



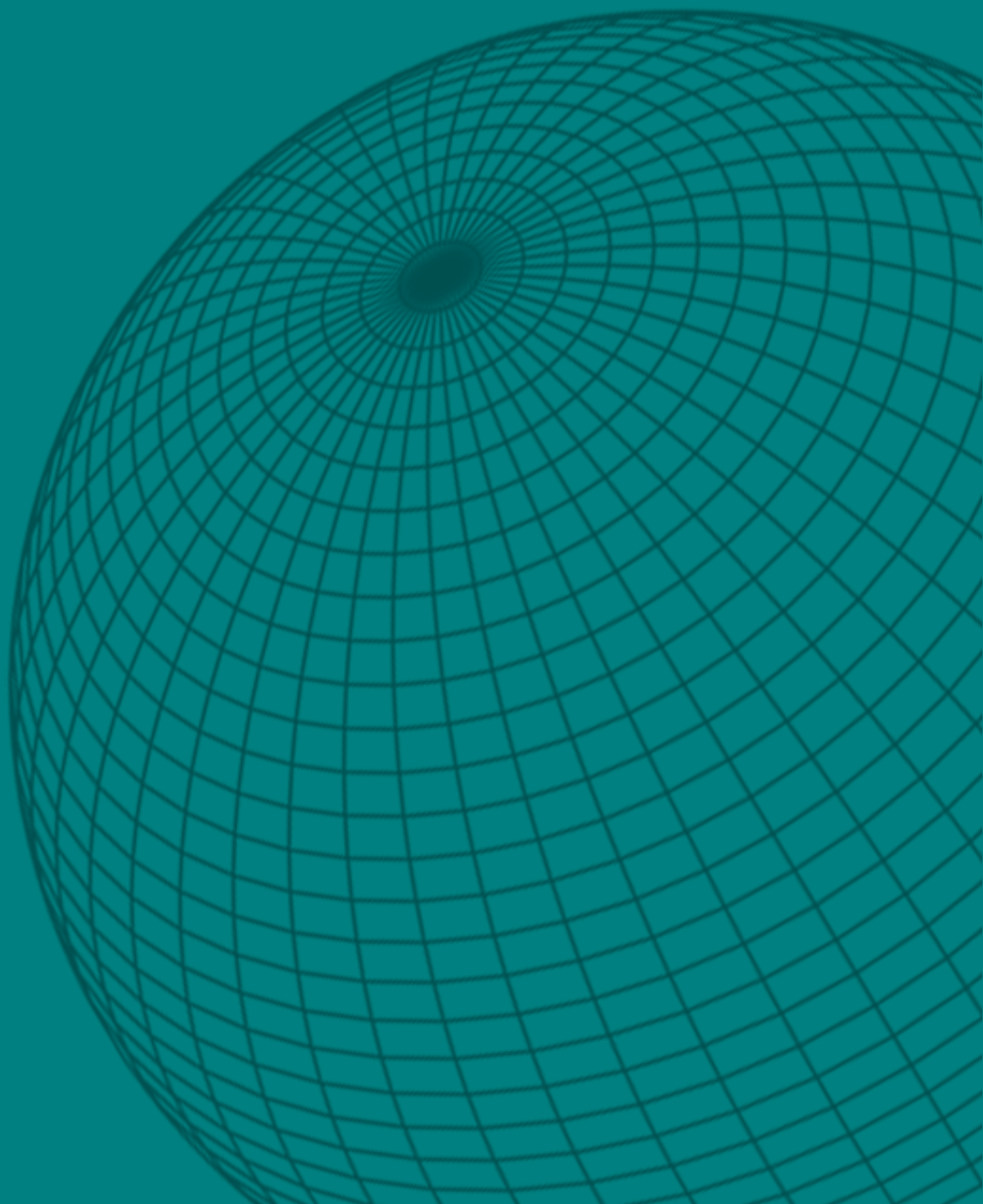
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Foreword

Welcome to the May 2016 issue of the Journal of English as an International Language!

This issue chimes with a host of initiatives and innovative applications that are commensurate with EILJ's declared resolve to uphold locally appropriate, culturally sensitive and socially attuned pedagogies and practices in EIL. In light of this, the voice and agency of our contributing authors assume particular substance and prominence in this issue. This, I vouch, is characteristic of EILJ's attempts to democratize and dehegemonize the use of English across the cultures of Asia and farther afield in the world.

The paper, "The Development of English as an ASEAN Lingua Franca and its Impact on English Teaching in Vietnam" by Stephanie Gross sets the tone and tenor for this issue in that it makes a bold attempt to question those incongruences that underlie the pedagogical approach to oral skills and pronunciation teaching in the ASEAN region. In doing this, the paper poses a vital question: Should teachers target common features and patterns developing in ASEAN English or target more "Western" pronunciation? In attempting to answer this question, the paper strives to balance the discussion of the importance of phonological differences within lingua francas with the importance of mutual intelligibility, especially for political and educational entities. Given the author's informed as well as experiential knowledge of the role of English in Vietnam and the ASEAN, it is both convincing and tenable to note that she voices her support for the use of multilingual national teachers without negating the working presence of visiting EFL teachers within the ASEAN context. In order to provide the theoretical support that her position demands, the author focuses on a number of crucial issues and concerns using sub topics such as: the status of English in Vietnam, ASEA's use of English as its language of choice, the lingua franca features of ASEAN English, the imperialism debate, cultural implications, issue of identity and pedagogical concerns. Given that the current teaching theory surrounding English as a lingua franca is seen to lack congruence with the current practice of teaching it within the ASEAN region, the author underscores the need for promoting awareness of World Englishes and English as an International lingua franca among Vietnamese students. This, she believes, can help students in Vietnam understand better as to what is happening in the world and hence will help diminish their obsession with a native speaker like accent and proficiency. In light of this they will then be more inclined to use English for informed learning and mutual intelligibility. Therefore, the author recommends that Vietnam should stop its idealization of British, American, or Australian

English in favour of a Vietnamese variety of English that encourages mutual intelligibility and effective speaking.

Anh-Thu Thi Nguyen and John Ingram's joint paper "Vietnamese accented English: Foreign accent and intelligibility judgement by listeners of different language backgrounds" directs attention to the context of English as a global language wherein the interactions are not only confined to those that take place between native speakers and ESL speakers but also among non-native speakers themselves. In view of this, the authors emphasize the inevitable need to investigate how well L2 listeners can judge and successfully comprehend accented English produced by other L2 speakers; particularly, how the specific linguistic background of an L2 listener determines their ability to understand and evaluate accented English from a speaker whose L1 is related – or not – to their own language. The authors believe that such an emphasis can have many beneficial implications for the formulation of pronunciation pedagogies/practices in TESOL teacher training programs. By the same token, their choice of methodology and route of realization are well placed to serve as a model for enriching our understanding of the principles that constitute language variation, contact, and change. In light of this, the focus on the corpus of Vietnamese accented English speech of Vietnamese overseas students can serve as an interesting viaduct for discerning realistically the various levels of the intelligibility of Vietnamese accented English speech that occurs in conditions that are synonymous with normal connected speech. Given this any non-problematic, simplistic and a one-shot understanding of accent and intelligibility of L2 speakers of English can have asocial consequences in the practices of EIL/TESOL.

Pramod Kumar Sah and Anu Upadhaya's paper "Establishing the Localization and Indigenization of Indian English: A Case Study", uses the world Englishes perspective (WE) as its theoretical mainstay to call for a greater acceptability and legitimation of non-native varieties of English. In light of this, the paper positions Indian English as a distinct variety evidenced by its localization and indigenization, which is consistent with the ethos of English as an international language especially Indian English rather than being downgraded and dismissed as "erroneous forms". The narratives featured in the paper are so well positioned that they confer a sense of immediacy and primacy to the issues focused in it. Using well informed arguments, the authors address the problematic issues that underlie the exonormative and endonormative models of English that appear to treat the complex issues of localization and indigenization rather simplistically. This implicates Indian English to a great extent. However, the authors confirm that the semantic slippage that arise in the discussions of exonormative and endormative models of English often fail to account for the strong

linkages between language and the identity of its user. The ensuing divergence urges us to go beyond the mere error-feature distinctions as seen in the Normative English in order to assign appropriate pedagogical value. This, according to the authors can serve as an well-nuanced introduction to the historical background of Indian English in addition to making a strong case for it as a distinct variety as evidenced by its localization and indigenization. Finally, the paper reviews the resulting pedagogical implications, i.e. the issues that English language teachers in India need to take into consideration while designing and delivering ESL lessons. Most important of these implications is the need to integrate local variety with the standard variety of English into the ESL syllabus. Only then can one address the sociolinguistic, socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic realities of India through the space, synergy and agency that WE offers its believers and devotees.

The joint paper entitled: “The Pervasiveness of the Neoliberal Agenda and Linguistic Instrumentalism in Japan’s English Education Policy “English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization” by Tyler Barrett and Hiroshi Miyashita interrogates the complexities and correlation gaps that become conspicuous in the English language policy agenda of Japan’s current political establishment. Pointing out the glaring disjuncture between the macro-level interests of the Japanese political establishment and the micro-level interests of the Japanese society at large, the authors use their epistemic stance, which is predicated on critical discourse analysis (CDA), to debunk the neoliberal tenets that Japan’s political establishment uses covertly to promote its “one size fits all” notion of linguistic instrumentalism as a rationale for effecting economic progress. Voicing their well garnered socio-cultural awareness obtained via their succinct methodology, the authors alert their readership to the resultant trail of social ills and woes. These they believe can only be addressed if those concerned with Japan’s English education show willingness to come to terms with the dynamics and fall-outs of their addictive adherence to linguistic instrumentalism from wider and inclusive perspectives. In light of this, the paper should augment our resolve to challenge any English language policy that is out of step with the agency, aspiration and voice of the people who come under its purview.

Usree Bhattacharya’s paper “The Politics of Participation: Dis-citizenship through English Teaching in a Suburban Indian Village School” reports on an ethnographic study, which examines and elucidates the implications of a politics of participation seen from a narrow policy pronouncement perspective. Using the notion of dis-citizenship perceived via the teaching of English in India, the author presents an engaging set of arguments to point out how misguided approaches and attitudes to “English-medium” school-

ing can exclude the focal children at an Indian school from a “fuller participation in national and international life.” The author quite unabashedly uncovers the findings of her study, which point to those problematic aspects of classroom instruction, which pose obstacles in the English learning experiences for the focal children thereby contributing to their dis-citizenship. This the author argues is a contradiction of the policy claims and pronouncements, which ranged from rote memorization routines to misdirected applications of communicative language teaching reminiscent of grammar translation practices. Such a state of affairs as the author argues confirms the exclusionary/marginalizing influence that English has on the focal children rather than an inclusionary or a fuller participatory citizenship influence it should otherwise exert on them. With a view to promoting fuller citizenship in the English classroom, the author presents an array of core issues and pedagogical insights with which both the policy makers and practitioners can transform the discourse, from focusing on the acquisition of English as a symbolic entity towards the acquisition of knowledge for the good of society.

In closing, I wish to applaud the resolve and resilience of the contributing authors in this issue. They have showcased their alternate discourses of current reckoning in EIL to make sense of their world and themselves. They have thus made bold border crossings to exemplify the translatability of their issues and insights in the practices of EIL. Such endeavours are central to EILJ’s declared mission of creating “a heterogeneous global English speech community, with a heterogeneous English and different modes of competence” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 211). Given this, I am certain that the issues and insights discussed in this issue would serve as a lamp to all of us, without which we will all be stranded in a “methodological wasteland of EIL”. Read on!

Dr Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam
Chief Editor

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH AS AN ASEAN LINGUA FRANCA AND ITS IMPACT ON ENGLISH TEACHING IN VIETNAM

Stephanie Gross

Pinnacle Teaching Solutions

Abstract

As English becomes an established lingua franca in the ASEAN region, what should be the pedagogical approach to oral skills and pronunciation teaching in the region? Should teachers target common features and patterns developing in ASEAN English or target more “Western” pronunciation? This study strives to balance the discussion of the importance of phonological differences within lingua francas with the importance of mutual intelligibility, especially for political and educational entities. Empowering multilingual national teachers is crucial and should be accomplished without negating the assistance of visiting EFL teachers within the ASEAN context. Current teaching theory surrounding English as a lingua franca is largely lacking any congruency with current practice within the ASEAN region. English teaching in Vietnam is specifically explored, within the question of whether current lingua franca theory can be applied within the context in a pragmatic way.

Keywords: lingua franca, mutual intelligibility, phonological features, pronunciation

Introduction

English as a lingua franca (ELF), is now being used widely throughout Asia as the communicative language of choice for business, medicine, and political communication. When English develops as a lingua franca in a specific area it often develops specific patterns of production that are mutually intelligible in that speech community, but may in fact hinder mutual intelligibility with outside communities. Common pronunciation patterns that mirror ASEAN languages are beginning to be cemented or fossilized within these speech groups. Why is there pressure to refer to language interference errors in a speech community as normal patterns of a lingua franca? What then should the pragmatic goal be for the teacher? To what extent should teaching focus on bringing students to a production level that mirrors what is represented in the Asian lingua franca context? Or, should native-speaker like pronunciation be taught so that students will be more able to communicate with individuals from all English speech communities, including those of the inner, outer, and expanding circles? Many of these questions do not have easy answers. In this study, the focus will be on three major areas; defining English as an ASEAN lingua

franca, cultural and pragmatic issues and the influence of these issues on English teaching in Vietnam.

The status of English

Any generalisations about the English language need to acknowledge the diversity hidden by those two words and also the debates about changing perceptions of how the status of English should be described. Is it a second or a foreign or an international language? When is it a lingua franca? The term “lingua franca” describes languages “used as a means of communication among people who do not speak the native languages of their communication partners” (Gramley, 2012, p. 174). In outlining the language’s history Gramley (2012) makes reference to varieties such as African English, New Zealand English and, closer to the geographical area of our discussion, to Singlish (Singapore English) and Hong Kong English.

English has been described as spreading for largely pragmatic reasons in East Asia today. In other words, it is “what makes communication possible” across the region (Kam & Wong, 2003, p. 3). In Vietnam, English is recognized as “an international language and ... the language for business, commerce, computer science and efficient use of the Internet” (Vang, 2003, p. 455). Thus, all discussion of how English should be taught in South East Asia, should originate from the needs and goals of those learning the language.

The teaching of English

Issues relating to the teaching of English as an international language include practical matters and questions of wider philosophical concern. As an example of the former, in speaking about the teaching of English in Vietnam, Kam and Wong (2003) mention three shortages: of teachers, of textbooks and of other teaching resources “especially in remote areas” (p. 18). In response to these needs the support of “international organisations and donors” (Vang, 2003, p. 461) was welcomed. These practical concerns must intersect with current research and theory into the study of English as an international language.

Wider concerns have been addressed for some time by both native and non-native speakers of English. Holliday (2005), for instance, is concerned with perceptions held by TESOL expatriates. Speaking of “culturism in TESOL” (p. 24), he illustrates his point with examples from an audience he addresses at a conference for “English speaking Western teachers” working in an East Asian country he chose not to name. In summary he noted a strong “them and us” thread running through the audience.

Another, related concern is which variety of English should be taught. Once the distinction was worded as British versus American, but the debate became more complicated when countries like Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa entered the arena. Then came forms of English which developed

within the region, such as Singapore English. So, which English should be taught in Vietnam?

English in Vietnam

Unlike many ASEAN countries where English has been taught for more than 50 years, Vietnam's countrywide exposure to English began after 1986. From the period of 1954 to 1975, Russian was the main foreign language studied. However, this varied in the different regions of Vietnam. Hoang (2013), a professor in Vietnam, brings out this point:

In South Vietnam, English was the dominant foreign language; it was studied for direct interactions with the USA. In North Vietnam, in contrast, although four foreign languages (Russian, Chinese, French, and English) were recognized nationally, Russian topped the list in the formal educational system; and like English in the South, Russian in the North was studied for direct interactions with the former Soviet Union (p. 2).

It was only after 1986 when Vietnam started its "open door" policy that the study of English became expanded. English is now a required subject beginning in primary school (beginning in grade 3) all the way up to upper secondary school (Hoang, 2013, p. 2)

Vietnam has yet to have a World English or the development of a generally established register. Because of this, English in Vietnam is at the beginning of its development. Does this change how we should interact with error correction to pave the way for a more mutually intelligible future? In addition, Vietnamese are less interested in using English as a means of expressing their identity and more interested in making money and establishing a bright future for themselves within the international community. French is the language that is most associated with colonialism in Vietnam. Thus, English, has more of a clean slate as it is being used in the country.

Vietnam desires to use English as a way of showing its new level of development. In 2009, the U.S. Department of State and MOET, the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam, worked on a project to create a plan to upgrade education in the country. One aspect of this goal, centered on making English an advantage for Vietnamese people. This would allow Vietnamese to interact actively with both the growing regional economy and the international economy. This would enhance the competitiveness of Vietnam within the next 10 years. As the study reports, "This would mean that Vietnam goes from last place in [the Asian] seven-country comparison of English language skills to a place of prominence and high achievement". This would mean that in achieving high levels of progress in English language ability, Vietnam would have an advantage over neighboring countries in the region within the next 10-15 years (DOS, p. 49).

Why is English the language of choice for ASEAN?

This paper will focus on the more measurable characteristics of English as a lingua franca for ASEAN, or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. English is an important part of education in all of these countries, although the educational scene looks different in all of them as they wrestle with the politics of bilingual education and how it affects society. ASEAN has been communicating cross-culturally in the Asian sub-region in English for more than forty years. It is quite clear that understanding the language and vision of ASEAN is important in determining education goals in Vietnam, as the two are interlinked.

A lingua franca in a country or region is often chosen because of its neutral nature. So the question comes to the surface, does English pose a threat? In South East Asia, Mandarin would be a difficult language for ASEAN to communicate in because it culturally seems to pose a threat to other smaller countries. In the Philippines, Tagalog is seen as a dominant language and there is resistance to widespread learning of the language. English, however, is met with little to no resistance due to its relative political neutrality in the region. However, because English is an unrelated language with no native speaker representation in the area, it is in a sense a non-threatening language to be used for the ASEAN community. To give one nation's language within ASEAN the privilege of being the lingua franca would again give a more dominant nation even more power. Kirkpatrick talks about how in Indonesia it was Malay that was chosen to unite the multilingual country, because it posed no major threat. Javanese was the most dominant and populous language group and was therefore considered a threat. Thus, "the adoption of Javanese as the national lingua franca would privilege an already powerful group" (Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 213). It is because English does not present a modern political threat to any entity in the ASEAN or wider Asian context, that it has become the language of choice.

Why is ASEAN English a lingua franca and not a World English?

It becomes confusing to discuss this subject without drawing clarifications between the existence of a "World English" and a lingua franca in any context. Countries such as India, Nigeria, and Singapore would be considered to have a World English. Many of the variations in these nations have been produced for many years and are quite fossilized within the speech community. Thus, lingua franca can be defined as "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth 1996, p. 240) as quoted in (Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 213). Therefore, ASEAN English is not a World English as it applies to the entire sub-region of Southeast Asia, because this would encompass more than just one background culture, lan-

guage, and country. Instead, the variety of English used for ASEAN's purposes mirrors the above definition, and is then a lingua franca.

In addition, Kirkpatrick (2011) points out that English for ASEAN purposes is not a world English because there is no code mixing. People who share a common language in addition to English will always naturally add words into the mix of the English they are speaking. This is not present in lingua francas. World Englishes are concerned about identity and culture, while lingua francas are concerned with communication (p. 219). Certainly the English spoken in the ASEAN context is one used primarily used for pragmatic purposes. These include the furthering of business and trade, rather than the purpose of cultural expression. There are of course times when cultural interaction is a characteristic of ASEAN events, but this does not dominate the main purpose of English within ASEAN.

Cultural similarities among the countries of ASEAN

There are cultural norms among the countries involved in ASEAN that would not be considered norms for the West. These can be present in English as a lingua franca for the ASEAN community without it being a “World English”. Kirkpatrick (2011) lists some of these cultural norms in relation to the development of English as a lingua franca for ASEAN. One of these pragmatic norms is deflecting rather than accepting compliments. In Asian countries this is a cultural norm that can be seen across the spectrum of ASEAN countries. The second, is that Asian speakers often give the reason for a request before stating the request itself. Speakers are generally allowed to finish their turn without interruption. In relation to this concept, Kirkpatrick (2011) continues,

Far from suggesting that speakers of English as a lingua franca in ASEAN settings should adopt native-speaker norms, therefore, they should be encouraged to retain their own pragmatic norms when using English as a regional lingua franca, as these norms are more likely to be shared by the people with whom they are interacting. This also means that the goal of language learning needs to be significantly re-shaped in contexts where the major role of English is as a lingua franca. (p. 220)

ASEAN members should be encouraged and allowed to use English to serve their own cultural pragmatic norms. That is the very definition of using English as an international language. So how unified is English in the context of ASEAN? How will this cultural similarity and diversity affect the incorporation of new idioms and words developed for cultural expressions?

Phonologically similar features in ASEAN English

Kirkpatrick (2011) talks about how English as an ASEAN English lingua franca has shared phonological features. The first feature is a reduction of con-

sonant clusters. For example this can be seen in the dropping of voiceless final consonant clusters, “first-firs”. In addition, the dental fricative /θ/ is often produced as a plosive, such as in Kirkpatrick’s example, “many thing [tɪŋ]”. The merging of long and short vowel sounds is also an example in the research as a shared phonological feature. An example of this is the morphing of /iy/ to /ɪ/. Speakers of English as an ASEAN lingua franca also seem to share a reduction of initial aspiration of voiceless consonants, such as “they will teach [diytʃ]”. Other similarities are the lack of reduced vowels and stressed pronouns that should not be stressed, “HE has been in Singapore”, as well as heavy end-stress, “the incidental WAY” (Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 218).

Kirkpatrick suggests that these shared features are caused by physiological difficulty or by the influence from the speaker’s first languages. Of course, these two concepts are inter-related with the physiological difficulty being originated in the fact that their first language does not incorporate these sounds (Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 218). All of my Vietnamese students share every one of the above features. Yet in class, when I encounter these features in my pronunciation lessons, I see these “features” as interlanguage errors that impede mutual comprehensibility. There is explicit interlanguage interference going on, which is even supported by the words of Kirkpatrick, who later condemns the idea of correction. The top three pronunciation difficulties that my students encounter are final consonant production, lax vs. tense vowels, and stress, both word and sentence level. Most Asian languages exhibit syllable stress, which includes Vietnamese. Therefore, extreme difficulty with stress production and producing English in a mono-tone syllable stress pattern, can and should be labeled errors of interlanguage interference.

Mutual intelligibility

Some of the biggest hurdles for Vietnamese students in reaching mutual intelligibility are the production of final consonants, syllable and sentence stress, the /iy/ to /ɪ/ vowel contrast, and reduced vowel forms. These hurdles almost exactly mirror what Kirkpatrick describes as “features”. These errors in pronunciation are indeed contrastive and interfere in comprehension and intelligibility. For example, in English “bee”, “beat”, “bead”, and “beast” are all contrastive words. The production of final consonants and consonant clusters then must be seen as generally contrastive. By producing sentence stress incorrectly, ASEAN participants run the risk of highlighting a word in an inappropriate way, with a meaning that is unintended. In English, this can create a tone of impatience, impoliteness, and can even be contrastive in meaning.

The /iy/ to /ɪ/ vowel contrast also presents word forms that are contrastive. Although some of the meanings of these forms could be determined by context, many of them are very similar in meaning. For example, “did” and “deed”, “fill” and “feel” could be used in similar contexts and mean something quite different. I am not convinced that these set of “features” are uninvolved with problems of mutual intelligibility. This brings up the question, “To what

extent can a lingua franca develop non-standard phonological and grammatical forms and still retain mutual intelligibility?"

Kirkpatrick argues that the phonological patterns are varieties that should be taught rather than native-speaker norms. However, in the research of Jenkins (2000), there is a phonological core that needs to be preserved in the production of English as a lingua franca in order to preserve mutual intelligibility. The most important areas listed by Jenkins were, "1, Most consonant sounds, 2, Appropriate consonant cluster simplification, 3, Vowel length distinctions, and 4, Nuclear stress" (p. 132). Final consonants both voiced and voiceless, as well as final consonant clusters, were considered by Jenkins as important for phonological intelligibility. Vowel length, specifically pronunciation differences between tense and lax vowels, such as /ɪ/ and /iy/ are also important for intelligibility, especially in minimal pairs. Finally, as Jenkins states, "Nuclear stress is crucial for intelligibility in ILT" (p. 153). Nuclear stress entails problems with misplaced stress, particularly contrastive or emphatic stress, as detailed above. Thus we can surmise that the "variations" of ASEAN English as described by Kirkpatrick, in fact encompass the lingua franca core that do impact mutual intelligibility as described by Jenkins.

In addition, there are times when errors that are seen as phonological "norms" or "features" are stigmatizing errors. In interaction with other Asian, Western or even African countries, these errors might result in stigmatizing political and social interaction. Vietnam and other countries also interact with a global community of countries politically. ASEAN is increasingly involved with Australia, the EU, the UN, and the USA. A lingua franca merely for ASEAN operations may require using English as more than an Asian lingua franca, but as in international one.

Defining goals

So what should our goals be in teaching Vietnamese students or any student in an ASEAN country? Should we aim to promote the pronunciation features of English as an ASEAN lingua franca? Should teachers restrict themselves from correcting pronunciation patterns that they see as errors if they represent part of the "lingua franca core"? Kirkpatrick (2011) has a strong view in relation to this question. He argues that students should be taught English later in school. He argues that the main reason language teaching is started so early is because native-like pronunciation is desired. With the goal being English as a language for inter-ASEAN purposes only, this desire is no longer as important (p. 222).

Whatever happened to the concept of shooting high? High being defined in this context as the ability to communicate with the largest group of people in the world as possible. Is it not also probable that people in the ASEAN context will also need English to do business with people from other Asian countries, Europe, Australia, the UK, India, Africa and the US? By allowing these six main problems to be continued without remediation in the lingua franca of Asia we are resigning it to the process of continually decreasing mutual intel-

ligibility. As Englishes are allowed to grow apart without checks or balances, their mutual intelligibility will gradually decrease. Possibly in the future a new lingua franca will be necessary. By delaying English until secondary school, students lose an important step-ahead for their future.

Comments similar to those of Kirkpatrick's must be placed in the present realistic situation that is found in most of the countries under the ASEAN umbrella. A report of the US Department of State (2009) states:

According to a 2003 comparison of English language education in seven Asian Pacific Countries (China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam), Vietnam lagged significantly behind in terms of frequency of instruction and the grade level at which English is introduced as a compulsory subject. Although there is a growing awareness in Vietnam of the need for communicative English language skills, the prevailing practice appears to be a grammar, reading, and memorization approach in public schools. (DOS, p. 48)

Hence, is the theoretical idea of instructing students in ASEAN English pronunciation valid? And if this is pushed, will this kind of pronunciation indeed result in communicative competency? Vietnam is already far behind other more developed countries in the region and wants to use English education as a means to encourage and sustain future development. Vietnam wants to use every educational opportunity to get ahead as best they can. ELF theories that are based in creating and protecting cultural identity, might in fact be seen as impractical and undesirable by the actual students and educational entities involved.

Jenkins (2009) disagrees with Kirkpatrick's pedagogical approach to ELF. Instead she states:

The second proviso is that even if and when ELF features have been definitively identified and perhaps eventually codified, ELF researchers do not claim that these features should necessarily be taught to English learners. In other words, they do not believe either that pedagogic decision about language teaching should follow on automatically from language descriptions. (p. 202)

Just because we are investigating the aspects shared within a specific lingua franca, this does not entail that those aspects should be taught pedagogically.

Tran Thi Lan, a member of the faculty at the Hanoi University of Foreign Studies has excellent insight into the topic of pedagogy. She questions how practical it is to have translator's training only in variations of English from the Inner Circle. Often graduates do not have clients who are native speakers (Tran, 2000, p. 4). I agree with Tran that it is important to be informed about English in use from countries all around the world. Yet, just because inner-

circle English is being taught does not mean that the learners acquire an inner-circle English pronunciation.

The question generally becomes, what is the outcome and what is the goal? In general, ASEAN English is the product of people aiming towards an English that would be equivalent to native-speaker English, however, interlanguage interference has caused the general patterns and forms. So, with a goal of inner-circle English, it is very possible that the outcome will be an English that still has very elements of the L1 present. It is very difficult for a learner to develop native-like pronunciation and proficiency. Therefore, the question that is not being asked is, what will be the outcome, if the goal is less strict? What will be the outcome if the patterns of interlanguage interference in ASEAN English are the goal? Just because individuals become proficient in English as an ASEAN lingua franca does not entail that they will be able to understand English speakers from Asian countries like Japan, Korea, or China, which are not members of the ASEAN community.

An important part of the discussion remains in defining the specific goals of Vietnamese students. What are their future vocational goals? How do they desire to use English in the future? Hoang (2013) states that most Vietnamese students at the university level fall into three main categories. First, some students view English as the means to get more lucrative employment in the future. Second, a small percentage need English to move forward as students by enrolling in study programs in other English-speaking countries. Finally, the majority of them learn English in order to simply pass the examinations (p. 13). Jobs that involve English are growing at a fast rate of speed. Often students are unsure of what they want to do, yet they believe that English is the key to success. Students that desire to study abroad generally are considering Australia and Korea as their most likely options with the U.S. encouraging more students to apply to graduate programs as well. Many students simply want to pass their exams to obtain a college degree, so that many more opportunities will be available for them, whether or not they involve using English.

In defining our goals for teaching we must consider, "What does Vietnam want us to teach?" MOET stated its goals for the Institute for Educational strategies and Curriculum Development as cited in Hoang:

To attain a certain level of understanding of English and American cultures, to become aware of cross-cultural differences in order to be better overall communicators, to better inform the world of the Vietnamese people, their history and culture, and to take pride in Vietnam, its language and culture. (Hoang, 2013, p. 17)

By learning English, Vietnam has the goal of entertaining more cross-cultural dialogue and the progression of more modern knowledge about the Vietnamese people and their culture. English will be the language in which to educate the world about the Vietnam of today.

Cultural implications

When considering English as an Asian language, many opportunities arise for cultural education, as well as tension. Kirkpatrick (2000) writes about the concept of English as an Asian language, in an article in the UK publication, the Guardian:

But what variety of English will serve as the region's lingua franca? I suggest a variety, which reflects local cultural conventions and pragmatic norms is developing to serve this role. I further suggest that it is this regional variety that will be taught in schools, rather than an external 'native speaker' variety. (p. 1)

Kirkpatrick seems to take a very hard stance on the idea of English being untouched by Western Culture as it is taught in Asia. Yet, when he talks about "pragmatic norms", some of these pragmatic uses might be with and among Western speakers of English. Intercultural communication with Western cultures should still be viewed as viable intercultural communication. Students in Vietnam want to learn about other cultures and ways of behaving. This should not be singled down to the UK and the US, however, the UK and the US should not be vilified. Countries with many World Englishes should be explored and discovered.

Kirkpatrick (2000) goes on to discuss the idea that "English is being used by non-native speakers with other non-native speakers. The English that they use need not therefore reflect any "Anglo" cultural values" (p. 1). In response to this idea, I fully agree that there is a great need for mutual intelligibility between non-native speakers and non-native speakers. However, this does not mutually disregard the need for continued conversation between non-native speakers and native speakers. It is not necessary that speakers display "Anglo" cultural values, however, it is not hurtful for non-native speakers to understand how to interact with those from "Anglo" backgrounds as well as non-native speakers from other Asian cultural backgrounds. Kirkpatrick seems to over-generalize the idea that Asian cultures are so innately similar that they must of course understand each other. It is true that Anglo culture should not be so imbedded in the practice of English teaching that learners cannot separate it from the language itself. However, Western cultures in and of themselves, are still cultures with value that deserve to be taught in balance with the teaching of other World English cultures.

Nguyen Thi Cam Le gives a helpful and intrinsically Vietnamese perspective to this discussion:

It is my viewpoint that materials do not need to be totally representative of the local culture and that a balance should be maintained between foreign and local cultural concepts and images. This provides a rich opportunity for teachers to explain non-native cultural items, in addition to using localized content. However, it is very important for teachers to be aware of what the

materials contain, so they can identify where to best represent local culture and where to explain nonnative elements... Explaining cultural differences is helpful because it gives teachers the opportunity to use English to analyze the differences between cultures. (2005, p. 3)

English should be used to describe and educate in reference to both foreign and local cultures.

It is important for any discussion of ASEAN to contain very clear respect for the differing cultural characteristics of all of the nations. The English language in this context is certainly less streamlined than Kirkpatrick makes it out to be. This raises the question of the importance of intercultural interaction. In some developing countries there seems to be an aversion to any discussion that links English to the culture of the West. Yet, any other culture is embraced with open arms. Proponents of these views argue that teaching must be neutral, yet in their description of the exclusion of Western culture they are lacking neutrality. By only concentrating on regional cultures we lose the opportunity for intercultural discussion. In the ASEAN context is it pragmatic that countries will be studying each other's cultures, using English as a base. Why is American or British culture completely excluded? Teaching culture should be based on inclusive awareness, not categorizing cultures in terms of superior and inferior. By reacting strongly against Western culture's inclusion in instruction, some scholars are committing the error of excluding Western culture based on underlying emotion. We must remember that when discussing cultural issues at a theoretical level, we are dealing with the whole of a country or a culture. Yet, practically, at the individual level, intercultural communication is happening whenever people of any culture interact.

The imperialism debate

There are strong voices within the sphere of ELF (English as a lingua franca), which refer to the teaching of native speaker pronunciation and culture as only imperialistic. However, the driving force behind English being a lingua franca is economic and communicative equality. The world wants to make money and to tell their story. In this sense, imperialism would be to not teach the lingua franca. Information is a means of independence and empowerment. Most NGOs and governmental organizations send native-speaking teachers in order to assist the development of other countries and establish healthy relations with them. Of course, many teachers of English come to Asia for purely economic gain. Yet, in much of the developing parts of Asia, teaching by native-speakers is done as a means of friendship and partnership. This concept is largely ignored in some scholarly circles.

Kirkpatrick cites Gordon Wu, "English is no longer some colonial language. It is the means [by which] we in Asia communicate with the world and one another" (Kirkpatrick, 2000, p. 1). Wu is reacting against the idea of being forced to speak "Anglo" English, because of it being tainted with the past

colonial overtones of the language. It is important to remember that linguistically, by saying one uses English to communicate with the world, they are saying that you will need to use English as a lingua franca, not just with Asia, but with other countries as well. If Asia develops an English lingua franca that has patterns that correlate with patterns of Asian interlanguage interference, these patterns will not be replicated with speakers of a European or African lingua franca.

By reacting against a “colonial” origin language, scholars are losing sight of the idea that “origin” should be weighed in a linguistically neutral way. Many scholars believe that languages as a whole originated from one origin language. Elements that many languages share are thought to have come from this origin language. There are no claims of superiority, but merely research being done within linguistic science. English came from somewhere. The language itself not a product of colonialism, but rather a language that should be valued in a strictly empirical sense. And as Krachu (1998) states, “But these constructs refer to the use of the medium. Such flaws are not intrinsic in the language” (p. 104). Cultural and scholarly neutrality is crucial in the discussion of an international lingua franca.

As an analogy, in the game “telephone”, an original message is read to one person, then orally passed around to players in a circle. The fun is in the difference between the original message and the final understanding. Without introducing original messages, in this case by vilifying a language origin, there is a linguistic inevitability that English will separate to a point of excluding mutual intelligibility as a possibility. Another language as a lingua franca or a re-clarifying of an intelligible “standard” of English will be necessary at this point.

Should native English teachers be replaced?

Among ELF scholars, there are some that believe native-speaking teachers should be replaced to make way for multi-lingual teachers. Two of these scholars are House (2002) and Kirkpatrick (2011). These scholars make very broad statements about how native English speakers should be replaced entirely by multilingual English teachers. “... that is to say, multilingual English teachers (METs) replace native English teachers (NETs) as the source of linguistic ‘norms’ for the students...the second language speaker should be measured against the successful bilingual or multilingual speaker (House, 2002) cited in Kirkpatrick (2011, p. 221). Empowering multilingual English teachers should be a very important goal for all language teachers. And while it is very encouraging to see successful models for non-native speakers, how practical is it in Vietnam and in the other countries of ASEAN to completely remove native English teachers at this present time? Could it not be necessary in a country like Vietnam where English is fairly new to have native speakers involved in the training and empowerment of successfully multilingual teachers.

Kirkpatrick (2011) goes on to make his own comment on this subject:

In the context of ASEAN, this means that successful multilinguals from the ten countries can provide the linguistic benchmarks against which learners are measured. The regional multilingual English language teacher provides a more appropriate linguistic model than the native English teacher. By recognizing that more appropriate linguistic model, we should be able to validate the countless multilingual teachers who have hitherto taught under the shadow of being viewed as somehow inferior to the native speaker (p. 221).

On a personal level, native-speaking teachers can work side-by-side with Vietnamese colleagues, establishing a level of equality and trust. Instead of creating feelings of inferiority, native English teachers should work to empower and promote their Vietnamese colleagues.

The most important question in this discussion is, “How practical is it that enough qualified multi-lingual professionals exist in developing countries like Vietnam?” Hoang describes the major problems experienced in teaching English in Vietnam, “First, there is a disproportionate demand-supply. With a population of over 85 million, of whom a sizeable proportion have a strong desire to learn English, the demand for English language teaching far outstrips the supply of native speaker and competent non-native speaker teachers” (p. 15). Thus, if Kirkpatrick wishes are carried out, at this point there will be even less teachers to be able to meet the demand in Vietnam. This is certainly not desirable by ASEAN or Vietnam itself.

Vietnam is also a developing country with a developing education system. Hoang (2013) points out that many teachers who teach at the primary and lower secondary levels are not fully qualified for the position (p. 16). Hoang also states that most teachers, even at the undergraduate university level, have never had a chance to study in an English-speaking country. He continues that most of them do not normally communicate or teach in English, and often fail to be able to teach in situations that require, “communicative interactions” (p. 16). If all countries were to follow Kirkpatrick’s advice and ask all native-speaking teachers to leave, it is unlikely there would not be enough remaining multilingual teachers to adequately encourage communicative competence in Vietnam. If all Vietnamese individuals that had a high communicative ability in English decided to join the teaching profession in Vietnam, it might be possible to have enough multi-lingual teachers. However, with the current low salary of teachers in Vietnam at all levels, many highly proficient English speakers join other vocational fields to obtain a higher salary.

Practical implications for classroom error correction

Many scholars in ELF desire regional varieties of English to be taught, so that their community identity can be retained. While, this may be desirable in some cases, it is certainly true that many individuals in various contexts have instrumental motivation to learn a variety that is not regional in order to have

better job opportunities. This statement also begs the question, should fossilized errors and interlanguage interference errors be viewed as a positive development of a “regional variety of English”? When I talk to students about the existence of some of these errors, and how stigmatizing it would be if these words were used across cultures, they are shocked that they had not been told sooner. Some of this variety would cause embarrassment not just across “Anglo” and Asian cultural barriers, but also across Asian-to-Asian barriers of communication. For example, most Vietnamese students habitually refer to their boyfriend or girlfriend as their “lover”. In many cultures, this kind of word is reserved for talking about relationships of a sexual nature. Should this kind of culturally stigmatizing language pattern be corrected or maintained as a cultural distinct language feature?

Jenkins (2009) deals with this topic in her discussion on English as a lingua franca:

Two further provisos need stating in relation to ELF research. Firstly, ELF distinguishes between difference (i.e. from ENL) and deficiency (i.e. interlanguage or 'learner language'), and does not assume that an item that differs from ENL is by definition an error. It may instead be a legitimate ELF variant...At present it is still to some extent an empirical question as to which items are ELF variants and which ELF errors, and depends on factors such as systematicity, frequency, and communicative effectiveness (p. 202).

While Jenkin's comments are helpful, they still do not define exactly what “frequency and communicative effectiveness” is.

As an example of this dilemma, Vietnamese students use a small assortment of adjectives to describe many aspects of their life. The three most commonly used adjectives are “interesting”, “comfortable”, and “suitable”. In Vietnamese, the word “hài” defined in English as “interesting” is able to describe a multitude of things. Songs, people, events, and objects, can all be “hài”. When students use this word in English, there are often errors in the usage. If you call a person “interesting”, this can often cause a misinterpretation of meaning. Not to mention the fact that the small variety in adjectives will inevitably result in a low oral TOEFL, IELTS, or TOEIC score, which most oral classes are designed to prepare students for. If one were to strictly follow the views of Kirkpatrick and others, it would be important to allow these “variations” to continue. Yet, these community wide variations may be a danger to the future success of Vietnamese students. TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS are important considerations for students, future teachers, and present teachers alike. Current teachers are being required to pass the IELTS exam with a score of 7 or above to continue teaching. This means that some teachers of English and those of French, Chinese, and Russian, may need to return to school for further English instruction.

The question of identity

Language often represents an important emotion of belonging and of personal and community identity. Yano (2009) writes, “The language belongs to all those who learn and use it, and for non-native speakers, in addition to providing access to the wider world, it is an additional means of expressing themselves, their identities, their societies, and their cultures” (p. 254). Lan agrees with Yano in that language should not be only limited to Westerners:

It is reasonable to claim that when a language becomes international in character, it cannot be bound to any one culture. An Indonesian does not need to sound like a Briton or an American in order to communicate effectively in English with a Vietnamese at an ASEAN meeting. A Japanese does not need an appreciation of an Australian lifestyle in order to use English in her business dealings with a Filipino or a Malaysian (Lan, 2000, p. 4).

English should be taught in an international way. However, is the argument that English should be taught in a regional way to allow individuals to express their identity overstated at a practical level? Holliday (2005) explores this in her research. Some local teachers do comment that the “ownership of English” is sometimes overstated as something that is meaningful to every non-native speaker of English. For many teachers this kind of theoretical idea is far from their mind in their practical context. Holliday quotes Sullivan (2000),

I agree that the ownership of English is changing, but I don’t see this perspective from most of the local teachers I deal with. I think this is an issue that is seen as more important by native speakers than by non-native speakers. The concept of “ownership” is a new idea to most local teachers that I bring it up with. And they don’t seem too interested. ... I just don’t think that “ownership” is a concept that is very relevant to local teachers. They see English as necessary for economic, social, and political reasons, and use it as they need it. It’s a pragmatic decision (Holliday, 2005, p. 165).

Most Vietnamese educators and students are most concerned with what makes sense pragmatically.

In response to identity in using English, Krachu (1998) has made some famously emotive statements at the end of his paper, “English as an Asian Language.” He writes:

The architects of each tradition, each strand, have moulded, reshaped, acculturated, redesigned, and, by doing so, enriched what was a Western medium. The result of a liberated English which contains vitality, innovation, linguistic mix, and cultural identity. And, it is not the creativity of the mon-

oligual and monocultural; this creativity has rejuvenated the medium from exhaustion and has liberated it in many ways. (p. 106)

Intercultural interaction and communication is truly a beautiful medium, however, this statement makes some very wide linguistic assumptions. Almost all languages begin as being monocultural. Also, why is the culture of the West not enriching? Other languages that have a small user base and no intercultural dialogue, are they not rich and enriched in and of themselves? Did the language itself as a communication medium, not contain vitality? Linguistic mix sounds good on paper, but can cause difficulty when communication is the goal.

Conclusion: A balanced approach

Our goal should be one of balance. This must begin with awareness. Supporting awareness of World Englishes and English as an International lingua franca among Vietnamese students is crucial. I agree with Lan (2000) that it is important that students in Vietnam have an accurate picture of what is happening in the world. Many students are obsessed with having a native speaker accent to an extreme level. Rather than completely displacing the goal of native speaker like proficiency, the goal should be one of informed learning and mutual intelligibility. We should introduce a variety of Englishes into our classrooms. Nguyen (2005) states, "Therefore, it is time that we stopped the idealization of British, American, or Australian English. We should recognize the importance of being effective English speakers rather than sounding native-like" (p. 8). The goal should be mutual intelligibility and effective speaking, not idolization of native accents.

Yet, in acquiring this intelligibility, it should not be required that native-speakers be excluded from teaching or ignore the pronunciation of core phonological patterns that are within the lingua franca core (Jenkins, 2000). We should aim at the pronunciation pattern that will result in intelligibility not just in Asian lingua franca, but in International lingua franca. In the International lingua franca, of which the origin was British or Western English, there are core features in different world-wide lingua francas that originate from the origin contact language. Thus, in a logical way, the study of native speaker patterns should not be so denigrated. Nguyen (2005) words this kind of practical application as such, "English from BANA (Britain, Australia, North America) countries is important to study for purposes of intelligibility, as there is no doubt that certain norms are shaped by native use of English; however, we should also expose students to English varieties used by nonnative speakers and should use materials that include a variety of Englishes" (p. 9). There should be a balance of teaching core lingua franca elements from native-like pronunciation with the understanding of current World Englishes and lingua francas worldwide. Thus neither native nor non-native speakers should be subordinated.

Languages that come in contact with one another will always be continually interacting. This is a beautiful characteristic of a lingua franca. This contact will continue as English collides with Asian language use. English being used to explore Asian contexts and culture is an excellent and beautiful thing. It is exciting to see new analogies and pictures being painted and incorporated into English. However, this must be balanced with continued error correction in respect to interlanguage interference. In addition, "... English standards for international or intercultural communications should be based on intelligibility, grammatical acceptability, and social appropriateness" (Lan, 2000). There is also much to be said on the balancing of traditional teaching methods used in SEA countries with the newer methods being explored within TESOL methodology and being applied to the SEA classroom, but this goes beyond the scope and word space of the present article.

Finally, there are many aspects to consider as we weigh the importance of the development of English as a lingua franca in Asia. In the end, all cultures and languages must be approached with respect. The feelings and emotions of learners and cultures in contact must be considered. Voices that approach any culture or language in negative a way should be questioned. Awareness should be raised among students about the use of English with other non-native speakers in business and education. Students need to stop the idealization of native-accent and focus instead on developing fluid, intelligible, and effective speech. Theory must not be so removed from practicality that it is difficult to know how to apply it. As educators we must be both practical and focused on our context while looking ahead at ideological concerns. A balance between the two must be carefully achieved.

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Note on Contributor

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VIETNAMESE ACCENTED ENGLISH: FOREIGN ACCENT AND INTELLIGIBILITY JUDGEMENT BY LISTENERS OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS

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Abstract

In the context of English as a global language in which the interaction is not only between native speakers and ESL speakers but also among non-native speakers themselves, there is a need to investigate how well L2 listeners can judge and successfully comprehend accented English produced by other L2 speakers; particularly, how the specific linguistic background of an L2 listener bears on their ability to understand and evaluate accented English from a speaker whose L1 is related – or not – to their own language. A corpus of Vietnamese accented English speech designed to elicit a careful but unguarded style of speaking was collected from 16 Vietnamese overseas students studying at an Australian University. Listeners of various L1 language backgrounds (Australian English [n= 125], Vietnamese [n=10], Chinese [n=10], Arabic [n=8], Japanese [n= 10], other=7), of varying exposure and fluency in English judged the intelligibility, the strength of foreign accent, and attempted to transcribe the test utterances in a self-paced speech recognition task. From this database it was possible to estimate (for the first time) realistic intelligibility estimates of Vietnamese accented English under conditions that approximate normal connected speech, and also to estimate the effects of the listener's language background in interaction with their comprehension proficiency in the target language (Australian English). Implications for English language teaching, particularly pronunciation pedagogy in TESOL teacher training programs are discussed.

Keywords: accented English, Vietnam, intelligibility judgement

Introduction

Previous studies on foreign accented speech have focused on how second language (L2) speech is perceived and understood by native speakers of the language (e.g., English) and thus mainly used native speakers as judges of non-native speech samples. However, in the context of English as a global language in which the interaction is not only between native speakers and ESL speakers but also among non-native speakers themselves, there is a need to

investigate how well L2 listeners can judge and successfully comprehend accented English produced by other L2 speakers; particularly, how the specific linguistic background of an L2 listener bears on their ability to understand and evaluate accented English from a speaker whose L1 is related – or not – to their own language. A few recent studies have employed native and non-native judges to evaluate native and non-native speech and have found little difference in the ratings of foreign accents between native and non-native listeners (Flege, 1988; MacKay, Flege, & Imai, 2006; Munro, Derwing, & Morton, 2006). In Flege's (1988) study, Chinese listeners were found to scale the accents of Chinese speakers in much the same way that native English listeners did. It was further found by Mackay et al. (2006) that Arabic listeners' rating of Italian-accented English correlated strongly with the ratings of native English listeners.

In terms of intelligibility, Gass and Varonis (1984) found that exposure to specific foreign accents, to particular speakers, or to accents in general influenced how well listeners understood L2 speech. With respect to L1 background, Bent and Bradlow (2003) reported that non-native listeners might find L2 speech more intelligible than native speech, whereas the opposite might be true for native listeners. Also, some research has suggested that speakers from a particular L1 background might have an advantage in understanding accented utterances from speakers who share that background. Smith and Bisazza (1982), for instance, observed an advantage for Japanese speakers listening to Japanese-accented English. However, the results of that study taken together with more recent work (Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramanian, 2002; Munro et al., 2006) suggest that such an advantage is probably small and not consistently observable. In Major et al.'s study of 400 listeners, Spanish speakers showed a small intelligibility advantage when hearing Spanish-accented speech in comparison with other varieties, whereas Chinese and Japanese speakers showed no parallel advantage for their L1 accents. In a study by Munro et al. (2006), listeners from native Cantonese, Japanese, Mandarin, and English backgrounds evaluated the same set of foreign-accented English utterances from native speakers of Cantonese, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish. Regardless of native language background, the listener groups showed moderate to high correlations on comprehensibility scores and intelligibility and accentedness ratings. Although some between-group differences emerged, the groups tended to agree on which of the 48 speakers were the easiest and most difficult to understand. Between-group effect sizes were generally small. Particularly, the listeners did not consistently exhibit an intelligibility benefit for speech produced in their own accent. These findings, on the one hand, support the view that properties of the speech itself are a potent factor in determining how L2 speech is perceived, even when the listeners are from diverse language backgrounds (Hazan & Markham, 2004; Munro et al., 2006). On the other hand, they also suggest that further studies on the effect of listeners' L1 background on their evaluation of accented English language are needed.

Comprehensibility, accentedness and intelligibility are the three common measurements that have been used in studies of foreign-accented speech (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1995, among others). Intelligibility and accentedness have been examined by means of listener judgement on equal-interval rating scales (e.g., a 5, 7 or 9-point scale), which have been shown to yield reliable results (Brennan & Brennan, 1981; Burda, Scherz, Hageman, & Edwards, 2003; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Southwood & Flege, 1999; Thompson, 1991). Usually, listeners evaluate how difficult an utterance is to understand or how strongly accented it is. Different methods have been used to assess comprehensibility (See Munro, Derwing & Morton, 2006 for a review). The most common measure is the number of words correctly transcribed by listeners, which is understood as an index of speaker intelligibility (Bent & Bradlow, 2003; Brodkey, 1972; Burda et al., 2003; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro et al., 2006). How reliable this assessment of comprehensibility is and how well it correlates with intelligibility and accentedness depends on the speech elicitation techniques used and the nature of the listening task. Zielinski (2004) found that a transcription score might not correlate perfectly with how well the listener has actually grasped the full message intended by the speaker. She reported cases in which all of the words were correctly identified, with the listener still puzzling over what the speaker was trying to communicate. In other cases, the entire meaning of a sentence could be lost because of one missing word. Previous studies have also found that the three dimensions -- accentedness, comprehensibility and intelligibility -- are clearly related but are not equivalent. Particularly, there tends to be a discrepancy between objectively measured comprehensibility and perceived intelligibility (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1995). Therefore, the relationship between ratings of strength of foreign accent and speech intelligibility to objective indices of speech comprehension (% word identification) needs further investigation.

This study aims to:

1. collect a corpus of foreign accented English from which realistic estimates of speech intelligibility of English L2 learners may be derived and benchmarked against native L1 speech elicited under the same conditions;
2. assess the relationship between ratings of strength of foreign accent and speech intelligibility in relation to objective indices of speech comprehension; and
3. assess the impact of L1 language background of the listener and how it interacts with the listener's comprehension proficiency in the target language (Australian English), particularly whether there is any different response pattern among listeners of typologically distinct L1 phonological and orthographical systems (e.g., English, Japanese, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic).

Method

In order to pursue the purposes of the study, the following steps were taken:

1. First, 23 test sentences with expected segmental transfer effects were constructed by the second author.
2. Second, 21 speakers (16 Vietnamese, 2 Australian born bilingual speakers of Vietnamese parentage, and 3 native Australian English female speakers as controls) recorded the test sentences in a grammatical paraphrase task.
3. Third, a listening test was constructed from the recorded test sentences as described above.
4. Fourth, 170 listeners of various L1 backgrounds (Australian English [n= 125], Vietnamese [n=10], Chinese [n=10], Arabic [n=8], Japanese [n= 10], other=7), listened to the test items and transcribed what they thought the speaker said into standard orthography and then to rate the original utterance for comprehensibility and accentedness on a 5-point scale. Finally, they indicated which accent they thought the majority of speakers in the experiment had.

The following sections describe these major steps in details.

Stimulus Construction and speech elicitation method

Twenty three test sentences were constructed, incorporating vocabulary items from a picture-naming pronunciation test that was originally designed to elicit segmental transfer errors of pronunciation by Vietnamese speakers of English (Ingram & Pittam, 1987). An example sentence, with expected segmental transfer effects indicated is:

A mask₁ covered₂ th₃se sol₄diers face and₅ mouth₆.

- 1 = coda simplification
- 2 = schwa epenthesis
- 3 = stopping
- 4 = /l/ vocalization
- 5 = coda simplification
- 6 = stopping

The set of sentences were elicited via a grammatical paraphrase task. Twenty one sets of these 23 sentences were selected from a larger corpus of recordings made by volunteer speakers drawn from students in an introductory linguistics class at the University of Queensland who participated in an elicitation experiment

Speakers

The overwhelming majority (16/21) of the speakers who supplied the listening materials for the present study were full-time overseas students at the Univer-

sity of Queensland. Vietnamese was their native language. They were in the age of 23-41 and ranged in residency in Australia from a period of 0.5 - 6 years (mean: 1.4). All had attained written and spoken English proficiency scores of 6.5 to gain admission to the University of Queensland. They all (except two) had been EFL teachers or lecturers in teacher training programs at universities in Vietnam and were doing an MA in TESOL studies. Three native Australian English female speakers were also included as controls in the elicitation experiment, as were two Australian born bilingual speakers of Vietnamese parentage who spoke English with an Australian English accent.

Grammatical paraphrase task

The grammatical paraphrase task required subjects to transform a sentence, presented in spoken and written form (over headphones and a computer screen) into a meaning-equivalent form. The materials were presented via a spoken Language Assessment Program (<http://www.language-map.com>). Subjects typed in the paraphrase in response to an initial prompt word and when satisfied with their construction, read out the sentence that they had formed. The linguistic aspects of task were sufficiently complex to engage the subjects (who were all L2 speakers of English, with the exception of 5 controls) and to deflect their attention from the pronunciation aspects of the task. This yielded quite natural sounding, careful but unguarded speech. After speaking their paraphrase response into a headset microphone, subjects pressed a button for presentation of the next item in the set, randomly selected without replacement until all 27 items had been presented. The typed response and the audio signal were saved to a database from which the listening test items were selected.

Construction of the listening test

Subjects for the listening test were also drawn from (another) large introductory linguistics class. They participated in the listening experiment for course credit. As a consequence, the experimental task was time-constrained (approximately 20 minutes) to avoid fatigue and flagging interest, which may have affected the quality of responses. Also, because of likely practice effects if any test sentence was heard repeatedly in the course of the experiment, it was necessary to block items in such a way that no listener heard a given sentence more than once (with the exception of four control sentences, see below). It was also necessary to expose each listener to the full range of speaker variation in the test sentence set.

Listener-subjects were assigned in roughly equal numbers to one of 18 overlapping blocks of 27 items. Note that four control items (spoken by native Australian English speakers), which did involve repetition of 4/23 test sentences were always presented as the last 4 items in a block, so that perception of accented English items would not be contaminated by previous exposure to a given sentence.

Subjects for the listening experiment

The largest group of listeners were native-born speakers of Australian English of monolingual home background (EnglishN, $n = 109$). The next largest listener group comprised native-born or near life-time Australian residents where a language other than English was used at home (EnglishS, $n = 15$). The other listener groups of interest comprised overseas students resident in Australia for their current course of study. They were grouped by L1 language background (Arabic, $n = 8$; Chinese, $n = 10$; Japanese, $n = 10$; Vietnamese, $n = 10$; Other, $n = 7$, mean age ranged: 21-29, mean length of residence in Australia: 1.5-3 years). The English proficiency and prior exposure to English of these L2 listener groups was mixed and will be taken into account in the discussion of results.

Procedure for the listening experiment

Participants in the listening experiment were randomly and evenly allocated to one of 18 blocks of items (versions of the experiment). A version of the experiment and instructions for undertaking it were e-mailed to subjects as Word files. Subjects had the option of doing the experiment at their time of choosing, using the multi-media facilities of their home computer, or using a University machine. Response sheets were e-mailed to one of the investigators and were checked for quality control before credit for participation was granted. Subjects reported finding the task interesting and not onerous. Subjects were instructed that they could play each item *up to four* times, to record the number of times they needed to listen to the items, transcribe what they thought the speaker said into standard orthography and then to rate the original utterance for comprehensibility and accentedness on a 5-point scale (Ease of Understanding-Intelligibility: (1) easy, (2) a bit difficult, (3) quite difficult, (4) very difficult, (5) = impossible; Strength of non-native English accent: (1) no foreign accent, (2) mild accent, (3) moderate accent, (4) strong accent, (5) very strong accent). Finally, they indicated which accent they thought the majority of speakers in the experiment had.

Data analysis

Listeners' language background and demographic data, ratings and sentence transcriptions were compiled into an Excel data base. A sentence comprehension score was generated in terms of the proportion of words exactly matching the experimenters' original transcription of the target utterances. Errors including word omissions, word substitutions, and incorrectly transcribed inflections, but excluding spelling errors, were also counted but not included in the analysis for this paper.

First, inter-rater correlations were calculated to establish inter-rater reliability. Second, the correlations among the four test measures (accent rating, intelligibility rating, % correct transcribed word, and number of times played) were examined. Third, a series of discriminant analyses, testing in turn each pair-wise combination of the rating scales and the behavioural scores was conducted to examine how well the test measures reflect the range of variation (from mild, through moderate, to strong) on the criterion variable that is anticipated in the reference population – in this case utterances of varying degrees of “foreign accent” and “intelligibility” produced by a typical group of Vietnamese L2 English ‘overseas’ students. Finally, we undertook a series of ANOVAs which aimed at assessing the impact of L1 language background of the listener upon auditory comprehension of Vietnamese accented English and how it interacts with the listener’s level of proficiency in Australian English.

Results

Inter-rater agreement and rating scale reliability

The results of the pair-wise correlations between listener scores within a given block of items for each of the 18 blocks showed that all correlations were significant at $p < .01$ ($r > 0.4$) and those for the Intelligibility ratings (INT-R) were particularly high ($r > 0.6$).

Correlations among behavioural measures and ratings

The strength of the correlations that were found, shown in Table 1, somewhat exceeded our expectations. The highest correlation ($r = .92$) was observed between perceived Intelligibility and the number of times an item was played (NTP). The high correlations among the subset of behavioural and rating variables ACC-R, INT-R and NTP suggest that for practical purposes, measures of Accent strength and Intelligibility may be virtually indistinguishable dimensions. The somewhat lower correlation between %WC and the other variables may simply indicate the rate of word misidentification is a relatively insensitive measure of auditory comprehension difficulty (Zielinski, 2004, 2007).

Table 1

Correlations among accent and intelligibility ratings and behavioural measures

	ACC-R.	INT-R.	%WDC	NTP
ACC-R	1.00	0.89	-0.66	0.80
INT-R		1.00	-0.81	0.92
%WDC			1.00	-0.76
NTP				1.00

Discriminant analysis

The basic datum (unit of analysis) for assessing the reliability of the rating scales and behavioural measures reported above is a token utterance produced by a particular speaker. There were 21 speakers (16 L2 Vietnamese, 2 Australian-Vietnamese, and 3 native Australian English controls) and 23 target utterances, forming a sample set of 483 items, each judged by an average of 9 listeners. A series of discriminant analyses, testing in turn each pair-wise combination of the rating scales and the behavioural scores was conducted. The scattergram in Figure 1, which plots the aggregated Accent and Intelligibility ratings for each test utterance indicates how well these two variables jointly and separately serve as a basis for classifying the test utterances into native English and non-native groups. The scattergram also indicates that both scales have adequate numbers of tokens represented across their measurement range.

The most successful combination of scales for the native – non-native speaker classification of test utterances was ACC-R and INT-R. The Accent rating scores (ACC-R) appeared to be marginally more successful at discriminating between native English and L2 speakers than Intelligibility ratings (INT-R). Utterances produced by the two Australian born Vietnamese speakers were generally classified into the Australian speaker group, while almost none of the Vietnamese overseas students' utterances were categorized into the native-speaker standard.

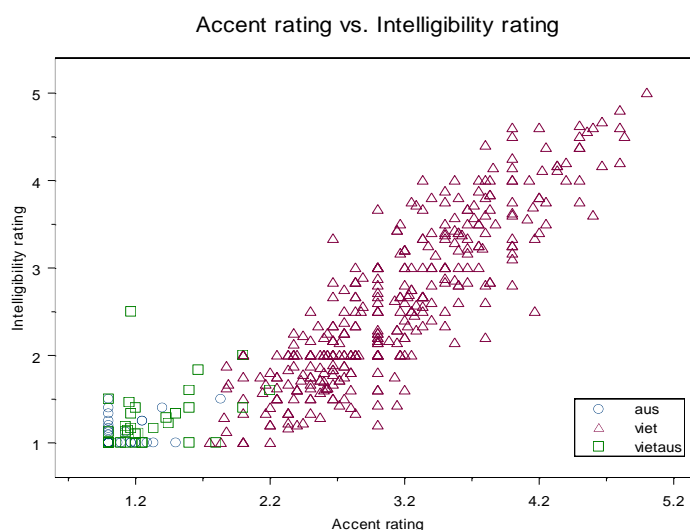


Figure 1. Scattergram and classification of test utterances by speaker group on the basis of Accent and Intelligibility ratings.

The combination of ACC-R and the other three variables: INT-R, %WC and NTP yielded significantly high discrimination rates (above 98% for Australian and Vietnamese). However, the combination of %WC and other variables,

particularly with INT-R showed a high discrimination rate for Vietnamese speakers but a less successful rate for the two native speaker groups, suggesting that success in word transcription (%WC) contributed less than the other variables to distinguishing among speaker groups.

The effect of listener's language background

All main and interaction effects of the four two-way analyses of variance (Speaker group [3 levels: Viet, Aus-Viet, and Aus] and Listener language background [7 levels: EnglishN, EnglishS, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Vietnamese and Other]) were highly statistically significant, resulting in a complex pattern of findings that is summarized graphically in Figures 2 – 4. Unless stated otherwise, all effects discussed below were registered at $p \leq .0001$ level of significance. This conservative level of significance was adopted in view of the exploratory nature of the analysis.

Speaker effects

As shown in Figure 2 and the interaction effects Speaker level x Listener groups in Figures 3-4, there were significant differences in ACC-R, INT-R and NTP, %WC among the three speaker groups (Aus, Viet-Aus and Viet) across all listener groups. Figure 2 shows that essentially the same pattern of main effects was observed between the three speaker groups for three of the dependent variables (ACC-R, INT-R and NTP) but that %CW behaved somewhat differently from the rest. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons showed a three-level pattern of significant differences applied in the case of the rating variables (ACC-R, INT-R) and, NTL: Aus<Vietaus<Viet. However on the transcription measure (%WC) the Vietnamese-Australians grouped with the L2 Vietnamese (Aus>Vietaus=Viet).

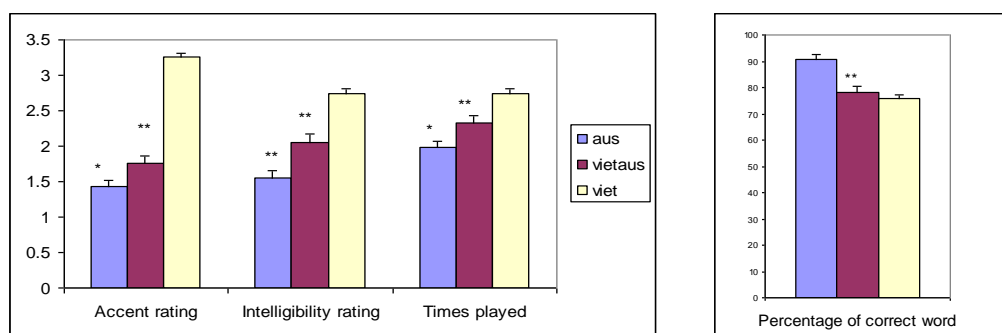


Figure 2. Accent, intelligibility rating and number of times played and % correct words across three speaker groups. *: $p < .01$, **: $p < .001$.

Accent ratings

The listener group with least familiarity with Vietnamese or Asian accented English (Arabic listeners) gave the Vietnamese speakers much higher “foreign accent” ratings than did any other group. On the other hand, the listener group with the greatest familiarity with Vietnamese accented English, the Vietnamese, assigned lower Accent ratings to the Vietnamese speakers than most other listeners (Arabic, $p<.0001$, Japanese, $p<.001$; EnglishN, $p<.01$; EnglishS, $p<.02$; Chinese, $p<.05$).

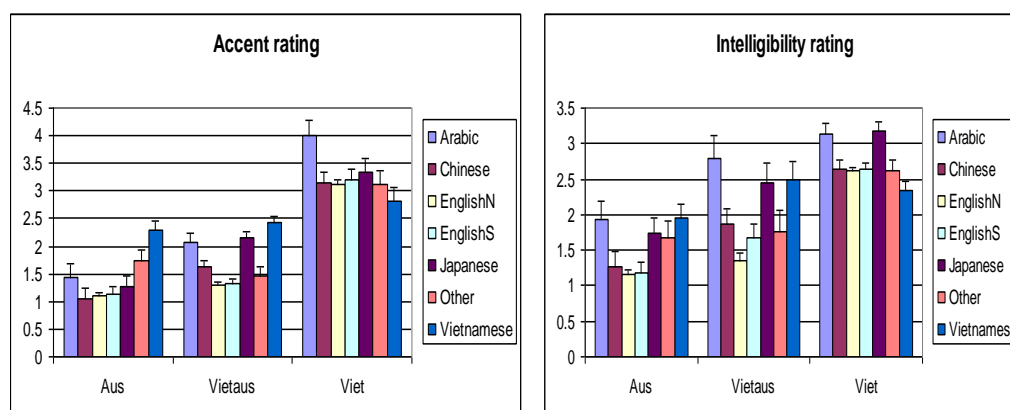


Figure 3. Speaker Accent rating and Intelligibility ratings as a function of 7 listener groups.

However, of all the listener groups, the Vietnamese listeners also assigned the highest Accent ratings to Australian and Vietnamese-Australian speakers; (significantly higher than the EnglishN, EnglishS, Chinese, or Japanese, $p<.0001$; and marginally higher than the Arabic listeners, $p<.004$). One way to interpret this distinctive pattern of accent ratings on the part of the Vietnamese listeners is to say that ‘foreign accent’ is a designation that tends to be interpreted relative to one’s own speech norms, even when one belongs to a reference group whose speech would be identified as non-native by the criteria of the wider speech community (as with the familiar experience of the naïve overseas traveller who discovers that everybody he meets speaks with a “foreign accent”). In the case of the Arabic listeners and to some extent the Japanese who exhibit a similar pattern of accent ratings, all three speaker groups appear to speak English with a ‘foreign accent’. This may reflect an American English reference accent with which they first learned English.

Intelligibility ratings

The Arabic and Japanese listeners reported significantly greater difficulty understanding the utterances of the Vietnamese speakers than did the native English and the other L2 listener groups. The Vietnamese listeners reported less difficulty understanding L2 Vietnamese accented English than any other listener group. However, they join with the Arabic and Japanese listeners in re-

porting greater difficulty of comprehending the Australian and Vietnamese-Australian utterances in comparison with the Intelligibility ratings of English-N, English-S listeners. We might infer from this that L2 listeners more clearly comprehend the non-standard pronunciation of L2 speakers that share their own language transfer effects. It is interesting to note in this connection that the apparently mild Vietnamese accented speech of the two Vietnamese-Australian speakers caused relatively more difficulty for L2 listeners with a less firm grasp on Australian English, than did the speech of the three native Australian English controls.

Number of times played

The pattern of results across listener groups for the number of times that a given item was played is very similar to that of the Intelligibility ratings, giving further credence to the interpretation that the Intelligibility ratings are a valid index of the degree of subjective difficulty that a listener experiences in interpreting a given utterance – accented or otherwise.

The same pattern was apparent among the L2 Vietnamese listeners of greater (subjective) ease of understanding for heavily accented L2 Vietnamese English than mildly accented English (produced by Vietnamese-Australian speakers), together with the suggestion that mildly accented speech can be more disruptive for less experienced L2 listeners (Arabic and Japanese listener groups in the present study) than for native L1 listeners or those of near-L1 competence in the target language.

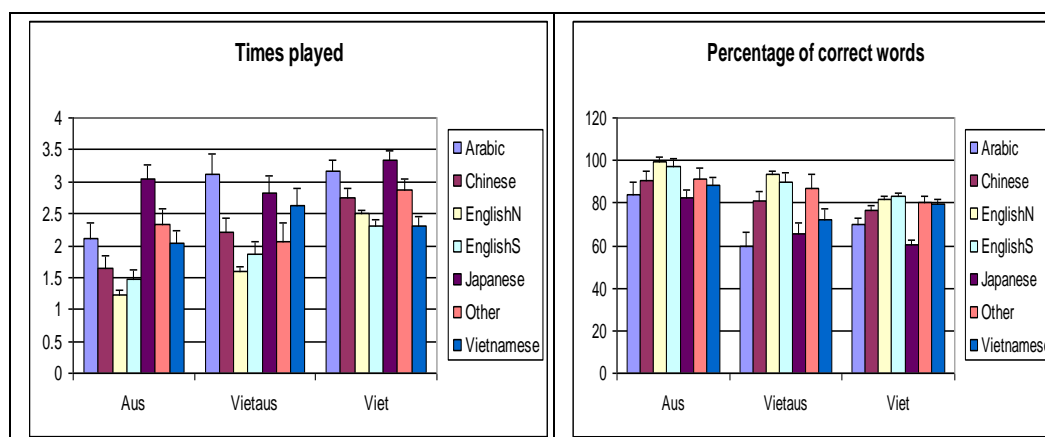


Figure 4. Number of times played and % correct words as a function of listener groups

Percentage of correct words

Although we have questioned the sensitivity of this behavioural measure as an index of relative ease of aural comprehension, the pattern of scores on this

variable across listener groups is consistent with the interpretation of the rating scales offered previously.

The three L2 groups that were identified as less secure in their grasp of Australian English (Arabic, Japanese, and Vietnamese listener groups) on the basis of Intelligibility and Accent scores were significantly or near-significantly lower in their %Correct word scores than those of the native or near-native English groups (English-N, English-S). By contrast, the higher performing L2 listener groups (the Chinese and Other group) were not significantly different from the native and near-native English listeners, at least in their responses to the Australian-English controls and the Australian raised Vietnamese-English speakers. We take this as further validation of the Intelligibility ratings against an objective (if imperfect) measure of comprehension performance.

Discussion

In this study, Accent strength and Intelligibility of L2 accent was evaluated not only by means of listener's subjective judgement (accent and intelligibility rating) but also by objective indices of sentence comprehensibility (percentage of correct word transcription and number of times a listener needs to hear the sentence). The aim was to assess the relationship between ratings of strength of foreign accent and speech intelligibility in relation to objective indices of speech comprehension. Previous studies showed that the three dimensions- accentedness, comprehensibility and intelligibility- are related but are not equivalent. Particularly, there tends to be a discrepancy between intelligibility and perceived comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1995). We found very strong correlations among the four variables. Specifically, the high correlations among the subset of behavioural and rating variables ACC-R, INT-R and NTP suggest that for practical purposes, measures of Accent strength and Intelligibility may be virtually indistinguishable dimensions. The somewhat lower correlation between %WC and the other variables, may simply indicate the rate of word misidentification is a relatively insensitive measure of auditory comprehension difficulty (Zielinski, 2007). The rating scales were also shown to provide better discrimination between L2 speakers and native controls than the two behavioural measures (%WDC, NTP). This suggests that the rating scale scores seemed to better capture individual differences of performance in the sample population, further confirming the reliability of listeners' subjective evaluation of accentedness and intelligibility of foreign accented speech (Brennan & Brennan, 1981; Burda et al., 2003; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Southwood & Flege, 1999; Thompson, 1991). In addition, the Accent rating scores (ACC-R) were found to be more successful at discriminating between native English and L2 speakers than Intelligibility ratings. The Australian raised bilinguals were clustered with the native Australian English speakers by the discrimination analysis but significantly had a stronger (mild) accent rating, in comparison with native speakers by all

listener group, suggesting the effect of home language (L1) use on bilingual accent (Guion, Flege, & Loftin, 2000; Yeni-Komshian, Flege, & Liu, 2000).

Another main aim of the study was to assess the impact of L1 language background of the listener and how it interacts with the listener's comprehension proficiency in the target language (Australian English). Contrary to previous studies that found little difference in the ratings of foreign accents between different L1 listeners (Flege, 1988; MacKay et al., 2006; Munro et al. 2006), this study found a strongly significant effect in accent ratings between L1 listener groups: the listener group with least familiarity with Vietnamese or Asian accented English, the Arabic, gave the Vietnamese speakers much higher "foreign accent" ratings than did any other group. On the other hand, the listener group with the greatest familiarity with Vietnamese accented English, the Vietnamese, assigned lower Accent ratings to the Vietnamese speakers than most others. However, the Vietnamese listeners also assigned the highest Accent ratings to Australian and Vietnamese Australian speakers. One way to interpret this distinctive pattern of accent ratings on the part of the Vietnamese listeners is to say that "foreign accent" is a designation that tends to be interpreted relative to one's own speech norms, even when one belongs to a reference group whose speech would be identified as non-native by the criteria of the wider speech community (as with the familiar experience of the naïve overseas traveller who discovers that everybody he meets speaks with a "foreign accent"). In the case of the Arabic and to some extent the Japanese listeners who exhibit a similar pattern of accent ratings, all three speaker groups appear to speak English with a "foreign accent". This may reflect an American English reference accent with which they first learned English.

A strong L1 listener background effect was also found for intelligibility rating. The Arabic and Japanese listeners report significantly greater difficulty understanding the utterances of the Vietnamese speakers than do the native English and the other L2 listener groups. The Vietnamese listeners report less difficulty understanding L2 Vietnamese accented English than any other listener group, lending further support to previous (though small and inconsistent) findings about listeners' advantage in understanding accented utterances from speakers who share their L1 background (Major et al., 2002; Munro et al., 2006; Smith & Bisazza, 1982). It would be interesting to further investigate whether this finding will be replicated when Arabic listeners rating speakers from their L1 background and how Vietnamese listeners response to Arabic and Japanese accented English.

However, the Vietnamese listeners join with the Arabic and Japanese listeners in reporting greater difficulty of comprehending the Australian and Vietnamese-Australian utterances in comparison with the Intelligibility ratings of the other four listener groups (English-N, English-S, Chinese, and other). This result suggests two overlapping effects. First, the Vietnamese, Arabic and Japanese listeners are less familiar with Australian English as opposed to the reference American English in their home countries. Second, these three groups of listeners, coming from EFL countries and residing in Australia less than 3

years, were shown to have more difficulties understanding native Australian speakers' speech than the Chinese and Other listener groups who come from ESL speaking countries such as Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore, Malaysia, suggesting the effect of listeners' proficiency and amount of exposure to the target language on comprehension of native speakers' speech (Matsuura, Chiba & Fujieda, 1999). In addition, the fact that all listener groups find Vietnamese speakers' speech most difficult to comprehend (in compared with those of the two native speaker groups) suggests that properties of the speech itself are a potent factor in determining the intelligibility of L2 speech (Hazan & Markham, 2004; Munro et al, 2006).

Another interesting finding in this study is that the apparently mild Vietnamese accent speech of the two Vietnamese-Australian speakers caused relatively more difficulty for L2 listeners with a less firm grasp on Australian English, than did the speech of the three native Australian English controls. More extensive testing is needed to confirm this finding, but it suggests, what other studies have indicated (Chiba & Matsuura, 1995) that L2 listeners are relatively intolerant of accent variation in L2, such that even a mild accent colouring of their own L1 can interfere with comprehension in L2, whereas a strong L2 colouring, replete with their own L1 transfer effects, is *less* disruptive to comprehension.

Implication for TESOL education in Vietnam

First, from the listener's perspective, the study showed that apart from listeners' proficiency, the amount of exposure to the target language and familiarity with the accent varieties facilitates the comprehension of native speakers' speech, consistent with previous studies (Bent & Bradlow, 2003; Gass & Varonis, 1984; Matsuura, Chiba & Fujieda, 1999). The implication of this finding is that to prepare Vietnamese learners of English for international communication especially in the context of English as a global language, it is important to include the exposure to different types of English and the varieties of English into the objectives of EFL curriculum.

Second, from the speaker's perspective, the results of this study show that even though all Vietnamese speakers (except one) in the study are EFL teachers and/or TESOL lecturers in EFL teacher training program at universities in Vietnam who had a formal training in English teaching in their BA program and had been in an English speaking country for a period of time (0.5-1.5 years), almost none of their utterances were categorized into the native-speaker standard by any listener groups. Their speech had a moderate to strong accent rating and was judged to be ranging from quite-to-very difficult to understand to all groups of listeners. Listeners needed to listen to their utterances more than twice but could identify correctly only an average of 80% of the words. While caution needs to be taken in generalising the results of this study, in which utterances were presented to listeners out of context, the trade-off is that listeners were allowed to listen to the utterances up to four times.

The results suggest that the Vietnamese speakers may have potential problems being understood correctly by native and non-native English listeners (e.g., the utterance “*the world’s driest continent is Australia*” was heard as “the worst rice cartoning is Australia” or “the worst riots continue in East Australia”; “*the queen was sleeping in the royal tent*” was heard as “the cream was glibbing in the riot hand” or “the King was sitting in the loyal town”). This imposes restrictions on their exchanges with native and non-native interlocutors in their study, life and work and might create occasions when the ideas and opinions of Vietnamese people are not appropriately evaluated. In addition, given the fact that they are EFL teachers and EFL teacher trainers, who will provide sole pronunciation model and input to learners in the EFL context in Vietnam, they deserve to receive proper training and opportunities not only to improve their own English accent and intelligibility for their better communicative efficiency but also to enhance their professional confidence.

Third, from linguistic perspective, the fact that all listener groups find Vietnamese speakers’ speech most difficult to comprehend (compared with those of the two native speaker groups) suggests that properties of the speakers’ speech itself, which was found to be strongly interfered by L1 Vietnamese phonology (Nguyen & Ingram, 2004), are a potent factor in determining the intelligibility of L2 speech (Hazan & Markham, 2004; Munro et al, 2006). Therefore, it is important for further research to investigate “which phonological characteristics of particular interlanguage processes precipitate most intelligibility loss when distorted by foreign accent” (James, 1998, p. 213) and inform pronunciation pedagogy. The speech corpus of Vietnamese speakers in this study is being closely annotated for interlanguage connected speech processes with the aim to determine the phonetic markers of Vietnamese accented English, and how they contribute to accent and intelligibility judgement.

Fourth, the perceived strength of a (foreign) accent has been shown to be affected by several factors, namely, age of L2 acquisition, length of exposure to L2 environment, formal instruction, relative use of the first and second languages, motivation, and language learning aptitude (Piske, Mackay, & Flege, 2001). Many of these factors, particularly age of acquisition, formal instruction, the amount of L2 use and L2 exposure seem to account for the strength of accent of Vietnamese speakers in this study. All of the subjects started learning English at the age of twelve with the Grammar Translation method during the secondary and high school. Those who had a B.A. degree in EFL teaching were exposed to some form of communicative language teaching method during four years of undergraduate study and some formal instruction on pronunciation mostly in the form of segmental phonetics but had very limited (and sometimes not at all) exposure to authentic communication with native speakers. Therefore, if one truly wants to improve Vietnamese learners’ pronunciation of English to enhance their communicative abilities in English as a global language, several of these factors (especially age of acquisition, formal instruction, L2 exposure, among others) need to be taken into consideration. In an article investigating the impact of English as a global language on

education policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific Rim countries (including Vietnam), Nunan (2003) showed that several countries have lowered the age for compulsory English (e.g., China: from 11 to 9; Korea: from 13 to 9; Taiwan: Grade 5 to Grade 1 (age 6-7); Malaysia: grade 7; Hong Kong: year 1 age 6; Japan: age 12 with primary students increasingly exposed to English). There is, on the one hand, an “overwhelming concern (in government and business sectors of Hong Kong) on losing economic advantage if English language skills are not enhanced”(p. 594), on the other hand, a concern with the impact of an early introduction to English on national language (Malaysia) and national identity (Korea). Vietnam has nationally introduced English to grades 3 -5 in primary schools as an elective subject since 2003 and as compulsory in 2006 but is encountering curriculum and EFL primary teacher training problems (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). Nunan’s report also showed that the English language proficiency of many teachers in the countries surveyed is not sufficient to provide learners with the rich input needed for successful foreign language acquisition. The solution on the part of Hong Kong and Japan is to recruit large numbers of native-English-speaking teachers through the NET and JET Programmes. These schemes have been extremely expensive and have had mixed success, although, in the case of Hong Kong, at least, it is too early to provide a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the NET scheme. We strongly agree with Nunan’s view that, “in the long term, this investment would be better spent on programs to enhance the proficiency and professional skills of local teachers” (p. 608), particularly in the context of Vietnam. Access to rich input which is fundamental to the development of high-level skills in the target language can be either from native speakers, highly competent speakers of the language, or appropriate technology (Ellis, 1994). In the current context of Vietnam where expensive large-scale recruitment of large numbers of native-English-speaking teachers may not be affordable, technology and rich, input-based programs can do a great deal to support teachers who do not have high levels of fluency in the target language (Anderson & Nunan, 2003) if they have access to appropriate materials and education about how to use them. Nevertheless, to raise teachers’ level of language competence, it is essential that “MOET should provide more English classes with English native speakers as a part of ESL teacher training” (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007).

A number of measures need to be taken into consideration to improve Vietnamese’s English pronunciation.

First, from the curriculum perspective, in EFL/ESL programs at all levels, pronunciation teaching should not be seen as “fixing problems” but rather as “teaching how to speak” (Yates, 2002, p. 12). It is important to focus attention on pronunciation as early as possible, and to integrate it as much as possible with other areas of language learning, so that the gains are felt in spontaneous speech and not just in pronunciation exercises. There is certainly a place for the separate language clinic in which specific problems are addressed, but to rely only on remedial strategies is to leave it far too late: learners need proac-

tive attention on how to speak the language intelligibly from the very beginning.

Second, in order to achieve this curriculum objective, the teacher's role is vital in providing a good model of spoken English. In addition, they need to provide the opportunity for every learner to listen to a range of accents in order to prepare them for life outside the classroom.

Third, in order for teachers to fulfil their crucial role in incorporating pronunciation into their "teaching students how to speak", beside being a good model of spoken English which they need to be better prepared from the very beginning as a language learner, they need a formal training in pronunciation pedagogy. Research has indicated that many ESL teachers even in English speaking countries such as Canada, Britain and Australia have no formal preparation to teach pronunciation. For instance, Breitkreutz, Derwing and Rossiter (2002) reported that 67% of ESL teachers surveyed in Canada had no training at all in pronunciation instruction. MacDonald (2002) cites several studies in Australia indicating that many teachers do not teach pronunciation "because they lack confidence, skills and knowledge" (p.3). The general lack of teacher preparation may partially explain the findings of another survey in which only 8 of 100 adult intermediate ESL learners indicated that they had received any pronunciation instruction, despite having been enrolled in ESL programs for extended periods of time (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002). In Vietnam, with no doubt, pronunciation pedagogy has not received attention in teacher preparation courses and materials. Therefore, we join other researchers' voice (Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Derwing & Munro, 2005; among others) in calling for the incorporation of pronunciation pedagogy into EFL/ESL teacher training programs especially at universities in Vietnam. From our perspective, the pronunciation pedagogy program should provide prospective teachers with a grounding knowledge of the phonetics and phonology of the target language, the sufficient background to enable them to assess their students' pronunciation problems, and skills to critically evaluate materials, curriculum, research findings, language learning technology and techniques to determine their applicability for their students.

Fourth, research also indicated that to-date, "much less research has been carried out on L2 pronunciation than on other skills such as grammar and vocabulary, and instructional materials and pronunciation teaching practices are still heavily influenced by commonsense intuitive notions" (Derwing & Munro, 2005, p. 380). In the current context of Vietnam, it is hard to expect all teachers to have expertise, time and resources to conduct research, it is, therefore, important to facilitate the collaboration or the interaction between researchers and practitioners to encourage more classroom-relevant research and to exert the impact of research findings on teaching practice. We would like to end this paper with a call from Derwing and Munro (2005): "Applied linguists with an interest in pronunciation should ensure that ESL teacher preparation programs offer courses in pronunciation pedagogy firmly rooted in existing

research. *Researchers and teachers owe this to ESL students*, many of whom view pronunciation instruction as a priority” (p. 392).

Acknowledgement

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ESTABLISHING THE LOCALIZATION AND INDIGENIZATION OF INDIAN ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The rise of English as a global lingua franca and the increasing use of it into the multilingual and multicultural contexts appear to be further indexing a number of new issues. These issues include from the discussion of its ownership – that it is no longer only the language of native speakers of it, as statistically non-native speakers make up 75 per cent of all English users (Crystal, 2003) – to establishing Englishes in different outer and expanding circles as distinct varieties rather than erroneous forms. Some forms that Indian speakers of English use are considered erroneous forms according to the inner circle variety, albeit they do not break down the communication. Therefore, this article examines the present role of English as an international language that incorporates consideration to legitimate non-native varieties rather than erroneous forms. It also introduces historical background of Indian English and supports Indian English as a distinct variety as evidenced by localization and indigenization. Finally, the article reviews the resulting pedagogical implications, i.e. the issues that English language teachers in India need to take into consideration while designing and delivering ESL lessons.

Keywords: Localization, Indigenization, World Englishes (WEs), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International language (EIL), Pidgin

Introduction

English language came into existence back in the fifth century as Germanic settlers, whose language was referred as *Englisc*, moved into Britain. “English did not originate in Britain” (Culpeper, 1997, p. 1) but it became the language of Britain as Anglo-Saxons made it a prime link language; however, distinct dialects also remained in practice. Since then, it has passed through many developmental stages to reach its present status. The language that started in the fifth century by Germanic settlers has today gone global. The political and economic power of Britain in the nineteenth century and the influence of the United States in the twenty century significantly helped English become a global language.

With the international spread of English, many concepts of English emerged, like English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International language (EIL) and World Englishes (WEs). EFL, whose aim is just to “be able to interact with native speakers of English” (Jenkins, 2004, p. 9) is distinct from ELF and EIL. ELF and EIL are generally used interchangeably; however, researchers prefer to use the term ELF over EIL as Jenkins again argues that the former “highlights the predominant use of this kind of English, i.e. as a lingua franca among non-native speakers, and pre-empts misinterpretations of the word “international”, which is sometimes wrongly assumed to refer to international native speaker varieties”. Researchers prefer to recommend the term ELF because the majority of English language users constitute non-native English speakers (Crystal, 2003). In this regard, ELF can be a common asset to all, be they from L1 English countries, post-colonial countries, or countries where English is neither L1 nor an official language. The awareness of EFL enhances intelligibility and helps the participants of communication to accommodate with each other varieties of English.

Despite ELF being widely accepted, the native variety of English is still regarded as custodians over what is acceptable form (Seidlhofer, 2005). Nevertheless, non-native version of English should also be made legitimate. For example, English “th” sounds are relatively difficult for some non-native speakers to pronounce and they of course sound distinct from native English-speakers. But, this should not be a problem unless it affects communication. Seidlhofer (2004) also captured in the VOICE corpus that ELF speakers are often not using the third person singular present tense “-s” and it does not break down communication. However, it is likely to lead to misunderstanding in case of using verbs like “put”, “cut”, etc. For instance, the utterance “She put the books in the shelf” might cause misinterpretation whether it expresses present habit or past action. Hence, this type of form should not be encouraged as a distinct form of ELF.

Although there has been ample discussion on the form and role of EFL, it is still controversy what form needs to be incorporated in an ELF syllabus. Nevertheless, some global ELT textbooks have tried to address this issue. Despite this fact, when learners have completed their English language courses, “it is the same native English [...] that is assessed in the supposedly ‘international’ ELT examinations” (Jenkins, 2012, p. 487). This is one of the issues “international ELT examiners” should take into account. Furthermore, successful acquisition of English is determined with comparison to native speakers’ model and non-native forms are termed as interlanguage errors. This belief is merely a myth in World Englishes. WEs scholars find the so-called interlanguage errors as sociolinguistic reality. Jenkins (2006, p. 168) emphasises the idea that the “learners may be producing forms characteristic of their own variety of English, which reflects the sociolinguistic reality of their English use, regardless of their circle, far better than either British or American norms are able to”. The next misconception is that the use of native speakers’ idio-

matic language is regarded as demonstrating a high level of L2 proficiency, but contrastively Jenkins (2005) and Seidlhofer (2004) find the use of idiomatic language to be examples of communication breakdown.

This discussion therefore raises questions about teaching and teacher education as to which English and what kind of English should be taught in expanding circles. There is also a possibility that the development of different varieties of English would turn into more complex scenario as each variety will sound different from others. This might cause the communication to be less intelligible globally. Thus, it could be argued to make learners aware of the linguistic features of different varieties, but it would be unwise to lead a particular variety far from the crux of Standard English. This may be the reason, for example, why the government of Singapore is encouraging their people to use Standard English rather than their local variety.

The face of Indian English

With the emergence of English as a language of global communication, different local varieties of English have been identified. Kachru (1992) divided English speaking countries into three circles, Inner, Outer and Expanding. The Inner circle refers to the variety of English that was spread across the world in the first diaspora. This variety represents the historic and sociolinguistic patterns of English in contexts where English was used a primary means of communication, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, and South Africa. The Outer circle was used by the second diaspora of English that spread English through British colonization such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kenya and Nigeria, whereas the expanding circle includes countries where English is used as the means of international communication, for example, in China, Japan, Europe, Nepal and Indonesia.

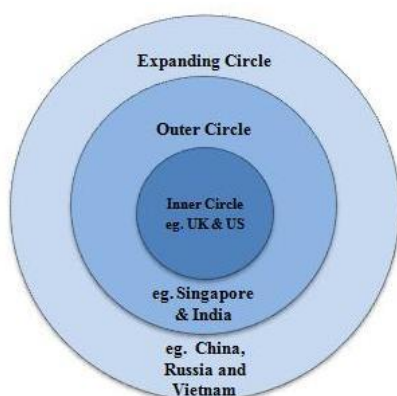


Figure 1. Kachru's (1992) three circles model of World Englishes

India falls under Kachru's outer circle of world Englishes. The emergence of the variety of Indian English is originally associated with the establishment of the East India Company in the 17th century. In 1835, the British Govern-

ment in India declared English as the medium of instruction in schools and universities. During the British rule, English grew as a language of power, prestige and convenience. Bhaskararao (2000, p. 5) states that Indians were very quick to take to English then, “and even those opposed to British rule would voice their resistance primarily in English”. Additionally, English was flourished by British missionaries, sailors and soldiers. Even after India obtained its independence from Britain in 1947, English continued to be widely used in various situations, such as business, education, media and social interaction. Late 18th and early 19th century witnessed a widespread development of English in metropolitan cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, “English input was reduced considerably in many vernacular schools and English was taught as one of the subjects” (Davyadova, 2012, p. 370).

The growth of English has been so high today that it is used as one of two official languages, the other being Hindi in India. English is now used by a large number of educated Indians as an additional language in communication at the intra-national level in day-to-day dealings (Kaushik, 2011). Enokizono (2000) additionally finds that English is virtually used as the first language by people in some states of India. Nevertheless, for a great number of educated multi-lingual Indians, it is the second language. India being a large country by geography, population, language and culture, the varieties of English coming across may be considered to be distinct varieties of the language. They evolved out of British English imbibing several features of pronunciation, grammar and semantic from the native language of it. Today, English is largely used as a link language among educated Indians since not people from all states use Hindi (national language), but they do speak English.

The use of English in any speech community can be profoundly affected by the immediate linguistic background of the users. The languages mainly used as native languages belong to distinct language families; for instance, a majority in the north identify themselves as “Indo-Aryan”, in the south as “Dravidian”, distinct hilly peoples as “Parsis” and Eurasian communities as the Anglo-Indians and East Indians (McArthur, 2003). As a result, it obviously forms variation in the use of English as well.

Mehrotra (2000), McArthur (2003) and Melchers and Shaw (2011) believe something of the kind of Pidgin English does exist in India. Mehrotra has provided arguments, such as: the language used is reduced and simplified; it is no one’s mother tongue; it is only restricted to trade and services; it is only oral and so on. But, there is plenty of empirical evidence to prove Mehrotra giving false justification of the use of English in India. English is used as a first language by Anglo-Indians (Melchers and Shaw, 2011), second language, and foreign language depending on which states the speakers belong to. English has a wide range of use in India as Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998) list the major domains of English in India as bureaucracy, education, print-media communication and advertising, intellectual and literary writing and social interaction. Subsequently, there are as many kinds of Indian English (for in-

stance, Bengali English, Gujarati English and Tamil English) as there are languages and social situations in India. Despite this diversity, there are distinct features of Indian English in common.

Evidence for the existence of Indian English

Taking the discussion further, there arises a question if India has an English of its own. An attempt has been made to justify Indian English as a distinct variety of World Englishes based on the criteria of “localization” and “indigenization” (Pang, 2003, p. 12).

Localization: Following Pang (2003), localization is one of the criteria to determine the existence of a distinct variety that incorporates the aspects of language as phonology, syntax, lexis and grammar. These criteria also reflect the first two Butler’s criteria, accent and vocabulary.

Phonology

McArthur’s (2003) strongest data on distinct phonological features of English speakers in India suggest the existence of the Indian variety. The main phonological feature stated in Kachru (1983) that makes it distinct from the RP is that Indian English is “syllable-timed”; all vowels tend to have their full value. However, word stress does exist and different stress patterns occur in different English speech communities in India; for example, “available” is often stressed in the North on the last-but-one syllable, “avaiLAbLe,” and in the South on the first syllable, “Available”. Similarly, Wiltshire and Harnsberger (2006) as mentioned in Melchers and Shaw (2011, p. 147) found that “rhoticity varied across and within individuals”. In other words, /r/ is pronounced in all positions in Indian English (McArthur, 2003). Another distinct characteristic of Indian English is the fact that there is almost no distinction between weak forms and strong forms (Nihalani, Tongue, & Hosali, 1979). The most striking feature of this variety is that the voiceless stops /p/, /t/ and /k/ are generally pronounced unaspirated and *F* is often pronounced as an aspirated *P*, so that “fan” is pronounced [p^hæn] and “pen” is pronounced as [pen]. This is because of the absence of aspirated sounds in local languages spoken not only in India but in suburb countries, like Nepal and Bangladesh. Additionally, speakers of Indo-Aryan languages tend to use consonant clusters, like sk, sl, sp with an epenthetic vowel, as a result, school is pronounced as [isku:l] by Punjabis and [seku:l] by Kashmiries. This example again triggers the existence of different varieties of English in India. Moreover, South Indians generally geminate certain consonants such as in “Americ-ca” and hum-man” and this may be the reason of the existence of such geminated forms in Dravidian languages.

Grammar

Indian English has several varietal syntactic patterns that make it distinct from other varieties of World Englishes. The most notable feature is the form of interrogation that often does not have subject/auxiliary inversion, in particular, “What you would like to have?” and “You want what?” These sentences are linguistically categorized as “interlanguage” but in fact Jenkins (2004) and some others prefer to take it as an accepted form of that variety of English. Same is the case with the use of “one” rather than “a” before a singular countable noun to denote one, which is the most significant feature of not only Indian English but English used in other South Asian countries as well. Similarly, the use of articles is hardly seen in the languages spoken in India that causes Indian English speakers to miss out articles or use them so-called incorrectly. In addition, some Indian languages have no distinction between countable nouns and uncountable ones (Enokizono, 2000). Thus, Indian English often tend to fail to distinguish between countable nouns and uncountable nouns and they are likely to use plural nouns, for example, after the determiners “every” and “each”. This might be due to the negative transfer of L1 as they have very similar construction in Hindi. Moreover, some uncountable nouns like furniture, information and feedback are frequently used in plural forms. Equally important, with regard to the use of question tag, “yes” and “no” are commonly used. “Isn’t it?” is too used as a generalized question tag, which is also a very common form used in Britain these days. As well as, code switching takes place as they sometimes use “hai na?” (It’s a Hindi phrase meaning “isn’t it”) but this utterance is only common among Hindi speakers of English. Moreover, verbs that do not usually have progressive forms in inner circle varieties are generally used in progressive form in Indian English; take for example, “She is having two children”, “I am loving her”, and “You may be knowing my cousin”. This so-called erroneous form is commonly used in many other outer and expanding circle varieties. This may be because there is no any underlying explanation of it in English pedagogic grammar and there are some exceptional contexts where the progressive forms of these verbs are accepted.

Lexis

It is a common practice to loan words from Indian languages and to mix them into English to describe things typical of India. This practice does not have only effect on Indian English but many lexicons derived from Indian languages, especially from Hindi and Urdu, are now used in inner circle varieties as well such as “jungle”, “bungalow”, “pyjamas”, “shampoo”, “veranda” and “samosa”. Particularly in a conversation exclusively among Indians, it seems that they feel more comfortable to speak English in such ways. Similarly, it is very common to use big words as they are exposed much to written English. Putting a special emphasis on written English has also resulted in the use of

complicated, old-fashioned and bureaucratic expressions, such as “do the needful”, “I invite your kind reference to my letter” (Enokizono, 2000). Similarly, the suffix *-ji* (also *-jee*) often comes with personal names, both first name and surname. This is generally used while addressing people with respect, for instance, *Gandhi-ji*, *Patel-ji*, *Praveen-ji*. Additionally, Indian English has many words which were taken from Arabic and Persian through Northern Indian languages, such as *dewan* (chief minister), *darbar* (palace), *mogul* (a Muslim ruler), *vakeel* (a lawyer), *zamindar* (a landlord, not the owner of a house on rent).

Indigenization

By indigenization, Pang (2003, p. 12) means “the acceptance by the local community of the existence of a local variety of a language in wide use in day-to-day communication”. Pang further explains that the variety which is well established within a territory and used for many different social functions are not only “institutionalized” (Kachru, 1983), but also localized and indigenized. He has mentioned Indian English as an example of both institutionalized and indigenized. Hohenthal (2003), while exploring the views of people towards establishing indigenization of Indian English, found most of the participants did not seem to acknowledge Indian variety as a distinct variety. Many acknowledge RP as the best model. However, a small number of participants supported Indian English as naturally distinct variety from RP or any other inner circle varieties because of linguistic and cultural reasons.

Moreover, governments in some states in India tried to promote their local languages by banning the use of English in all offices and public places but this attempt was not successful. A statement was made by one of the Indian ministers, Rajnath Singh, that showed his negative reaction at using English, but his statement received quick criticism from educationists in India (IBN, 2013). He has shown a threat that young generation will forget their language and culture. Alternatively, the use of English has been a common practice among young people and has been obligatory in some sense. With the growth of multinational companies, young generation is also instrumentally motivated to have mastery over English language to secure better future prospects. In addition, in most of the Bollywood (Indian Movies Company) movies, English is largely used and it carries a wide range of Indian English features. Although there is controversy in terms of accepting English as their primary language, there is much evidence to support the notion of indigenization in Indian English.

Pedagogical implication of the discussion

Outer-circle countries are often likely to choose an endonormative model for pedagogical purpose. However, there is still a strong debate on the issue of selecting exonormative, endonormative or lingua franca approach. Jenkins

(2006, p. 173) argues that it is required “to learn not (a variety of) English, but about Englishes, their similarities and differences, issues involved in intelligibilities, the strong link between language and identity, and so on”. It therefore seems obvious that even in Indian context, English language teaching and learning should be based on world Englishes rather than merely following either exonormative or endonormative model.

The discussion in the previous section, to some extent, stresses the existence of Indian English, but they still continue to teach English through the literature and thoughts of England instead of a home-grown model (Kaushik, 2011). The educationists in Indian are, however, now suggesting focusing on Indian variety. On the other hand, there is still a group of people who tend to acknowledge RP as the best modal. This may be because this group of people are not aware of the existence of world Englishes, as Matsuda (2003) found the similar case in Japan. At the same time, there are many varieties of English found within Indian territory itself. Therefore, if they decide to follow the Indian variety, the learners and teachers need a model or near ideal speaking and writing formats covering different genres and styles, all represented through the relevant content. The model should incorporate local needs and their content should reflect sociolinguistic, socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic situations of the learners. In addition, they should not ignore the fact that the students need to be prepared to communicate with both native and non-native English speakers that may take place at any part of the world. If I argue for the complete WEs based syllabus, it would be senseless as the form of WEs syllabus has not been defined yet. Hence, I argue that they need to form a syllabus based on intelligibility that is more inclusive, pluralistic, and accepting than the traditional view of English in which there is one correct standard way of using English that all speakers must strive for. In terms of textbooks, Indians have grown rich in publications. They have developed textbooks and teaching materials based on Indian English and these textbooks are not only accepted in India but also in its suburb countries, like Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. These textbooks can be further upgraded by incorporating the features of WEs. Moreover, these poses challenges for preparing Indian students to undergo international English language proficiency tests which are designed based on exonormative models. With only Indian English competency, they are likely to be graded below their real levels. Thus, making the learners aware of the inner-circle varieties seems significant as well. This is also a global “hot” issue today to revise the exonormative assessment formats of English language proficiency tests in order to base on World Englishes formats.

Conclusion

English is now merely owned by the speakers of inner-circle variety, but the ownership has gone global. India, one of the outer circle varieties, has used English for more than two centuries and by the date, Indian English has its

own features that distinguish from the original RP. They use English that reflects their socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic situations. They seem to use a hybrid form of English that identifies localization and indigenization of their own English, which they also call “Hinglish”. The distinctive features of Indian English in terms of phonology, syntax, lexis, and grammar evidence the existence of localization, whereas there is still controversy in terms of establishing indigenization. It is also noted that within a single territory, English is used as L1, second language and a foreign language and that, in some states English has transferred into a pidgin form.

There also seems to be needs for designing courses and syllabus of English language that can address the World Englishes variety, which is challenging though. Since English is used differently in India itself and learners need to communicate globally, EFL syllabus should be based on intelligibility that can be inclusive of local variety while also incorporating the features of WEs. However, giving much emphasis on local variety of English into the syllabus can disadvantage the learners who undergo International English Language Proficiency tests such as IELTS, TOEFL and GRE unless the examiners of such tests revise the exonormative assessment formats. It would be therefore wise to integrate local variety with standard variety into the EFL syllabus. It is also important that the syllabus can address sociolinguistic, socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic realities of India, rather than following the literature from inner circle varieties. This could fulfil the demand of supplying their cultural values to Indian people while learning an additional language.

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**THE PERVASIVENESS OF THE NEOLIBERAL AGENDA AND
LINGUISTIC INSTRUMENTALISM IN JAPAN'S ENGLISH
EDUCATION POLICY "ENGLISH EDUCATION REFORM PLAN
CORRESPONDING TO GLOBALIZATION"**

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Abstract

Governments are challenged with pursuing macro-level interests for the good of the group, while also needing to accommodate and to acknowledge the needs and preferences of people at the micro-level. Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (MEXT) "English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization" policy appears to promote English in terms of linguistic instrumentalism while also recognizing the interests of people in the education sector at the micro-level. Our intention is to discuss MEXT's promotion of English as linguistic instrumentalism and to present an analysis of the EERPCTG policy document in an effort to suggest that MEXT's macro-level pursuit of English as linguistic instrumentalism actually trumps its efforts to accommodate micro-level preferences of English education. Overall, our intention is not to condemn the current social and educational situation dominated by neoliberalism, but to demonstrate that the use of words with positive discourse prosody in English education policy in Japan still results in neoliberalism, and to provide policy makers and practitioners engaged in English education with viewpoints to see the current situation from wider perspectives.

Keywords: English education policy, Japan, linguistic instrumentalism, Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

Governments are often faced with the challenge of pursuing macro-level goals that are often based upon economic-related interests, while also needing to accommodate micro-level interests of the people. In the case of MEXT, Japan's ministry of education, at the macro-level, the promotion of English corresponding to globalization is characterized by neoliberal goals from the Abe Administration. However, at the micro-level, the promotion of English in the education sector is characterized by teachers educating students in a nurturing environment. MEXT's macro-level neoliberal goals are pervasive to the de-

gree that the micro-level promotion of English is still suggestive of linguistic instrumentalism. However, MEXT relies upon teachers at the micro-level to implement macro-level policy and curriculum in order to achieve its neoliberal goals. In this paper, we are interested in understanding the relationship between MEXT's macro-level neoliberal pursuit and its attempt to appeal to the micro-level education sector through the language of English education policy. We begin from a broad and perhaps global perspective, by defining linguistic instrumentalism and citing examples in a global context. We then narrow in on the EERPCTG policy document and use Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the policy text to show that even though MEXT uses verbs with illocutionary force and positive discourse prosody, the EERPCTG policy still results in promoting neoliberalism through the scheduled implementation of English in a very short period of time. Finally, we discuss five concerns about linguistic instrumentalism in an effort to provide policy makers and practitioners engaged in English education with viewpoints to see the current situation from wider perspectives.

Linguistic instrumentalism in a global context

Linguistic instrumentalism is defined as an ideology that emphasizes utilitarianism of learning English for sustaining economic development of a society or increasing social mobility of individuals (Guo, 2012). In this sense, English is a tool that supports a nation's competitiveness in the global market which results in the utilitarianism of learning English at the society level for the purposes of sustaining the economic development, and at the individual level for the purposes of social mobility (Kubota, 2011; Wee, 2010). English as linguistic instrumentalism is particularly evident in education policies in Japan (and in other nations) and has resulted in an emphasis on English Language Teaching (ELT) and English curriculum reforms.

Kubota (2011) suggests that linguistic instrumentalism underscores the importance of English skills for employment opportunities in terms of economic success, and has influenced Japanese language and teaching in Japan, suggesting the notion of human capital (i.e., skills deemed necessary for the knowledge economy) and the employment conditions of a neoliberal society. Neoliberalism can be defined as a revisionist approach to transform the welfare state into a post-welfare state that relegates all aspects of society to the wisdom of the market. Neoliberalism usually adopts a trickle-down hypothesis in which economic benefits gathered to upper groups of the society will benefit poorer members of the society by improving the economy as a whole. Neoliberalism has been a dominant paradigm for social reform for the past few decades mainly in the world of economy, but it is expanding in terms of its influence in other areas including education.

Examples of linguistic instrumentalism or neoliberalism permeating into areas of English education around the globe are reported by an increasing number of scholars. For example, in South Korea, English implies a promise

of social inclusion in the sense that reaching certain goals of measurable competence in the language is assumed to provide economic and social advancement (Park, 2011). Similarly, teaching English has become a commodity in Japan aimed at creating profits for businesses including publishers, schools, the testing industry and agencies that sell study-abroad programs (Kubota, 2011). In China, the unprecedented marketization of English education has resulted in the relationships between teachers and students as being like those between businesses and clients (Guo, 2012). In Singapore, a country with racial and linguistic diversity, the emphasis on the economic value of the language rather than the role of the language user in preserving traditional values is creating tension among the people (Wee, 2010). Even in the Nordic countries, which possess a long tradition of emphasizing the cultural and social motives of higher education, students with experience studying abroad have come to be regarded as more valuable for the national economy upon their return (Stensaker, Frolich, Gornitzka, & Maassen, 2009). Many Intensive English Programs (IEP) featuring English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in the United States are creating websites with images that allure international students and textbooks that often contain content that fits well in a neoliberal society (Chun, 2009).

Despite incisive criticism from many researchers, however, the current neoliberal logic of capitalism is too deep-rooted to stop the English frenzy. In many Asian countries, English teaching reform has been intensely prompted by the government with strong influences from the business sector. Large corporations look at the workers' competence in English as a criterion for employment and promotion, and emphasize the importance of English in the globalizing world. For example, the domestic market of South Korea is much smaller than many Asian countries, so the government and businesses began English education reform much earlier to compete in the globalizing world. As a result, many students and workers have invested much time and money in developing their skills in the language (Park, 2011). In Japan, the Japan Federation of Economic Organization (Keidanren) and the Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Doyukai) have proposed that the government improve oral communicative skills of students in primary, secondary, and higher education, and the plans and policies released by MEXT have reflected these corporate demands (Kubota, 2011). We will demonstrate these pervasive neoliberal sentiments in our analysis of the EERPCTG.

Critical Discourse Analysis in the context of the EERPCTG

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to identify power relationships between texts and social contexts (Fairclough, 2003). In the following sections, we identify the use of discourse strategies, such as positive self-portrayal through the use of verbs because verbs carry illocutionary force, which can suggest positive self-representations of the doer of the verbs. Because the implementation of English language and education policy has the potential to be

seen as an imposition of new mental structures (Phillipson, 1992), MEXT uses specific verbs to promote a positive image of itself and its policy through mitigation (Wodak, 2001). For example, as we will see, the verbs “reform” (i.e., to make changes for improvement), “promote” (i.e., to further the progress of something), “enhance” (i.e., to further improve the quality of something), “ensure” (i.e., to make sure or provide certainty), and “empower” (i.e., to make someone stronger or more confident) are used to present MEXT and its implementation of the EERPCTG in a positive light. Presenting itself and the EERPCTG (i.e., the macro-level) in a positive light is important because MEXT relies upon schools and teachers at the micro-level (i.e., community level) to bring macro-level (i.e., government level) measures of reform into fruition. However, MEXT policy is motivated by neoliberal goals from the Abe administration, i.e., “Abenomics,” and the subsequent promotion of English in terms of linguistic instrumentalism, which is contrary to micro-level realities where the classroom is often a learning environment aimed at educating students and not necessarily at promoting a neoliberal agenda.

Abenomics is a neoliberal approach characterized by, “accelerated low taxation, deregulation, reduction of fiscal deficit, and free trade,” (Tokunaga, 2015). Essentially, in these terms, Abenomics is a conservative economic model based upon the philosophies aligned with conservative moral politics (Lakoff, 1996). For example, the “strict father” philosophy of conservatives suggests that people are generally self-reliant, get what they deserve, ultimately responsible for themselves, and not dependent on the government. In contrast, the “nurturing parent” philosophy is a politically liberal perspective (different than philosophies in support of a liberal economy) that suggests people are not always rewarded for their efforts and sometimes require assistance (e.g., from the government). Interestingly, people generally subscribe to both philosophies depending upon the issues. Education at the micro-level is a sector that tends to align with a “nurturing parent” philosophy, which is why, although Abenomics is characterized as having a conservative or “strict father” neoliberal agenda for creating economic stimulus through deregulation and free-trade, the Abe administration, through MEXT, strategically utilizes the discourse of the “nurturing parent” through the illocutionary force of verbs that have positive discourse prosody to appeal to people in the education sector at the micro-level. As Lakoff (1996) suggests, conservative politicians have been more successful at influencing voters because they are able to effectively utilize discourse with positive discourse prosody that appeals to people at the micro-level.

We view language policy as a discourse and as “every public influence on the communication radius of languages, the sum of those “top-down” and “bottom-up” political initiatives through which a particular language or languages is/are supported in their public validity, their functionality, and their dissemination” (Wodak, 2005, p. 170). Policies tend to operate top-down (i.e., from macro to micro), and bottom-up (i.e., from micro to macro), as a result of interpretation and implementation (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). There are

degrees of discourse prosody in the language of policy, in terms of the way that neutral words can be perceived as having positive or negative meanings as a result of the relationship of words with the attitudes and beliefs of speakers and hearers (Baker, 2006, p. 87). As stated above, the use of the verb “empower” in the EERPCTG is a macro-level attempt by MEXT to address the need for teachers to become “empowered” and “improve” their ability to teach English. MEXT could have used a more neutral verb such as “train” to indicate the processes of preparing teachers for English education, which would have been a more neutral choice because “training” is part of employment. However, MEXT chose the verb “empower” because of its positive discourse prosody value, because the reality is, that when teachers successfully implement this policy reform, MEXT’s (neoliberal) goals are more likely to be achieved.

For the purposes of this analysis, we suggest that the speaker, MEXT (in terms of what the policy says at the macro level) promotes English education as a positive step toward aligning Japan with the goals of globalization, and for the purposes of achieving its neoliberal agenda of boosting the economy. However, this view is highly controversial. Additionally, we suggest that the plan is accelerated to the degree that it only suits MEXT’s neoliberal economic interests in promoting English as linguistic instrumentalism. We aim to demonstrate this through discourse analysis and by connecting policy with discourses. In particular, we aim to show that this policy document demonstrates the disconnection between macro-(governmental) and micro-levels (school) of language policy.

Methodology

In Table 1, we present our approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Wodak, 2001), which includes identification of discourse markers that are also discourse strategies used by MEXT to present its reform plan in a favorable way. Such markers include mitigation through modifications of illocutionary force, positive self-portrayal through references to self in the third person and modification of verbs with illocutionary force, vagueness through ambiguous lexical content, unification through inclusive lexical references, and unreal scenarios aimed at persuading the public through ambiguous spatial and temporal references. These markers are useful for identifying relationships of power between the speaker (MEXT) and the hearer (the public of Japan) and the degrees of discourse prosody as the meanings of the texts have implications that are evident in the discourses of Japan. As a result, we use these discourse markers to identify macro-level views (e.g., lexical descriptions) and micro-level accommodations (e.g., mitigated verbs).

Table 1
Discourse markers/strategies

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Mitigation	To modify the status of a proposition	Intensifying or mitigating illocutionary force through verbs
Positive self-portrayal	To create a positive self-image	References to self in the third person
Vagueness	To convince the public of programs and ideas	Ambiguous lexical content
Unification	To promote solidarity and unity	Inclusive lexical references
Unreal Scenarios	To persuade the public	Ambiguous spatial and temporal references

(Source: Wodak, 2001)

Concerning translation

We were concerned with the potential of the text being lost in translation. As a result, we compared the verbs in English and Japanese with the intention of finding variance, and we found high degrees of synonymy between Japanese and English translation, which led us to feel comfortable with an analysis in English.

Texts

The whole policy text is titled, “English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization,” (EERPCTG) and it is the English translation of the MEXT policy document that describes the English education reform plan (MEXT 2013). There are four parts of the document which include: Introduction (which we label Text 1a & 1b); Part 1: New English Education corresponding to globalization (which we label Text 2a, b, c, d); Part 2: Constructing Necessary Frameworks for New English Education (vigorous promotion from FY 2014) (which we label Text 3a, b, c, d, e); and Part 3: Schedule (provisionary) (which we label Text 4). We selected the text because it was specifically created by MEXT to describe the intentions and processes of the English Education Reform Plan in the context of globalization and in preparation of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. As demonstrated by the title of the text, “English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization,” the illocutionary force of verbs in the text suggest positive discourse prosody that enables MEXT to present itself in terms of positive self-portrayal through “we vs. you” discourse. For example, in the title MEXT uses the word “reform,” which means to change something for the purpose of improvement, and sug-

gests it is improving the existing English education policy and program, while many scholars and practitioners (teachers at the micro-level) disagree and believe that MEXT is simply promoting its neoliberal interests in using English education to boost the economy.

Analysis of texts

In the following we present an analysis of the EERPCTG text according to the discourse markers/strategies described above in Table 1, which include positive self-portrayal and mitigation, vagueness, unification, and unreal scenarios. Compared to other discourse markers/strategies in this analysis, our analysis reveals significant use of positive self-portrayal and mitigation markers/strategies which are complementary (and thus presented together) since mitigated verbs are often used to modify the status of a proposition through positive discourse prosody. Thus, our analysis begins with a presentation of several examples of positive self-portrayal and mitigation in the EERPCTG text.

Positive self-portrayal and mitigation

Beginning with Text 1a, in this section we present several examples of texts in which MEXT appears to present itself in a favorable way by using positive self-portrayal and mitigation strategies to describe its efforts to reform English education in Japan.

Text 1a

In order **to promote** the establishment of an education environment which corresponds to globalization from the elementary lower/upper secondary education stage, MEXT **is working to enhance** English education substantially throughout elementary to lower/secondary school **upon strengthening** English education in elementary school in addition **to further advancing** English education in lower/upper secondary school.

In the opening statement of Text 1a, MEXT declares its intentions. The strategy of MEXT is to positively present a plan to reform English Education corresponding to globalization. The use of the verb “promote” in “to promote the establishment of an education environment,” suggests positive self-portrayal as MEXT declares itself as being capable of establishing a reform.

In the independent clause, “MEXT is working to enhance English education substantially throughout elementary to lower/secondary school ...,” MEXT declares itself in third person as doing the present continuous/progressive verbal phrase “is working to enhance,” which suggests continuous effort to “enhance” English education (strategy of mitigation), which

is modified by the adverb “substantially” to suggest a high measure of enhancement, and used to demonstrate a positive self-portrayal of MEXT as having an ability to improve the English program, which is not consistent with the history of English in Japan and the micro-level realities of language policy in Japan.

The independent clause is followed by a verb phrase, “upon strengthening English education (in elementary school),” where “strengthening” (strategy of mitigation) supports the macro-level view and is a positive-self portrayal by inferring that MEXT can improve English education in elementary schools. However, efforts to build or improve the elementary school program that began in 2008 (more than 7 years ago), have been tremendously challenged and the curriculum is based upon English “activities” that have been ineffective and difficult for instructors to teach, especially the majority of elementary school teachers who have not been trained to teach English.

In the verb phrase, “in addition to further advancing English education in lower/upper secondary school,” “further advancing” demonstrates the macro-level view where the adverb “further” modifies the present continuous verb “advancing” (strategy of mitigation) to suggest positive-self portrayal in terms of the inferred competitive (e.g., as demonstrated in the collocation “advancing to the finals”) and perhaps militant intentions (e.g., as demonstrated in the collocation “advancing the troops”) of MEXT to do whatever it takes to achieve its neoliberal goals, which may be contrary to the micro-level realities of educational environments.

Text 1b

Timed with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, in order for the full-scale development of new English education in Japan, MEXT will incrementally promote education reform from FY2014 including constructing the necessary frameworks based on this plan.

In Text 1b, similar to Text 1a, the independent clause, “MEXT will incrementally promote education reform from FY2014,” which suggests positive self-portrayal through the use of the verb “promote” (strategy of mitigation) where MEXT declares it “will incrementally promote” (future tense), which is modified by the adverb “incrementally” to suggest the steps or stages of the EERPCTG in the developmental process of its reform. The restrictive relative clause, “including constructing the necessary frameworks based on this plan,” which is essential information referring to the infrastructure of the EERPCTG, includes the adjective “necessary” to describe “frameworks based on this plan,” which suggests certainty and positive self-portrayal that MEXT understands how to implement the EERPCTG to achieve its goals by 2020, which is in contrast to the actual realities at the micro-levels of educational environments and the findings and opinions of English education scholars of Japan (Kubota 2011).

Text 2a

Elementary school (Third and Fourth grade):

English Language **Activities** classes **1-2 times a week**

-**Nurture** the foundations for communication skills.

-**Supervision** by class teacher.

In Text 2a, MEXT presents English in third and fourth grade elementary school education as “activities classes 1-2 times a week” in contrast to “English Language Subject classes” which is the term used to refer to fifth and sixth grade elementary school classes (see Text 2b). The verb “nurture” (strategy of mitigation) suggests MEXT’s macro-level plan will be implemented at the micro-level with care and encouragement, even though “nurturing” is actually dependent upon the teacher and may not be consistent with the 4 to 6 year rapid pace. “Supervision” suggests that additional teachers, such as ALTs will be brought in to teach English Activities (as we will see in Text 3c).

Text 2b

Elementary school (Fifth and Sixth grade):

English Language (Subject) classes 3 times a week (also utilize module classes)

-**Nurture** basic English language skills.

-In addition to **class teachers with good English teaching skills**, actively utilize specialized course teachers.

In Text 2b, MEXT presents English in fifth and sixth grade elementary school education as “English Language (Subject) classes 3 times a week” (in contrast to “English Language Activities” in Text 2a, mentioned above). The mitigated verb “nurture” (positive-self portrayal) is used to identify the delivery of “basic English language skills” and to suggest that the delivery will be done at the micro-level with care and encouragement. MEXT distinguishes “class teachers with good English skills,” where “good” is determined by passing Grade pre-1 in the Text in Practical English Proficiency (EIKEN), or scoring over 80 on the TOEFL iBT test or achieving equivalent scores (as we will see in Text 3b). This dependency upon testing is a characteristic of linguistic instrumentalism (Kubota, 2011).

Text 2c

Lower Secondary School:

-**Nurture** the ability to understand familiar topics, carry out simple information exchanges and describe familiar matters in English.

-Classes will be **conducted** in English in principle.

In Text 2c, MEXT uses the verb “nurture” (strategy of mitigation) which is a positive self-portrayal suggesting the caring and encouraging delivery of English education at the micro-level in “Lower Secondary School,” in terms of acquiring the “ability to understand familiar topics,” “carry[ing] out simple information exchanges,” and “describe[ing] familiar matters in English.” MEXT also suggests that classes will be “conducted” in English “in principle” which is an acknowledgement that classes may not be carried out in English.

Text 2d

Upper Secondary School:

-**Nurture** the ability to understand abstract contents for a wide range of topics and the ability to **fluently communicate with English speaking persons**.

-Classes will be conducted in English with high-level linguistic activities (presentations, debates, negotiations).

Similar to Text 2c, in Text 2d MEXT uses the verb “nurture” (strategy of mitigation) to suggest positive self-portrayal in describing the delivery of English education at the micro-level as resulting in “the ability to understand abstract contents for a wide range of topics,” and “the ability to fluently communicate with English speaking persons.” “Classes” are described as being conducted “with high-level linguistic activities.”

Text 2e

-**To ensure nurturing** English communication skills by establishing coherent learning achievement targets throughout elementary and lower/upper secondary school.

-**Enrich** educational content in relation to **nurturing** individual’s sense of Japanese identity (focus on traditional culture and history among other things).

In Text 2e the verb phrase, “To ensure nurturing (English communication skills)” (strategy of mitigation) is an example of positive self-portrayal at the macro-level in terms of suggesting that MEXT’s plan is capable of ensuring the nurturing of English communication skills “by establishing coherent learning achievement targets.” The verb “enrich” (strategy of mitigation) is used to describe the delivery of “nurturing” the Japanese identity of Japanese students.

Text 3a

Empower teachers in elementary school

- Create** measures for the additional posting and training of English education promotion leaders in elementary school.
- Improve** teaching skills of specialized English course teachers
- Improve** English teaching skills of elementary school class teachers.
- Develop and provide** audio teaching materials for training.
- Improve** teacher training program and teacher employment.

In Text 3a, the verb “empower” is used to present a positive self-portrayal of MEXT “empowering” (strategy of mitigation) teachers in terms of “creating” (strategy of mitigation) measures for “additional posting” and “training of English education,” while also suggesting that MEXT will “improve teaching skills” (strategy of mitigation), “develop and provide” audio teaching materials, and “improve” (strategy of mitigation) teacher training and teacher employment. In this case, “empower” is the operative verb that is used in place of neutral verbs such as “training” which suggests positive discourse prosody.

Text 3b

Empower teachers in lower/upper secondary school

- Nurture** English education promotion leaders in lower/upper secondary school.
- Improve** teaching skills of lower/upper secondary school English subject teachers.
- Utilize** external language exams to periodically inspect English levels of achievement for teachers posted within each prefecture.
- All English subject teachers must prove English capabilities** by passing Grade pre-1 in the Text in Practical English Proficiency (EIKEN), scoring over 80 in TOEFL iBT test or achieving equivalent scores.

In text 3b, similar to Text 3a, verbs such as “empower”, “nurture”, and “improve” (strategies of mitigation) are used by MEXT to promote a positive self-portrayal in terms of assisting teachers and leaders. “Utilizing” external language exams to “periodically inspect English levels” of teachers is consistent with the test-centered focus of linguistic instrumentalism as described by Kubota (2011). Emphasis upon such testing is demonstrated by MEXT stating that “capabilities” are verified by passing scores in Grade pre-1 in EIKEN and TOEFL tests.

Text 3c

Promoting utilization of external staff

- Expand** placement of Assistant Language Teachers (ALT), **promote** utilization of community members (formulate guidelines for such external staff use, etc.)
- Strengthen and enrich** ALT training programs.

In Text 3c, similar to other sections, MEXT uses the verbs “promoting,” “expand,” “strengthen” and “enrich” (strategies of mitigation) to present a positive self-portrayal of itself and its intentions at the micro-level in terms of its efforts (from the macro-level) to promote utilization of external staff, expand the ALT program, and to strengthen and enrich ALT training programs.

Text 3d

Developing Guidance Teaching Materials

-**Prepare** teaching materials for early implementation.

-**Develop and prepare** Information and Communication Technology (ICT) teaching materials for module classes.

In Text 3d, the verbs “developing” and “prepare” are used to suggest a positive self-portrayal of MEXT in terms of its ability to develop and prepare teaching materials for “early” implementation.

Text 3e

Enrich English education throughout each stage in elementary, lower/upper secondary schools and **improve** student’s English ability (aim to pass Grade 2 or above in the Text in Practical English Proficiency, score over 57 in the TOEFL iBT test, etc.)

→**Examine** student’s English abilities **by utilizing** external language exams and **expand** the utilization of such exams which measure all four skills for university entrance including the Test in Practical English Proficiency and TOEFL.

In Text 3e, the verbs “enrich”, “improve”, and “expand” (strategies of mitigation) are used to promote a positive self-portrayal of MEXT in terms of its ability to “improve student’s English ability” determined by test scores (Kubota, 2011), and to use exams to assess all four skills.

Vagueness

In addition to the several examples of positive self-portrayal and mitigation, there are also instances of vagueness which appear to be aimed at convincing the public of programs and ideas using ambiguous lexical content. For example, in Text 1a the reference to “educational environment” (strategy of vagueness) demonstrates the macro-level general view, while educational environments at the micro-level are actually specific to the personal needs of the students and the teacher’s interpretation of such needs. This is followed by a restrictive relative clause, “which corresponds to globalization from lower/upper secondary education stage,” where “globalization” is a strategy of vagueness

because the term can describe language, culture, and economy (among other things) in a global context, where “globalization” is viewed as a macro-level concern which contrasts the micro-level realities students and teachers in actual educational environments that are mainly focused upon community and state-level issues.

The prepositional phrase, “in order for the full-scale development of new English education in Japan,” begins with the compound preposition in the prepositional phrase “in order for...,” which is also an idiomatic expression used in policy discourse to state purpose and to recognize contingency (see “in order to form a more perfect Union...” in the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States), and to indicate the strategy to implement the “full-scale development of new English education” policy of the EERPCTG. “Full-scale development,” demonstrates the macro-level view of the goal and is a strategy of vagueness as it suggests the massiveness of the operation of reformed English education in Japan, which is no small feat, and as stated, is suggested to occur in a very short period of time.

Unification

In Text 1a, the independent clause is followed by a verb phrase, “upon strengthening English education (in elementary school),” where the inference that MEXT can improve “education in elementary school” is a strategy of unification that demonstrates a macro-level view of homogeneity of elementary schools throughout Japan.

In Texts 2e and 3b, “Lower/upper secondary school/education” is a unification strategy from the macro-level perspective which suggests homogeneity where all lower/upper secondary education environments are seen as “corresponding to Globalization,” when in fact the reality is that lower and upper secondary environments are unique in terms of the personal needs of students and capabilities of teachers at the local level in various locations throughout Japan.

In Text 2e, “Enrich educational content in relation to nurturing individual’s sense of Japanese identity (focus on traditional culture and history among other things)” English education is suggested to be a means to promoting “Japanese identity” which is a unification strategy where students will be taught in English about Japanese “traditional culture” and “history” which suggests the potential for homogenous Japanese identity. Given that the 2020 Olympics is a “trigger” to promote tourism in Japan (Matsutani, 2014), MEXT aims to equip students to become capable of presenting Japan identity to the world in a type of “we vs. you” discourse, which is consistent with the discourses of *nihonjinron* (Befu, 1993) and *kokusaika* (Kubota, 2002) that suggest that Japan is a unified nation and that Japanese culture, tradition, and identity are unique to citizens of Japan. On these terms, English is intended to be the medium used to promote the uniqueness of Japanese identity to the rest of the world, which is contrary to the inclusiveness and recognition of diversity that is often pro-

moted in multiculturalism discourses such as in the Canadian Multicultural Act (1988) where Canada aims to recognize diversity to varying degrees.

Unreal scenario

In addition to unification strategies, unreal scenarios are also evident in the EERPCTG. For example, in Text 1a, “Lower/upper secondary education stage” is a metaphor (i.e., education is a process) suggesting that education occurs in small and steady increments. However, when compared to other descriptions of the program in this document (e.g., Text 1a, “further advancing English education”), we see an unreal scenario since the progress of the reform cannot be both steady and rapidly occurring as MEXT intends to rapidly grow the English program in a relatively short period of time from 2014-2020 in preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, as demonstrated in Text 1b and Text 4.

Text 4: Schedule (provisionary)

- Around January 2014: **Establish** expert council
- 2014-2018 Establish teacher **empowerment frameworks**, **expand** advance implementation through support by the Regional Core Project aimed to Enhance English -Education and Schools with Special Substitute Curriculum
- Revise** the Course of Study upon examination by Central Education Council, advance incremental implementation from FY2018.
- Full scale **implementation** from FY2020 timed with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics

In Text 4 we see the expedited and provisional schedule of a six year period in which they intend upon “establishing expert council,” establishing “teacher empowerment frameworks,” and expanding “advance implementation” through the Regional Core Project.” MEXT aims to “revise the Course of Study” beginning in 2018, which suggests only a four year period is given to begin the Reform Plan while “full scale implementation” throughout Japan is expected to begin in 2020 with the intention of being “timed with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics,” where the Olympics is a “trigger” for the implementation of the program aimed at achieving economic growth (Matsutani, 2014).

Discussion

In our analysis of the EERPCTG, we have intended to identify the pervasiveness of neoliberal macro-level intentions in the “English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization” policy. Whereas MEXT and its policy vis-à-vis the Abe administration (i.e., Abenomics) embodies a conservative or “strict father” neoliberal agenda through its attempt to rapidly implement Eng-

lish education reform in only 4-6 years, English education at the micro-level is a sector that tends to align with a “nurturing parent” philosophy (Lakoff, 1996). In the EERPCTG, we have seen the pervasiveness of the macro-level neoliberal agenda in terms of rapidly promoting English as linguistic instrumentalism, and efforts to appeal to people and teachers in the education sector at the “nurturing parent” micro-level through the illocutionary force of verbs that have positive discourse prosody. This demonstrates the way that MEXT uses positive discourse prosody in macro-level policy to achieve its neoliberal goals in micro-level contexts. Overall, we see that macro-level policy that concerns micro-level contexts must use language that appeals to people in the education sector at the micro-level in order to achieve macro-level goals.

This six year period is particularly short when considering the history of English education in Japan, where English proficiency and retention has been a historic struggle, especially when compared to other countries (e.g., Japanese ranks 40th out of 48 countries in the TOEIC (Hongo, 2014). Terasawa (2012) suggests that while many Japanese are not proficient in English, they are not at the lowest level on a global scale. Yet, even after nearly 30 years of increased efforts, i.e., the implementation of the JET program in Japan in 1987, English education in Japan has been comparatively unsuccessful, and yet, as we have seen in Text 1a, MEXT suggests that “further advancing” can take place in only six years. In Text 1b, we read, “(EERPCTG) timed with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics,” which is a dependent clause that explicitly indicates the significance of the time and the rapid pace (unreal scenario) in which the EERPCTG has been set to unfold as part of MEXT’s macro-level neoliberal agenda. As it is explicitly stated, reform of the EERPCTG is directly linked to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which was announced by the IOC (International Olympic Committee) in 2013, shortly before the EERPCTG was implemented. Along with an improved status on the global stage as a host of an event meant to bring the global community together, perhaps more importantly for the Japanese government, economic growth is expected and it is the motivation for hosting such an event. As reported by Matsutani (2014) in the Japan Times, “Since Tokyo won the bid to host the 2020 Summer Olympic Games last September, various think tanks have announced their estimates of the economic effects of the Olympics, with figures ranging from ¥3 trillion to ¥150 trillion...As part of the growth strategies in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s “Abenomics,” the government is aiming to increase the number of foreign visitors per year to 20 million by 2020 and 30 million by 2030.”

As stated, MEXT’s plan to reform English education is motivated by Abenomics’ growth strategies and neoliberal goals that include using the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as an opportunity for economic growth through emphasizing tourism in its “Discover Tomorrow” slogan, which is similar to the way that the 2012 Olympics in London were used to promote economic growth beginning with the following five promises that were made in the original Olympic bid: “To demonstrate that the UK is a creative, inclusive and welcoming place to live in, to visit and for business” (Renton, 2012, emphasis mine). To

demonstrate the neoliberal agenda in which English is the lingua franca, Executive member of the Mori Memorial Foundation's Institute for Urban Strategies institute, Hiro Ichikawa, suggested that, "the institute estimates 1.21 million jobs will be created because of the Olympics, or about 170,000 new jobs a year" (Matsutani, 2014). While the Olympics has not always resulted in economic stimulus (e.g., Greece went bankrupt after the 2004 Olympics; Winter Olympics in Nagano in 1998 did not result in stimulation), the 2012 Olympics in London did result in a stronger economy (Matsutani, 2014), and this is the hope of the Japanese government. Additionally, Ichikawa stated that the projected economic stimulus in Japan is contingent upon deregulation (a characteristic of neoliberalism) (e.g., 50 new headquarters of foreign companies and 500 new foreign companies by 2016), and in terms of Japanese hospitality, both of which indicate the need for English, where according to Text 2e in the EERPCTG, MEXT expects students to use English to tell the world about Japanese culture and history, which is why he stated, "The Olympics is the trigger for them to come to Japan. They will learn about Japan and keep visiting. That's our strategy" (Matsutani, 2014).

Conclusion: Five concerns over linguistic instrumentalism

While neoliberal goals may be evident in the EERPCTG indicating that English education in Japan is in fact linguistic instrumentalism and a manifestation of the neoliberal agenda of the Abe Administration, the reality is that nobody knows whether neoliberalism or its adoption in English education will contribute to making Japanese society better in the long run. It might work, but there are several concerns about the ongoing reform. The aim of this paper and analysis has been not to condemn the current social and educational situation dominated by neoliberalism, but to demonstrate the pervasiveness of neoliberal goals in English education policy in Japan, and as we will see, to provide policy makers and practitioners engaged in English education with viewpoints to see the current situation from wider perspectives. In the following, we present five concerns about English instrumentalism that may be important points to consider.

First, we have to realize that we can be manipulated to desire something; in many cases we do not desire something but are made to desire something. Motha and Lin (2014) made an important argument on this issue. They argue that if a state seeks to strengthen its economic power by increasing the number of fluent English speakers to compete in the global marketplace, the desire can be reflected in English teaching curricula. The students taught through the curricula are made to desire English communicative fluency. A ready-made workforce for the economy can be produced in this way. Teachers' desire is also subject to be manipulated, as we have tried to demonstrate through the pervasiveness and sophistication of language aimed at producing positive discourse prosody in the EERPCTG, and they might be assisting the neoliberal ideology unconsciously or unknowingly not by educating human beings, but

by creating human resources to develop the economy. Kubota (2011) indicated that it is not only an instrumental desire, but the mixture of leisure, consumption, and romantic desire that has created a huge industry of English education in Japan, which is also problematic if people are manipulated by macro-level power structures.

Second, required ‘skills’ are also manipulated. For example, TOEIC used to be the test of choice for many corporations in South Korea in 1990s, and a large industry was created including material developers and private schools. Once it was found that a high TOEIC score did not translate into good competence in English, corporations began to abandon TOEIC as an assessment tool (Park, 2011). This change occurred over a 10-year period. This example shows that the definition of ‘skills’ can be ideologically controlled by power. These days, it is ‘communicative skills’ that are presented as being required skills, although as we have seen in the EERPCTG, ‘communicative skills’ are not clearly defined. Who knows how the ‘communicative skills’ will be regarded in 10 years? The power that reproduces the structure of the linguistic market continues to revise the concept of ‘skills,’ which leads students or workers to perpetually pursue the imagined skills they believe they need at a given time.

The third concern is educational inequity. Guo (2012) reported widening disparity in the allocation of educational resources including public investment, qualified teachers, and school facilities in China. Fees that students pay and salaries that teachers are paid are much higher at prestigious schools than others. Lamb (2007) argued through an Indonesian case study that many Indonesians invest in English as a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) in the hope of gaining cultural and economic capital in the future, but they also need to already have a certain level of social status to have a good chance of success. What we need is a more careful analysis and criticism to understand the mechanisms of the linguistic market and how the structure is reorganized to maintain or accelerate the social inequalities it supports.

The fourth concern is related to motivation to learn. As we have seen in the EERPCTG verbs such as “reform” (i.e., to make changes for improvement), “promote” (i.e., to further the progress of something), “enhance” (i.e., further improve the quality of something), “ensure” (i.e., to make sure or provide certainty), and “empower” (i.e., to make someone stronger or more confident) are used by MEXT to appeal to the “nurturing parent” beliefs of teachers at the micro-level because teachers understand that teaching English requires a “nurturing” approach as students do not simply acquire English by bootstrapping. It is only a limited number of students who are motivated by the neoliberal logic who are able to acquire an additional language such as English. The majority of students are not motivated or rather demotivated by the neoliberal logic. Lamb (2007) indicated that studies of change in motivation of senior high school students revealed a fall in enthusiasm for language learning in every Asian country, and he presented one possible reason using two terms: the “ought-to L2 self” and the “ideal L2 self.” Those who already have eco-

conomic and cultural advantages can imagine their future-selves succeeding with English proficiency. This is called the ‘ideal L2 self.’ Those without enough resources tend to have difficulties in finding ways to be a strong user of English, but are made to believe that English is indispensable for future success. This is called the “ought-to L2 self.” Some students in the latter group are unconsciously and unknowingly demotivated.

The last point is how teachers in the frontlines can fill the gap between the realities at the micro-level and the macro-level top-down policies. In reality teachers in Asian countries who have typically acquired only a reading comprehension ability in English have to prepare students to pass English exams. However, students, parents, and school principals often demand that teachers produce exceptional results. On the other hand, at the macro-level, governments in many non-English-speaking countries have issued policies aimed at improving oral communicative skills by calling for the use of English for instruction and hiring more native English speakers as assistant English teachers (ALT), as we have seen in the EERPCTG, or by encouraging students to study abroad by offering financial aid. If teachers on the ground follow the policies, they have to prepare many supplementary lessons, which are typically for reading comprehension and not usually aimed at improving oral proficiency. Not all English teachers can do so because school teachers have many other obligations to do. In that case, many students may have to go to a cram school or hire a tutor to win competitions to enter prestigious universities or go abroad by way of government sponsored programs. Students who cannot afford supplementary support are likely to be left behind.

In conclusion, we would also like to point out that linguistic instrumentalism does not always contribute to individual economic success despite high English proficiency gained by spending enormous amounts of time and money, such as in the case of the EERPCTG. In most cases the promise of English is illusion. For example, Kubota (2011) reported in a case study in Japan, that a female worker who gained high English proficiency with a large amount of investments ended up working as an English instructor for children at a private school that paid only 750¥h. Further, almost all workers engaged in English-related clerical work are temporary staff in spite of their good command of English. In Japan, employers who are required to negotiate in English are often limited, and professional knowledge and skills in one’s specialized field rather than English skills are regarded as being essential by corporate executives. Park (2011) also reported a similar situation observed in South Korea. As a result, although MEXT intends to promote English and use the 2020 Olympics as a “trigger” to promote a reformed English education program in Japan, the value of English as linguistic instrumentalism is difficult to determine and may not produce the results that the Abe Administration is hoping for.

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**THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION: DIS-CITIZENSHIP
THROUGH ENGLISH TEACHING IN A SUBURBAN INDIAN
VILLAGE SCHOOL**

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Abstract

Ramanathan (2013a, 2013b) urged scholars to expand the notion of citizenship beyond its typically bounded understandings, towards conceptualizing it as “being able to participate fully” (p. 162). This view highlights the *processual* aspects of citizenship, shifting away from the more categorical meanings that underpin the term (Ramanathan, 2013a; Ramanathan, 2013b; Ricento, 2013). Dis-citizens’ ability to participate in different processes is more limited. This theoretical perspective casts new light on the opening statement of an influential Indian language policy report, *The Teaching of English* (NCERT, 2006), which contended, “English is in India today a symbol of people’s aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life.” India’s premier educational research body’s imagining English as a benchmark of “participation” in Indian life merits further analysis. This ethnographic case study explores this concept of participation through the examination of the English literacy experiences of students in an English-medium village school. Involving eight focal children from an *anathashram* (orphanage) in suburban New Delhi, the data draws on extended fieldwork at the school in 2011, entailing participant observation supplemented with audio- and video-recording, and interview exchanges. The analysis reveals how the English literacy practices are implicated in the production and reproduction of dis-citizenship, in order to demonstrate how “English-medium” schooling functioned to exclude the focal children from “fuller participation in national and international life.”

Keywords: English Teaching, Medium of Instruction, Literacy, Dis-Citizenship, India

Introduction

This investigation grounds itself in the nascent theoretical concept of dis-citizenship, which derives from Pothier and Devlin’s (2006) seminal work within Critical Disability Theory. Pothier and Devlin (2006) argued that those with disabilities are accorded “citizenship minus” (p. 2) by virtue of the multiple obstructions, ostracizations, and exclusions they experience in their lives.

These everyday marginalizations, they argued, give rise to what they cast as “illegitimate hierarchies” (p. 146) within different systems, borne of the competing centrifugal and centripetal ideological forces engendered by citizenship. Inspired by their work, Ramanathan (2013a), in her editorial to the special issue on language policy and dis-citizenship hosted by the *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, highlighted the processual aspects of citizenship, marking a shift away from the more static, categorical meanings that typically underpin the term (Ramanathan, 2013a; Ramanathan, 2013b; Ricento, 2013). Moving into this emergent space of citizenship theorization within language education, Ramanathan (2013b) argued that scholars should pay closer attention to the networked nodes of policy and pedagogy. Within this theoretical framework, citizenship encompassed “policies, pedagogic engagements and borders—that do or do not create equitable conditions” (Ramanathan, 2013a, p. 1). This perspective, she argued, would help shed light on the “subtle forms of dis-citizenship” (p. 162) that are not always rendered visible in scholarship, particularly within language education. Importantly, she urged scholars to expand our understanding of citizenship by conceptualizing it as “being able to participate fully” (p. 162). Dis-citizens, within such theorization, are those who have limited ability to participate within different systems. Closely focusing on this construction of participation, I examine the dis-citizenship of young boys from an anathashram (orphanage) in suburban Delhi by investigating the literacy practices at their English-medium school.

To help frame this discussion, it is useful to first invoke a powerful English language policy document from India, entitled “The Teaching of English” (NCERT, 2006). It opened with: “English is in India today a symbol of people’s aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life” (p. 1). This was one of several Position Papers released by the NCERT, or the National Council of Educational Research and Training, established in 1961 by the Indian government to assist the Indian Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in its mission of crafting educational policy, curricula, and programs nationwide. These Position Papers were part of the larger articulation of the NCERT curricular framework, which presently forms “the basis for the school level curriculum for all subjects in India in both private and government schools” (Ghosh & Madhumathi, 2012, p. 1). “The Teaching of English” (NCERT, 2006) document engaged with key policy-related issues within English language education in the country. In addition to offering a language policy framework for the nation, this document has been widely used to anchor understandings of English pedagogy within Indian educational literature (e.g., Agnihotri, 2010; Chauhan, 2012; Vulli, 2014). The focal children’s English curriculum, importantly, was entirely dictated by the NCERT framework.

The emphasis placed on English as a perceived benchmark of “fuller participation in national and international life” (NCERT, 2006, p. 1) by India’s premier educational research body merits closer analysis. The document itself

does not offer any further comments on this perception, a point that is highly problematic given the minority and elite status of English and its speakers in India. The document seems to unquestioningly accept the idea that the possibilities of participation – and therefore citizenship – in India are superior for those with access to English. Through this analysis, I will illuminate, in fact, how the participation of those particularly on socioeconomic and linguistic margins are discourses, enacted, and curtailed through English literacy. Ultimately I show that English-medium schooling, while appearing to be a ticket to “fuller participation in national and international life” (NCERT, 2006, p. 1), becomes a space of dis-citizenship for the focal boys.

English in India: Access and opportunity

Because this investigation revolves around English, it is important to review the context of its national circulation. English in India is strongly linked to powerful discourses around globalization and modernization (Faust & Nagar, 2001; LaDousa, 2005; Proctor, 2015; Roy, 2014; Vulli, 2014). It is perceived to carry unmatched sociocultural capital and offers *the* path to socioeconomic mobility (Bhattacharya et al. 2007; Christ & Makrani, 2009; Kachru, 1986; Khubchandani, 1983; Mohanty, 2008; Parameswaran, 1997; Proctor, 2015; Ramanathan, 1999; Roy, 2014; Vaish, 2008; Vulli, 2014). Its perception as a powerful international language makes it highly desirable within a dynamic, shifting landscape that prizes transnational mobility (LaDousa, 2005; Vaish, 2008). Moreover, the predominance of English within higher education has helped to further fortify its exalted position within the linguistic hierarchy in India (Christ & Makrani, 2009; Khubchandani, 1983; Parameswaran, 1997; Roy, 2014).

English does not, however, have widespread circulation in India; it is primarily aligned with privileged urban networks within India, with the middle and upper classes, and, consequently, as in colonial times, with the ruling elite (LaDousa, 2005; Mohanty, 2008; Parameswaran, 1997; Ramanathan, 2005; Roy, 2014; Proctor, 2015). It is worthwhile here to reflect on the tricky business of the circulation of English within India. There is little consensus, unfortunately, on the number of Indians who “speak” or “know” English. Moreover, the criteria for what constitutes “speaking”/“knowing” English differs across estimates. The National Knowledge Commission (2000), for example, proffered that 1% of Indians use English as a second language. Crystal (2003), however, estimated the same at 20%. Meanwhile, Hohenthal (2003) pegged the total number of English speakers at 4% of the population, while Mishra (2000) claimed it was 5%. Mohanty (2006) approximated that less than 2% of Indians “knew” English. Sonalde and Vanneman (2005), meanwhile, found that 4% of Indians could speak English fluently, and that 16% could speak it a little. Despite the wide variance, there is clear consensus that English speakers constitute a small and – most importantly—elite minority.

Because of its associations with structures of power, there has been exponential rise in private English-medium schooling, primarily un- or semi-regulated, targeting the poor (Aggarwal, 2000; Annamalai, 2005; De, Majumdar, Samson, & Noronha, 2002; Jhingran, 2009; Nambissan, 2003). Socio-economically disadvantaged parents send their children to such schools at great costs, based on the “myth of English-medium superiority” (Mohanty, Panda & Pal, 2010, p. 214). Such schools aim for “cosmetic Anglicization,” where, despite the nominal importance of English, vernacular languages dominate (Mohanty, Panda, & Pal, 2010, p. 216) (see also, Annamalai, 2005; Bhattacharya, 2013; Khubchandani, 2003). In such contexts, students typically acquire “bookish,” non-communicative language skills in English; what they learn, he claimed, is to imitate, not interpret texts. Elites, in contrast, as Mohanty (2006) pointed out, enabled “with ...positive attitudinal and environmental support for English” (p. 269), are able to access far more effective English instruction. Sheorey (2006) has thus called English a “divider rather than a unifier” in India, pointing out that the “advantages and the ‘power’ inherent in English literacy are enjoyed primarily by the middle and upper classes” (p. 18). These are beyond the reach of students who are hindered by their financial and social conditions (Ramanathan, 1999). Either they cannot access English instruction or the kind of English they acquire is insufficient for today’s demanding job market (Mohanty, 2006). The medium of instruction, as Mohanty (2006) noted, reflects, maintains, and perpetuates socio-economic divides in schools (p. 269). In this manner, “English-medium education widens social fractures in Indian society by creating and reinforcing a social, cultural, economic, and discursive divide between the English-educated and the majority” (Faust & Nagar 2001, p. 2878). This linguistic divide thus continues to be hardened both by questions of access to English as well as the differential quality of English instruction available across different socio-economic groups (Annamalai, 2005; Bhattacharya, 2013; LaDousa, 2005; Mohanty, 2008; Proctor, 2015). It is within this hierarchically ordered, unequal, and high-stakes linguistic landscape that this present investigation takes shape.

Method

The study context and participants

This investigation unfolded in Noida, a bustling suburb of the Indian capital, New Delhi. Noida is an ethnically, culturally, linguistically, and socially heterogeneous city, with about 650,000 inhabitants. The languages of state administration, business and commerce, and schooling are English and/or Hindi, although many inhabitants speak other languages at home.

The *anathashram* was situated in an *ashram* (a Hindu religious commune) in a quiet residential area in Noida. The priest/administrator, two assistants, and the Board of Directors managed the ashram. The focal children’s ages ranged from 5 to 14, and they received room, board, and/or education free of

charge or at subsidized costs. The children spoke Bengali, Bihari, Punjabi, and/or Nepali as their mother tongue, and Hindi as a second or third language. The eight focal children were selected on the basis of several, pre-decided criteria, including that they: had been residing at the orphanage for a minimum of six months prior to the start of data collection; were five or older; and had rural backgrounds. The decision to focus on eight children was motivated by a desire to arrive at a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the language and literacy contexts given time constraints.

While they resided in an *anathashram*, not all children were entirely parentless. A few of the children had two living parents, and the rest had single parents, guardians, or access to family networks. The children's parents or guardians were all migrant workers, having arrived from rural parts of Bengal, Bihar, or Nepal to the Delhi area a few years ago.

The school in which the children studied was Subhash Chandra Bose Public School (SCB), located in Madhupur village (private schools in India are referred to as "public" schools). The school had approximately 250 students. Madhupur was home to around 3,500 inhabitants, a mostly floating population of migrant workers. School was in session from 8:00 am through 1:00pm, Monday through Saturday. Fees were reduced for the poorest students (including the *anathashram* children), and supplies offered at subsidized rates for everyone. All the teachers participating in the study had been educated in Hindi-medium schools, and held post-graduate degrees in various disciplines from local and regional universities.

Procedure

This study draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork between December 2010 and August 2011 at an *anathashram* (orphanage) and village school in suburban New Delhi. The data for this study included 250+ hours at the sites, involving nearly 100 hours of classroom observations at approximately 4–6 hours per week when the school was in session, and more than 150 hours at the *anathashram* at 4–6 hours per week, from December through August. The data collection process entailed participant observation, structured and semi-structured interview exchanges, and informal conversations to provide depth and detail (Patton, 1980). The variety of methods employed for data collection allowed for the triangulation of data (Denzin, 1970). While I use some data here that I have examined elsewhere (Bhattacharya, 2013), the data in this study are interpreted within an entirely new theoretical framework. Where the previous analysis had focused on the medium of instruction and its role on curtailing access to language and content, this study analyses the data using the theoretical perspective of dis-citizenship. The subjects of this study included eight focal children from the *anathashram*, the *anathashram* administrator and two assistants, and five teachers at the school. Written artifacts consulted included: textbooks, homework, schoolwork, Unit Tests, Mid-terms, final exams, *anathashram* records, fieldnotes, interview notes, and relevant

local and national policy documents (including the NCERT document noted in the section below). Data analysis was conducted both during the data collection process and after the collection process ended. For this analysis, the data were coded for “English teaching,” “English learning,” “participation,” and “dis-citizenship.” The coded data were then explored through analytic memos. These memos illuminated emerging themes; those elucidating dis-citizenship are explored through representative examples in the findings section.

Potential ethical issues arising in data collection and analyses include biases inherent in interviews, pitfalls of participant observation, the researcher’s own implication and influence in contexts of interaction and observation, and researcher bias (Diener & Crandall, 1978; Kelman, 1982; Merriam, 1988). These have been minimized here through prolonged periods of data collection, informant interviews, triangulation of data through multiple sources, and reflexivity regarding my own positioning. My personal history as an Indian, a New Delhi native (where I spent the first 22 years of my life), a married Hindu Bengali woman in her thirties, playing the multiple roles of *didi* (Bengali, ‘elder sister’) and researcher, a product of the Indian K-12 system and part of American academia, and as someone interested specifically in the learning and teaching of languages (especially English), had influenced the nature of the data collected and analysis conducted, and provided an additional source of reflection on the data.

Data and analysis

In this section, I offer a glimpse into core literacy practices at the SCB School, focusing on those that specifically help create conditions for dis-citizenship.

Multigrade Pedagogy

Multigrade pedagogy was a key characteristic of classroom teaching at SCB School, as it is in most classrooms in India (Alexander, 2008). In this section, I argue that multigrade pedagogy placed constraints on the children’s ability to participate in the language learning process within the classroom. Multigrade teaching is defined as “the teaching of students of different ages, grades and abilities in the same group” (Little, 1995, p.1). SCB schools were multigrade out of compulsion, since the K-12 and nursery classes had to be packed into only six classrooms, and for most of the data collection period the school had only five teachers on the payroll. Typically, two classes were seated in one classroom, with a short aisle separating the two. In addition, the classes only had half-walls on either side. Teachers would be simultaneously in charge of between two and four classes. This meant teachers would “actively” teach one class, and assign “quiet work” to the other class(es) they were also responsible for. Thus students who were not being “actively” taught were typically assigned tasks to copy texts into notebooks, told to do “handwriting practice,” or instructed to silently commit texts to memory. The result was a strongly teach-

er-centric environment, as well as heavy reliance on Hindi, a language in which the teachers found it easier to maintain control. The students who were being “actively” taught, meanwhile, found themselves being given few opportunities to speak because the teachers again desired to maintain control. This partially alienated the teacher, the centralized resource of the classroom, from all students, since the focus was primarily on noise control and discipline. This classroom design resulted, then, on constraining the students’ ability to participate within their own classroom; furthermore, their learning process was dictated by the need for noise control rather than on their educational needs. Both these factors combined to marginalize the children within the learning context.

Translations

Observations at the school revealed that English was taught largely via translations of words, phrases, or sentences into Hindi. This study revealed that the unsystematic paraphrasing and translation practices led to serious difficulties in understanding English texts for the students, and placed constraints on their ability to participate in their own learning. Below, for example, is an extract from a lesson reading sequence, of Chapter 12 from a Class V *Baby Birds* English textbook (observed on 2/7/2011). A teacher, *Bade* sir, read the text out loud and simultaneously translated it in the following manner (all words in *Italics* have been translated from the Hindi by the author):

“Once a mouse was roaming a house.” “Once” *meaning one time*, “mouse” *meaning* [Hindi word for mouse], *the mouse was roaming around*, “in the house.” *One time one mouse was roaming around in a house*. “He was also hungry” *He was also hungry*. “He went into all the nooks and could not get anything,” *the mouse had entered the house, was hungry, also therefore he went to all the rooms but he could not find anything to eat, he was not able to get anything to eat*. “At last” *meaning at the end, where did he reach?* “Kitchen” *he reached, in the* [Hindi word for kitchen]. “In search of food,” *he was searching for food*.

As is evident, texts were mostly translated and paraphrased into Hindi without pointing out which syntactic and lexical items were being introduced or excluded in the process of translation. Students’ ability to understand meanings of individual words was adversely affected as a result, as multiple observations and interviews I conducted revealed. In fact, interviews showed that without exception, the focal children could not understand most of the English in their textbooks across subjects, because of the difficulty they experienced in decoding and comprehending English texts when they studied texts by themselves. This, in turn, led to increasing dependence on memorization for tests and exams. Since teachers controlled the translations of the English, the children found themselves distanced from the language. This further constrained their ability to participate in the learning of English, since the language had to

be mediated through translations by the teachers. The process of translation thus reduced their ability to directly access the language, and, in this manner, I argue, created dis-citizens of the children in the classroom.

Communicative Language Teaching

In this section, I argue that the largely lecture-style, teacher-centric pedagogy the children experienced in school limited their opportunities for using English communicatively, and, as a result, contributed to their dis-citizenship within the classroom. While their textbooks valorized communicative language teaching (CLT) methods and the lessons were organized around them, exercises demanding interaction, group work, or communication were invariably ignored. For example, the Interactive Skills section in the Class III Baby Birds English textbook contained the following exercise, which, as usual, the teacher skipped over. The exercise, on “good habits,” had an exchange that students were asked to read out loud in groups of two (each of the pair of students was to read alternating lines):

A) Talk about the good habits. Talk in pairs:

Joy: I plucked a flower from the garden.

Tina: Don't pluck flowers.

Manu: I speak to her loudly.

Rina: Always speak softly.

Rony: Let us run on this soft grass.

Nina: Don't run only walk on the grass.

Ali: Let us fly a kite on the terrace.

Raja: My room is all messed up.

Tara: Keep your room tidy.

Beyond this example pointing to the teachers' avoidance of communicative tasks, this exercise, as we see, shows how the lessons offered only stilted and decontextualized speaking practice, a point characteristic of most exercises provided in the children's textbooks. The *kinds* of communicative exercises offered by the textbooks, therefore, also need to be recognized as constraints within the language-learning context.

A reason for the neglect of the communicative component by the teachers was possibly because CLT methods used in the SCB textbooks contained exercises that were modeled on approaches that had been created elsewhere, under different conditions, and for a different population of students and teachers (Block, 2010; Canagarajah, 2005). At SCB, thus, communicative exercises were, as noted, invariably sidelined, and teachers continued teaching using grammar-translation methods, which was how they themselves had acquired English. The disconnect between the two resulted in students not only getting limited or no communicative practice, but the students also found themselves stuck in a puzzling situation where their textbooks' pedagogical motivation

clashed with classroom practice. Both these aspects obstructed the children's English language development, and thus further contributed to their educational dis-citizenship.

Rote Memorization

There was a great deal of emphasis on memorizing texts, an aspect that, alongside other literacy practices, as I argue in this section, led to the children's dis-citizenship. Typically, study periods involved either students' copying texts or memorizing large chunks of text. Students memorized stories, poems, entire lessons, and also questions and answers posed at the end of the lessons (see next section). Here is an example of a model composition for the topic prompt "The Cow" for Class VI provided in the grammar reader:

1. The cow is an useful animal. 2. We call her Gau Mata. 3. She has four legs, two ears, two eyes and two horns. 4. She eats grass and straw. 5. She gives us milk. 6. She gives calf. 7. The calves plough the field. 8. They are also used in cart. 9. Hindu worships the cow. 10. Cow are found in black, white and brown colours.

The Class VI students were expected to memorize these essays for their unit tests or exams. The same topic prompt, "The Cow," for Class VII, the next in the grammar series sequence, contained only marginally modified text:

Ram has a cow. She is domestic and gentle. She is brown. She has four legs, two eyes, and two ears. She has two horns. Her tail is very long. She has her calf. She loves her calf very much. She eats green grass and straw. She is very fond of gram and wheat. We worship and call her Gau Mata.

For class VIII, the same topic was provided with the following model in the next level in the grammar series:

The cow is a useful animal. They are white, black, brown or spotted. She eats grass, straw, oil cake or anything that is given. She gives us milk. Milk is good for all. She gives us calves. They plough fields. Her dung is good for farming and cooking food. The Hindus worship her.

Most of the memorization activities were focused on remembering texts for unit tests and mid-term or final examinations. While rote learning can play a positive role in teaching contexts, the almost exclusive reliance on rote learning at SCB School, resulted, regrettably, in a context where teaching was focused on test performance rather than learning. This limited the English that the children acquired, as both observations and interviews revealed, since there were few incentives for the children to understand English or to compose in the language. Ultimately, the emphasis on memorization resulted in the de-

valuation of the children's own voices and, yet, again, led to the children's dis-citizenship within the learning process.

Giving answers

In this section, I argue that the teachers' providing answers to questions in the textbooks also contributed to the children's dis-citizenship. Teachers provided almost all answers to the questions posed in textbooks, which the children then memorized for tests. Let us take a closer look at this. During observations on February 7, 2011, *Bade* sir offered responses for the chapter, "Bachendri Pal," about the first Indian woman to scale Mount Everest, from the Class IV Baby Birds English textbook that he had just recently taught. He pointed to the question: "(B). Write the root words for the following words," followed by a numbered list of eight words that appeared in the lesson. *Bade* sir walked up to the blackboard, then wrote out the answers: 1) mountain, 2) teach, 3) learn, 4) high, 5) continue, 6) climb, 7) success, 8) complete. He then wrote out the answers to the remaining WH questions from the book, until the bell rang for lunch.

The stress on memorizing answers for testing meant that critical engagement with English – the language in which questions were posed – was minimal, with students being expected to memorize and regurgitate answers supplied earlier by their instructors. There was another issue. The children also thought that they were given answers because, in the words of one focal child, "They don't think we are capable of answering questions." Thus, both these aspects contributed to the children's dis-citizenship in the classroom; the children were not only robbed of the opportunity to answer the questions posed in their books, but they were also made to feel as if they were not capable of answering them. In this manner, the children were further marginalized in the classroom, "dis-citizenized" within the learning process.

Concluding remarks

Obstacles to fuller participation

The data thus revealed that there were multiple aspects of classroom instruction which posed obstacles in the English learning experience for the focal children, and thus contributed to their dis-citizenship. Firstly, the multigrade pedagogy modified teaching and learning in several ways, leading to a focus on minimizing disruption rather than learning. It also restricted their access to their teacher in the classroom. Secondly, the heavy reliance on unsystematic translation and paraphrasing techniques further alienated the students from English. Thirdly, the disconnect between the Communicative Language Teaching model used to organize the textbooks and the teachers' grammar-translation approaches resulted in difficulty for the students; furthermore, the neglect of communicative activities constrained their ability to produce Eng-

lish. Finally, the extensive reliance on rote memorization and teaching to the test (by giving out answers) resulted in limiting students' access to content as well as English. This kind of "English-medium" instruction, I argue, does not offer students the pathway to "fuller participation" invoked in the *Position Paper* (NCERT, 2006), since it does not offer real access to English. In fact, it instead creates further dis-citizenship for marginalized students, by offering English instruction, more or less, in name alone. In this manner, the socio-economic disparity in India gets exacerbated through English instruction, just as Mohanty (2006) and Sheorey (2006) found.

Towards fuller citizenship in the classroom

In this concluding section, I outline some core issues and questions for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to consider going forward:

- **Language policy:** There should be a reconsideration of the relationship between language and citizenship in the Indian context. Some questions to consider are: What are the criteria for citizenship in multilingual India? How does it relate to language? How do we problematize the kinds of dis-citizenship resulting through the "fuller participations" engendered through English, given that it is a minority language? How do we problematize this within language policy discourses, such as the *Position Paper*?
- **"English-medium" instruction:** As this investigation indicates, "English-medium" is a problematic construct. There are important questions to consider. What criteria are used to determine a school's (self-)labeling as "English-medium"? What differential opportunities are afforded through different forms of "English-medium" schooling?
- **Teaching to the test:** A modification in pedagogy is recommended, one focusing on learning and comprehension, rather than rote learning and test performance. This is a larger ideological issue which will require greater dialogue within the national educational consciousness.
- **Teacher training:** Additional support is necessary for Indian teachers who battle complex language encounters, multigrade teaching contexts, limited supplies and resources, ideological disconnect with textbooks, to name only a few aspects. The current Indian educational system does not adequately cater to these issues in teacher training; it is imperative that urgent attention is brought to bear on these issues.
- **Vernacular support:** Finally, given India's multilingual wealth, it is of urgent importance that there be a strengthening of the vernacular education base in conjunction with the English educational foundation. It is particularly important that higher education in vernacular languages be encouraged so that English does not continue to play the exclusionary role it does presently.

Ultimately, in order for all Indians to be able to “participate fully” in the national arena, we have to transform the discourse, from focusing on the acquisition of English as a symbolic entity towards the acquisition of knowledge for the good of society.

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