of nations where English is used, and the comparison between colonial and non-colonial countries, and can lead to over-generalizations regarding the spread of English. Phillipson's macro-social perspective is also criticized for failing to attend the micro-social issues of domination as well as to apprehend the reality of periphery classrooms (ibid.). From his perspective, the status of English will only be challenged by changing the structure of geopolitical relations, and the existing resistance to English in the Periphery, e.g. nativized visions of English and the hybrid mixing of languages in indigenous communities, is ignored. As Canagarajah (1999) further argues, the determinism and impersonality of Phillipson's analytical models, i.e. Galtung's theory of imperialism and dependent theory, preclude him from investigating some of the more complex issues of linguistic domination and resistance.

The theoretical foundation of Phillipson's linguistic imperialism has also been

questioned. Davies (1996) challenges Phillipson's Linguistic Imperialism by pointing out his ahistorical and insular view of English and the problem of his self-confirming hypotheses. The latter refers to Phillipson's deterministic insistence of revealing the unequal power relations behind the post-colonial promotion of English, and it has biased the judgments of the facts and the presentation of his arguments. Davies also argues that in *Linguistic Imperialism* the post-colonial development of English is isolated from other imperial languages, and not only the interaction of English with other languages but also the responses, decisions and resistance from the Periphery has been ignored. In addition, Phillipson is criticized for overemphasizing the role of language and the structural and hegemonic power of English spread, and for blaming the English language as the major cause of disadvantage in the Anglophone Third World (ibid.).

From a Marxist point of view, Holborow (1999) argues that Phillipson's Center-Periphery model fails to explain the material realities in the Periphery, in the sense that the Periphery is not uniformly suppressed by the Center and that local ruling classes of the periphery countries are the actual beneficiaries of capitalist development. In fact, education and linguistic policies in these countries are measures conforming to local ruling classes' interests rather than the consequence of cultural imperialism. The term 'linguistic imperialism' is therefore misleading because 'it deflects attention from the source of the inequalities, as well as missing the contradictory character of language itself' (ibid. p.78). According to Holborow, Phillipson's theoretical tool and analysis is not sufficient to explain the modern world today and language is not a determinant of the world order. Conrad (1996) argues that it is not linguicism but imperialism that induces the exploitation and disadvantage of the former British and American colonies. Language is only an indication of imperialism, and it is not languages *per se* that are in conflict. Instead, it is people merely using different languages to create conflict in the first place.

Consequently, the concept of linguistic imperialism in part reveals the socio-political role of languages and power relations between different language speakers under the global structure, and it needs to be investigated further in different contexts. The significance of the criticisms made by Phillipson, and other writers such as Pennycook and Tollefson, is that they have brought these socio-political and ideologically radical questions to the forefront. These issues have tended to be ignored in the field of Applied Linguistics and ELT for some time. For a fuller discussion of the criticisms of English spread, the following sections will focus on the key issues in Phillipson's argument of linguistic imperialism: cultural imperialism, inequality and the ELT industry.

2.1 English and cultural imperialism

Tomlinson (1991) summarizes four approaches to analyzing the characteristics of cultural imperialism, namely: cultural imperialism as media imperialism; cultural imperialism as a discourse of nationality; cultural imperialism as the critique of global capitalism; cultural imperialism as the critique of modernity. He points out that the first three can be seen as determinants of the cultural condition of modernity, and argues that the various discourses of cultural imperialism could be regarded as protests against the spread of (capitalist) modernity. In this respect, the spread of Western imagery and culture is construed as a new form of imperialism. This is referred to as 'cultural imperialism', and it is claimed that it can reinforce the dependency of the Periphery on the Centre.

One of the most profound cultural impacts of imperialism might be language practice. As Laitin (1983) (quoted in Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1997: 61) claims:

Of all the cultural ties that still bind Africa to Europe, it is the continued use of European languages as the official languages of African states that remains most significant.

For languages are both a medium of communication as well as an identity symbol. On the one hand, it, in part, signifies one's nationality, culture, ideology and ethnicity, and works as a social organism constructing its communities and in turn constructed by its users, on the other. In most former British colonies in Africa and Asia, e.g. Nigeria, Kenya, and Malaysia, English has often been adopted as the official language in education, administration and law. The language policies and language politics in these countries tend to reflect a twofold dilemma in the process of their nation building, i.e. national unity vs. linguistic nationalism, and modernization vs. resistance to imperialism. For example, Kembo-Sure (2003: 247-8) describes the prevailing attitudes towards English in Kenya.

For many Kenyans the position of English in their environment is taken for granted, for it is the language their children have to learn at school. To this group it is simply the language children must learn in order that they may get ahead in life and other questions may not be warranted. [...] On the other extreme there are Kenyans, mainly the educated elites, who link English to their country's inglorious past of political and cultural subjugation. This group is opposed to the status of English as an official language, the language that dominates the public life of many Kenyans. The link with the ignoble past causes this group to assert that Kenya will not be fully free from neo-colonialism until it divests itself of the language of slavery and oppression.

In the global context, it is claimed that English is learned because of its connection

to popular culture and the mass media, e.g. American films, television, popular music and other mass entertainment. In other words, the domination of American culture has reinforced the spread of English while English as a mechanism for participating mass consumer culture facilitates the process of Americanization.

However, the concept of cultural imperialism has been criticized as it fails to explain how a cultural practice can be accepted in a context without coercive imposition (Tomlinson, 1991) and for overstating external determinants and undervaluing the internal dynamics in the Periphery (Garofalo, 1993, cited in Golding and Harries, 1997: 5). As Kroes (1999) argues, most of the research on cultural production tends to focus on the senders (the Centre) rather than the receivers (the Periphery). They often over-emphasize the hegemonic and structural power that can benefit the Centre (the senders), and hypothesize the Periphery as passive and submissive receivers. Therefore the subjectivity of the receivers and the resistance from the receiving end is often ignored. In the case of the global spread of English, similar argument has been raised by scholars such as Davies (1996) and Bisong (1995). It is argued that the spread of English is not a static interaction but rather a dynamic one. Moreover, the decisions of the Periphery are far from dependent but can be contextually different. The subjectivity of the receiving end is therefore legitimated by the notion of choice and the resistance to hegemony.

Following Phillipson's (1992) linguistic imperialism and Pennycook's (1994) claim of restricted notions of choice (i.e. the choice of English is restricted and thus problematic), Bamgbose (2003: 421) raises a valid point in the debate regarding the global spread of English; he poses the question: '*Is the choice of English a free choice or are there constraints that make the choice inevitable?*' English language users and learners in ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) countries around the world do have a choice which, however, is constrained by 'functionalist' or 'hegemonic' reasons, e.g. international communication and national unity. For example, in Asian contexts the dominance of English might be driven by internal needs and interests. However, as Tsui and Tollefson (2007: 18) claim,

their language policy responses to globalization have been shaped, and even determined, by the linguistic practices and preference of multinational corporations, transnational organizations, and international aid agencies. Asian countries have little choice but to legitimize the hegemony of English.

In this sense, Pennycook appears justified in arguing that the notion of choice is problematic in terms of its meaning and interpretation. Constraints on a choice cannot deny the subjectivity of the decision makers while a choice under constraints cannot

legitimate the freedom that the notion of choice implies. In other words, both the concept of cultural imperialism and the notion of choice are weakened as well as hindered by the resistance to hegemony and appropriation of English in the Periphery. The dichotomy between the dominant Centre and the dominated Periphery in discourses of cultural imperialism is problematic, especially when the Periphery is no longer a passive and submissive receiver but a more active participant in the process of English spread. However, the resistance to the norms of the ENL countries in a way reveals the existing power relationship between the Centre and the Periphery.

Pennycook (1995:48) argues for a more dynamic as well as clearer picture of the global spread of English:

A critical paradigm [is needed] that acknowledges human agency and looks not only at how people's lives are regulated by language, culture and discourse but also at how people both resist those forms and produce their own forms.

Rather than only focusing on English speaking countries (the senders) and the norms (messages), it is claimed that there is a need to attend the receiving end: in other words, the resistance and localization or hybridisation of messages. Many researchers (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999; Eoyang, 2003; Sonntag, 2003) have investigated the anti-hegemonic or resistance perspectives which can provide a more interactive and integrated view on the global spread of English. And by shifting the focus from the Center to the Periphery, it allows Periphery participants to claim their ownership of English. (See Section 4 for a discussion on 'New Englishes' and the Ownership of English)

2.2 Inequality and English

Tollefson (2000:8) raises a paradox regarding the global spread of English:

[Although] English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political and economic inequalities.

The dominant status of English as a global language, on the one hand, facilitates and increases international communication and interaction. However, it may also result in a new form of global stratification that depends on access to the *lingua franca* of a global elite. It is claimed that the dominance of global English has resulted in unbalanced power relations between native English speakers and non-native English speakers (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994, 1995; Tollefson, 2000). In addition, while English has taken a very important position in many education systems around the world, it has also become a gatekeeper to positions of prestige in

society (Pennycook 1994, 1995).

In former British and American colonies where English is used as an official language in the education system and government, English is an instrument by which individuals who can afford to learn English in expensive schools can have greater educational and economic advantages later in life. In the global context, English as a global language has become the dominant language of international communication, business and technology, and is the most widely studied language in the world¹ (Graddol, 1997; Ho and Wong, 2003). While English-speaking countries may benefit from the privilege of their mother tongue and from the English education industry, non-English speaking countries and individuals have to invest their own time, effort and expense in order to acquire the English language.

It is therefore argued by some (e.g. Tollefson, 1995, 2000) that a new form of socio-economic inequality has emerged between native English speakers and non-native English speakers in international contexts, and between those with and without English proficiency in the outer and expanding circles (Kachru, 1985, 1992a, 1992b). Under this stratification, English as a variety or as a *lingua franca* is still subject to the legitimacy and constraints of ENL countries in terms of standards and education (see Section 4 for a further discussion on 'New Englishes' and the ownership of English).

Scholars such as Auerbach (1995), Pennycook (1995) and Tollefson (1995) question the widespread ideological view of English as an instrument for gaining individual economic opportunity, and argue that the global spread of English is part of a wider political, social and economic process that results in economic inequality. Their argument regarding the relationship between global English and global inequality deserves careful examination.

To a certain extent, their critique of global English has some plausibility. The global spread of English is not a simple phenomenon of prevalence of skills or technique, but a complicated process with socio-cultural and politico-economic implications. English might not be the cause of global inequality but has become an important factor in intensifying inequality. However, as several writers have pointed out (Conrad, 1996; Davies, 1996; Fishman, 1996), it is the world political-economic system rather than the English language alone that is responsible for global inequality. English is not the centre or the major cause of global inequality but only part of the world system that indicates the unbalanced power relations. Therefore, English as a global language can be seen as an infrastructure and a medium for the world political-economic system, and will continue to be the prestigious instrument for

¹ The proportion of all school students studying modern languages in Europe: English 60.3%, French 30.4%, German 5.2%, Spanish 3.5%, other 0.6% (Graddol, 1997: 45).

development as long as its predominant status retains.

2.3 English, the ELT industry and international education

Another important aspect of English spread is the global development of English language teaching and learning, and the ELT industry. As one of the major growth industries around the world in the past thirty years (Crystal, 1997), the ELT industry provides the inner circle English users, including the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand with a new form of international trade: English education industry. This market process may well intensify and expand the use of English around the world (Kaplan, 2001).

In addition, the global spread of English and the dominant status of English in major international domains also promote higher education in ENL countries, as well as the English-medium higher education. For example, in the case of the natural sciences, English has obtained a predominant status, and up-to-date textbooks and research articles are more easily obtainable in English. The dominance of English in the sciences (Ammon, 2001) results in the growth of higher education in English-speaking countries, mainly the US and Britain, and leads to the development of the English-medium higher education in non-English speaking countries. Graddol (1997) suggests that the international demand for specialist courses of ESL will rapidly increase in the following decades and new forms of higher education will become an important part of international education. These may include hybrid courses (e.g. Information technology in English) and joint venture enterprises between institutes in English-speaking and non-English speaking countries.

The promotion and revenue of international education provides not only educational and economic benefits, but also political and national interests. In a way, the ELT industry, international education, and the predominance of English have established an influential global framework of English promotion. On the one hand, the predominant status of English benefits the ENL countries in the global market of higher education and enhances the development of the ELT industry worldwide. On the other hand, the international education provided by the ENL countries, and the rapid growth of English language teaching and learning worldwide, tends to reinforce the domination of global English.

However, as the dominant language in the global market of education, can English function as a neutral language without imposing the underlying ideological and cultural values of its original users? By examining the discourse of English as an international language, Pennycook (1994) argues that the promotion of English has changed from the pre-Second World War era in that development aid became a global commodity. He claims that English language teaching practices are cultural practices

rather than the neutral, natural and beneficial classroom methodology or technology. Furthermore, the ELT industry is not only a world commodity or a service industry, but also an integral part of international capitalism and global structures of dependency (ibid.). Pennycook (2000) therefore argues that socio-political and cultural political viewpoints are needed in the English language classroom in order to reflect the larger cultural and social world. By examining the government policy of the UK and the US, the capitalist global market of English, as well as the academic discourses of English language teaching and learning, Phillipson (1992, 2000) also challenges the neutrality of ELT. He argues that ELT is promoted worldwide by agencies, such as the British Council, which not only respond to the demand for the English language, but also aim to reinforce the demand. In addition, the ELT profession, including language teachers and those training the profession, conspire to keep the predominance of English by tenets, beliefs and practices adopted in ELT. It is argued that English has been promoted by the UK and the US for their national interests. A conspiratorial role therefore is imposed on ELT activities.

However, it can be argued that Phillipson's account considerably overstates the political influence and status of the ELT profession and ignores the subjectivity of English learners around the world. As De Swaan (2001) suggests, the global popularity of the English language is mainly due to the benefits it can provide. People worldwide choose to learn English not just because of the promotion by agents, such as the British Council, but also because of its high communicative potential. Crystal (1997) and Graddol (1997) maintain that the global spread of English should be regarded as a consequence of modern historical development of the world politico-economic system, rather than a conspiracy to retain the domination of English speaking countries. In other words, the dominance of a certain language is more a byproduct of the politico-economic world, rather than a political goal in itself.

Nevertheless, it is also undeniable that ELT practices and international education cannot be value-free nor culturally appropriate. The impact of global English is social, cultural, as well as ideological, for language is culture-bound and so are its pedagogy, textbooks and methodology. Canagarajah (2002) and Gray (2002) argue that there is a need to examine various paradigms of ELT from the Centre in terms of its methodology, pedagogy and coursebooks and to have a voice in the Periphery language classrooms. Although it is native English speakers who are believed to be in the legitimate position of holding the norms and standards of English (also see Section 4 'New Englishes' and the Ownership of English), the power relation in the scenario of ELT and international education is not static. ELT is not a one-way transmission of language norms and cultures. As far as learners from different cultures are concerned, ELT is not only a huge business worldwide but also a forum where different cultures,

ideologies and viewpoints can meet.

3. English, Language Endangerment, and Linguistic Rights

The commonly accepted estimate of languages in the world is between six and seven thousand. According to recent estimates, 2,500 languages are likely to die out by the end of the twenty-first century. Research on endangered languages has been conducted by scholars (e.g. Crystal, 2000; Dalby, 2002) who advocate the need to halt the loss of languages and investigate the cause of language death. The reason why the loss of languages should be stopped lies in the multiple and abundant resources embodied in different languages. The existence of linguistic diversity not only provides us with various linguistic properties but also the evolution of the human mind that languages can reveal. Moreover, languages can preserve and transmit a number of unique elements including insights into the structure of the human world embodied in other languages, and the creativity and flexibility generated by interaction between languages (Dalby, 2002).

One of the criticisms of the spread of English is its threatening impact on other languages. In most former colonies of British Empire in Africa and Asia, as a language of imperialism and predominance in government, education, technology and business, English has been blamed as the major cause of language death. It is claimed that English curtails the developments of other languages or poses a direct threat to the existence of other languages while it becomes dominant in most significant domains of language usage (e.g. Mühlhäusler, 1996; Phillipson and Skuttnab-Kangas, 1996, 1997; Skuttnab-Kangas, 2000a). For instance, Skuttnab-Kangas (2000a: 24) argues that the 'consciousness industry' (by which she means formal education and the mass media) is one of the direct main agents for causing language death. Through the education system and the mass media, the necessity of the dominant language and the inferiority of other languages tend to become reinforced. Linguistic genocide therefore happens when speakers learn the dominant language at the cost of their mother tongues, rather than in addition to them.

This is also the case in the context of the globalizing world. Fishman (2001) points out that the sheer difficulty of saving threatened languages is due to the worldwide movement toward modernization and Westernization driven by American-dominated globalization. The dominant languages in the world are the so-called 'killer languages', and it is claimed that the foremost among them is English.

In order to protect linguistic diversity threatened by English, Linguistic Human Rights as one type of human rights have been advocated (Phillipson and Skuttnab-Kangas 1995, 1996, 1997; Skuttnab-Kangas and Phillipson 1995;

Skuttnab-Kangas 2000a). It is claimed that ‘rights are needed for speakers of dominated languages, who individually and collectively experience linguistic “wrongs”, marginalization, and ultimately the extinction of the languages’ (Phillipson and Skuttnab-Kangas 1995:483). By legally binding linguistic human rights in language policy and language education, it is then possible to cultivate and preserve linguistic and cultural diversity in terms of language ecology.

English can be a cause of endangerment of minority languages in contexts where it has direct contact with other languages (Mühlhäusler, 1996; Skuttnab-Kangas 2000b). English as a locally dominant *lingua franca* has indeed curtailed small languages. However, it should be noted that other regional *lingua franca* and national languages can have the same threatening impact on the small languages in the regions or territories. Dalby (2002) suggests that the decline in the total numbers of languages worldwide is caused by the development of large centralized political units in human society. He maintains that if we focus on the development of world languages in the twentieth century, it is the underlying assumptions and ideological paradigm of the nation-state that often leads to linguistic nationalism. These political entities tend to emphasize the need for ethnic and linguistic unity and, therefore, invariably marginalize other smaller languages.

As a result, in most former colonies of the British Empire and America, English has retained its official status in the process of nation building for solving the problem of considerable ethno-linguistic diversity in their territories and for access to Western knowledge and technology (see Ferguson, 2006; Wright, 2004). Holborow (1999) argues that Phillipson’s appeal for the promotion of local languages, in order to counteract inequality, does not necessarily promote linguistic rights. On the contrary, linguistic rights can lead to nationalist policies and have been used by local elites as an excuse for oppression and division in parts of Africa and Eastern Europe.

Consequently, although English might be responsible for language death in certain contexts, it is the political and ideological development of human society, e.g. nationalism, that can cause the decline of the number of world’s languages. To some degree language is an index as well as an instrument of political power. For threatened languages, the major threats are their weak political status and the domination of the national or official languages in education, government, and media.

4. ‘New Englishes’ and the Ownership of English

The global spread of English and its predominant status worldwide had a significant impact not only on its users, but also the way it can be used and developed. This section examines the controversial issue of the status of ‘New Englishes’ and the

claim of the ownership of English in the outer and expanding circles.

4.1 The other tongue: The emergence of New Englishes

At the end of colonial period, 'New Englishes' emerged. They were defined as the localized forms of English in post-colonial countries, such as India, Singapore, Nigeria and Philippines. The 'indigenisation' or 'nativization' of English varieties manifests the diversification of English and has provoked the controversy over the models, norms and standards for English in the outer-circle countries.

On one side of the controversy, Kachru (1985, 1992a, 1992b) proposes a paradigm shift for the study of World Englishes and advocates that many types of English, instead of a unified form, exist in the outer-circle countries. It is argued that they have their own sociological, linguistic, and literary manifestations. In this sense, English no longer exclusively belongs to the inner-circle countries. It is a medium for expressing context-specific meanings, and an independent and decolonized identity.

According to Kachru (1985, 1992b), there are two types of models of English: native and institutionalized non-native. The new varieties of English in the outer-circle countries are the institutionalized varieties of non-native English. Their main characteristics are as follows:

- (a) they have an extended range of uses in the sociolinguistic context of a nation; (b) they have an extended register and style range; (c) a process of *nativization* of the registers and styles has taken place, both in formal and in contextual terms; and (d) a body of nativized English literature has developed which has formal contextual characteristics which mark it *localized*. (Kachru, 1992b: 55) (original italic)

Focusing on the acculturation and nativization of English in the outer-circle countries, Kachru's work provides a framework of sociolinguistic and sociopolitical analysis in the study of World Englishes and advocates their rights of the language.

In contrast, Quirk (1990) advocates the necessity of teaching Standard English in all three of Kachru's circles. He argues that new English varieties in the outer circle are not legitimate varieties of English because of the instability and because of their lack of description of local norms. There is also considerable concern regarding the loss of intelligibility if the drift of English varieties accelerates. Additionally, in terms of English language teaching, scholars in Applied Linguistics and the public are skeptical of the non-native English norms not only for the linguistic deviation, but also for international intelligibility.

The debate on the status of New Englishes tends to focus on the tension between international intelligibility and local identity. McArthur (1998, 2001) suggests there is a centripetal/centrifugal paradox in world English in that there may be an increase in

the variety and local prestige of the language which may be at odds with powerful pressures towards a world standard. Moreover, it is claimed that this trend may continue.

Brutt-Griffler (2002) provides a framework to explain the development of world English. In her view, second language acquisition is a socio-historical process, and New Englishes are regarded as the products of social second language acquisition when ‘a speech community not only acquires the language but also makes the language its own’ (ibid, p.137). In order to explain the unity of varieties of English, Brutt-Griffler proposes a centripetal diagram of forces (see Figure 1) which distinguishes between the two types of bilingual speech communities in terms of macro-acquisition² (type A macro-acquisition coincides with ESL contexts of English spread; type B macro-acquisition coincides with EFL contexts of English spread). By continuing mutual interaction in major international domains (e.g. business, popular culture, science and technology), World English, that is, the language of the world speech community of English, creates a ‘centre of gravity’ which retains the essential linguistic unity among the varieties of English.

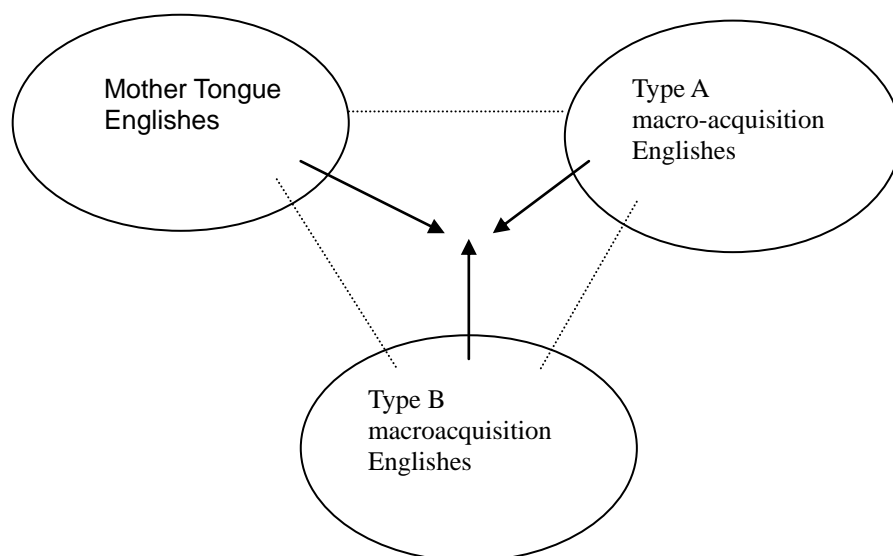


Figure 1. Language convergence with world English (Brutt-Griffler 2002:178)

In the past two decades, much research on New Englishes has been conducted (see Bolton, 2003). Through the claim of pluri-centricity of English, the codification of innovations and bilinguals’ creativity, the model of New Englishes has been recognized and accepted by many scholars (e.g. Bamgbose,1998; Kachru 1992a,

² According to Brutt-Griffler (2002), macro-acquisition refers to the acquisition of a second language by a speech community and emphasizes the thrust for change in the process of social second language acquisition.

1992b, 2005). It is argued that to a certain extent the ownership of English has been passed from native to non-native speakers in the outer circle (Seidlhofer and Jenkins, 2003). However, as Ferguson (2006) points out, the recognition of New Englishes as legitimate varieties does not necessarily lead to the acceptance of teaching a local model of English in school. This is because of the lack of codification of local norms and the benefits that learning Standard English can provide. Overall, the New Englishes have obtained socio-political and sociolinguistic recognition but there are still doubts in regard to adopting them as adequate teaching models.

In the following sections, I will move on to the expanding circle and international context and examine the issue of English as a global *lingua franca* and its pedagogical implications.

4.2 The ownership of English and the pedagogical implications of English as a *lingua franca*

Following the paradigm of New Englishes, the native speakers' ownership of English has been questioned by several writers (e.g. Seidlhofer and Jenkins, 2003; Widdowson, 1994, 1997) in order to establish the legitimacy of English use in the outer circle and to justify the use of English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) in EFL countries without being constrained by the norms of the inner circle. In general, there has been considerable discussion regarding the norms and models involved in teaching English worldwide, especially in the outer and expanding countries (Brutt-Griffler, 1998; Deneire, 1998; Jenkins, 2000, 2004; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004; Widdowson, 1997, 1998). The difference between ENL and English as a *lingua franca* needs to be addressed as it reflects a fundamental shift of the orientation of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). The issues involved include: levels of correctness to appropriateness and differences between native-like norms to forms of global inclusiveness. In the face of English varieties and English language teaching worldwide, the nature and practice of Standard English has thus become an important issue among ELT practitioners and academics.

Widdowson (1994) questions the native speakers' 'ownership of English' and proposes that Standard English is an international language that serves a whole range of different communities and their institutional purposes. Widdowson (1997) goes on to argue that through the development of autonomous registers which can guarantee specialist communication within global expert communities, English has spread as an international language. He therefore suggests that English as an international language is English for specific purposes (ESP) and proposes an approach of English teaching focusing on the language use in the secondary international communities, e.g. academic and professional activities, rather than one focusing on the authentic

language of use in current English pedagogy. However, in spite of the difficulty of imposing ESP in school curriculums and the question of the suitability of ESP for international communication and interaction (Brutt-Griffler, 1998), Widdowson’s ESP approach reveals the paradox of English as an international language in EFL countries. Although the ESP approach emphasizes communication and information rather than community and identity, it is still subject to constraints of the academic criteria of the original English-speaking countries.

In attempting to democratize English, Seidlhofer and Jenkins (2003) argue that the goal of English education in the expanding-circle countries is to teach English as a *lingua franca* rather than English as a native language, because the goal of learning English for non-English speakers is not to communicate with native speakers but with non-native speakers around the world (Seidlhofer, 2001). Jenkins (2000) identifies pronunciation as the area of greatest prejudice and argues that the main accent in EFL pedagogy, e.g. RP (Received Pronunciation) or GA (General American), is not widely used among L1 speakers and is unlikely to be appropriate for L2 pedagogy. An alternative model of phonological core of intelligibility which excludes difficult and irrelevant items for interlanguage intelligibility, e.g. /θ / and /ð/, is therefore proposed. In addition, as Seidlhofer (ibid.) points out, the lack of empirical work on the most extensive use of English as a *lingua franca* worldwide among ‘non-native’ speakers prevents us from regarding speakers of *lingua franca* English as language users in their own right, and results in the continuing dominance of native English. She therefore suggests an alternative model for teaching English as a *lingua franca* and argues that ‘the most typically English’ features, e.g. third person–s, tags, idioms, are not crucial for communication of English as a *lingua franca* in international contexts (Seidlhofer, 2001: 149).

In order to distinguish the ELF perspective from a traditional EFL approach, Jenkins (2009: 42) demonstrates the following comparison:

EFL	ELF
Part of modern foreign languages	Part of World Englishes
Deviations from ENL are seen as deficiencies	Deviations from ENL are seen as legitimate differences
Described by metaphors of transfer, interference and fossilization	Described by metaphors of language contact and evolution
Code-switching is seen negatively as an attempt to compensate for gaps in knowledge of English	Code-switching is seen positively as a bilingual resource to promote speaker identity, solidarity with interlocutors, and the like

Without conforming to native speaker norms of correctness, in the ELF paradigm

non-native forms are regarded as new kinds of English norms. However, among users of English with diversifying cultural and socio-linguistic backgrounds, there is a need to attain a certain degree of convergence. In order to achieve intelligibility and to identify non-native English norms in the expanding-circle context, empirical research on ELF have been done by scholars such as Jenkins (2000, 2002, 2009) and Park (2009), and through ELF corpora such as VOICE (the Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English) (Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004), the corpus of English as a lingua franca in Academic settings, and the corpus of South-East Asian (ASEAN) Englishes (Deterding and Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Graddol (1997, 2006) argues that when English becomes an international lingua franca, the future of English is no longer determined by its native speakers but by all users around the world. For a more democratic and fair world of international communication, an ELF norm might be necessary. Ammon (2000: 111), for example, refers to the ‘postulate of the non-native speakers’ right to linguistic peculiarities’. However, although the intention of the current ELF research endeavor is to identify the new ELF norms, the model of ELF is still more a socio-political claim than a practical objective in pedagogy. As Ferguson (2006) points out, there are some methodological difficulties in codifying ELF norms (e.g. the diversity of ELF users’ proficiency level and linguistic background, and the instability of communicative contexts) and conceptual obstacles in accepting an ELF model, i.e. the attachment to native-speaker-like competence as the ultimate benchmark. By pointing out the complexity of a sense of ownership toward a language, Saraceni (2010) argues that the feeling of the ownership of English goes beyond language as code and depends on the degree of the confidence a language user has when judging the correctness of given expressions. In addition, the claim of the ownership of English in the outer and expanding circles can be regarded as a kind of academic discourse produced by a group of highly educated elite and differs from public discourse stories of appropriation and ownership (ibid.). Overall, the claim of the ownership of English and an alternative model of ELF can be perceived as an attempt to resolve the unbalanced power relations between native and non-native English users in terms of communication and pedagogy. Nevertheless, it also shows the inevitable gap between theoretical conceptualization and educational practices in the spread of global English.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, criticisms of the wide spread global use of English reveals the complexity of this unprecedented phenomenon, and also shows the need for more thorough and contextually-based investigations. Jenkins (2000: 4) makes the point

that since English is the global language and the necessity of global English is confirmed, it is more important to look ahead and consider how to ‘make the language more cross-culturally democratic’ for all English users around the world, rather than argue the socio-historical inequality in English spread. Consequently, the critical perspectives of global English are significant, for it provides socio-cultural and political analyses of the dominance of English and provokes further investigation of its impact on different contexts.

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