Lucilla Lopriore
(Ed.)

ELF PEDAGOGY

A research study on ELT practices

Contents

Part 2 | *Chapter 8*
World English/es and ELT

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Abstract
The main aim of this chapter is to provide a general account of a teacher-development session dedicated to the integration World Englishes (WE) into the English syllabuses. This session was carried out during the course that is the object of the second part of this book. The Introduction explains the rationale behind a critical stance toward mainstream language education, which is based on the concept of ELF *awareness* in English language teaching (ELT), and on Dewey and Pineda's (in print) definition of ELF *informed pedagogy*. These notions are then extended to WE. Sections 1 and 2 describe the session plan, the content and the activities that were designed for this component of the teacher development course mentioned above. Finally, an overall assessment of this experience is provided in the Conclusions.

Introduction

This chapter presents the component called *World Englishes for the English Classroom*, which was carried out during the teacher development course that constitutes the object of the second part of this book, entitled *New English/es Landscapes*.
First of all, it should be pointed out that even though English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is not an encoded variety of English as, for instance, postcolonial Englishes (also referred to as outer-circle Englishes, in Kachru's (1982) terms), it is usually included in academic manuals that deal with language change and variability in contemporary

English (e.g. Jenkins, 2003; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Schneider, 2011). This is due to the fact that the linguistic processes that have led to the consolidation of linguacultural variant forms of English in diverse historical, sociopolitical and economic contexts are essentially similar to the way several multilingual and multicultural forms of English are emerging in language contact situations, today. Here, ELF has become a major affordance of the process of globalization, nevertheless this has inevitably contributed to the raise of new forms of English even in international settings, where native speakers of English are not directly involved in communication (i.e. in the so-called *expanding circle* countries). We may, therefore, argue that a teacher-development course that is focused on today's plurilithic dimension of English (Pennycook, 2009; Graddol, 2006) should not only deal with ELF, but also stimulate the practitioners' reflection on the characteristics of World Englishes (WE) (e.g. their historical background, and the linguistic features) and the importance of integrating this topic into the English syllabuses. Indeed, it seems reasonable to assume that a wider perspective on the multifaceted reality of English should no more be neglected in second language education, now that the heyday of monocultural standard English (SE) is on the wane.

Over the last few years, one of the most recurrent expressions in ELF research is *ELF awareness*, which is referred to the growing need to reshape English language teaching (ELT) as a consequence of the changing nature of English as a global language (e.g., see Grazzi, 2018; Sifakis, 2014; 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018). In this respect, teacher education has become a priority for the years to come, as mainstream ELT is still deeply ingrained in native-speakerism (Holliday), which does not represent today's plurality of English. Sifakis points out that

> […] The purpose of ELF awareness is not to replace or displace EFL in an either-or understanding of things, but to offer practitioners of valuable additional tool that they can use to help their learners come to terms with their own capabilities for using and learning English today. Sifakis (2018: 34)

Therefore, the pedagogical aim of ELF awareness is essentially learner-centred, for it holds an open attitude towards the emergence of variable forms of English in the classroom, i.e. towards the cognitive processes that allow students to progressively appropriate the L2, i.e. adapt it to their L1 linguacultural identity to respond to their immediate communicative needs. Sifakis goes on to explain that

> ELF awareness is helpful because it prompts teachers to (a) appreciate what they already do in their classroom, and (b) become cognizant of the immediate, and broader

context that defines to a large extent the 'culture of teaching' espoused in their context (by implementing the *ecological approach*). […] The concept of ELF awareness […] deviates from the so-called ELF *approach* in that it does not necessarily prescribe a new, original or unique approach to teaching. Sifakis (2018: 41)

Whereas the concept of ELF awareness represents a turning point in ELT, as it bridges the gap between the more conservative world of schooling and the world of global communication, Dewey and Pineda suggest that an additional definition is needed in ELF research in order to implement a pedagogic change in the English classroom, that is "ELF *informed* pedagogy" (Dewey & Pineda, in print). The authors contend that

Other scholars favour the term 'ELF-aware' pedagogy (see especially Bayyurt & Sifakis 2015); however, for our purposes we prefer 'informed' (Dewey 2015; and see also Chen, Kao & Tsou 2020) to emphasize the motive underlying our approach to ELF research: that we focus on promoting the application of an ELF way of thinking about language and communication. In short, while awareness of ELF is a fundamental starting point for a classroom response, awareness alone is not sufficient. This point is also made clear by proponents of ELF-awareness; indeed, while we describe our approach as ELF informed, the theoretical basis of our arguments is still very much in line with Bayyurt & Sifakis (2015).

In this chapter, both definitions, ELF aware and ELF informed pedagogy, are considered appropriate and complementary. Therefore, in section 1 I am going to refer to the concept of *awareness* to describe activities that were carried out during the first part of my session for the teacher-education course, the aim of which was to share fundamental notions about WE with participants.
On the other hand, in section 2 I'm going to use the expression WE informed pedagogy to refer to innovative teaching activities that participants were asked to design and experiment with their classes during the second part of the session.
In the Conclusions, I will briefly comment on the results of this component of the teacher-development course, and point out how this experience could be improved in the future.

Raising World English awareness

As a preliminary introduction to my session about WE, I uploaded a short video on YouTube that I linked to the Moodle platform connected to the teacher

development course[1]. In this clip, I briefly introduced myself and provided attendees with general information about the topics we were going to discuss in our four-hour session (i.e. the pedagogic impact of WE on ELT), and about the blended approach I had selected for our work, namely a combination of theoretical input regarding the fundamental tenets in WE, and practical activities to implement the teaching of English as a plurilithic language in the English classroom.

As warm up materials, I also provided participants with links to introductory videos on WE and education that they should watch before our meeting[2].

Moreover, I created a folder called *Virtual Library* on the Moodle platform, where I uploaded several academic papers to expand on the topic of WE and share basic notions about WE with the attendees[3].

I met the participants to the teacher development course on Dec. 7, 2018. The first part of my for-hour session plan included 8 steps:

1. A general introduction to language variability in English, from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective.
2. Essential theoretical tenets about WE through videos and online materials (Kachru's model of WE; Crystal's video on variability in English; Strevens's map of English; Prodromou's model of WE; Mahboob's language variation framework; Schneider's dynamic model of Postcolonial Englishes; Jenkins's 1st and 2nd dispersals of English).
3. Definitions and examples of pidgin and creole languages derived from English.
4. Open debate: WE and ELT today (negotiating views and ideas with attendees).

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1 Access to this Moodle platform was granted by the Dept. of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures of the University of Roma Tre.

2 https://youtu.be/1b7hY8yrT0s
 https://youtu.be/wX78iKhInsc

3 Here is the full list of additional materials I included in the *Virtual Library*:
- Bhatt, R. M. (2001). World Englishes. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 30 (2001), 527-550.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2006). The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued. *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Jun., 2006), 586-619.
- Grazzi, E. (2016). Double book review: Jenkins, J. (2015). *Global Englishes: A Resource Book for Students* (third edition). Abingdon: Routledge / Galloway, N. & Rose, H. (2015). *Introducing Global Englishes*. Abingdon: Routledge. ELTJournal, Volume 70/4 October 2016, 469-473. Doi: 10.1093/elt/ccw063.
- Huddart, D. (2014). Chapter 3: English in the Conversation of Mankind: World Englishes and Global Citizenship. In D. Huddart, *Involuntary associations: Postcolonial Studies and World Englishes*, pp. 52-74. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Lo Bianco, J. (2003). Making Language Education Policies: A Needed Response to Globalization. *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (Summer, 2003), 286-288.
- Schneider, E. W. (2003). The Dynamics of New Englishes: From Identity Construction to Dialect Birth. *Language*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (Jun., 2003), 233-281.

5. Language education and WE: a transformative perspective in ELT.
6. Additional videos from YouTube with examples of WE: focus on pronunciation and lexicogrammar variations[4].
7. *Show and Tell*: I presented three manuals for University students on WE (Jenkins, 2003; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Schneider, 2011), which participants could find useful in order to expand on the topic of WE from a pedagogical point of view.
8. Concluding remarks: a few minutes were dedicated to sum up the main points that had been presented in the first part of the session, and to answer participants' questions. Finally, attendees were invited to join a forum entitled *English vs. Englishes* that I was going to moderate on the Moodle platform, where we could continue our open discussion on a number of topics concerning, WE and ELT.

World English informed classroom activities

The second part of my session of the teacher development course was essentially dedicated to practical activities that were intended to pave the way for participants in designing and implementing new tasks for the English classroom, whereby learners would be able to develop the notion of English as a plurilithic language.
First of all, I organized a complex activity based on the principles of cooperative learning, which consisted in following a procedure that would allow all attendees to participate actively in a conversation with peers on the following theme: *English and Language Variability*. As a teacher trainer, my goal was also to show participants how possible it is to manage an open debate in the English classroom, where all pupils have a chance to express their point of view. I divided the class into groups of four and we started off with a brainstorming activity on the following points:
a) Why do languages change?
b) Is English a monolithic or plurilithic language?

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4 Here is the full list of additional videos that were shown during the first session:
- Different WE accents: https://youtu.be/LBYsuohdKs4
- D. Crystal on second language education: https://youtu.be/ItODnX5geCM
- MLE, or Multi-cultural London English: https://youtu.be/0KdVoSS_2PM
- British vs. American English pronunciation: https://youtu.be/2nAnT3PASak
- British slang vs. American slang: https://youtu.be/wYmrg3owTRE
- AAVE, or African-American Vernacular English: https://youtu.be/xX1-FgkfWo8
- Australian English: https://youtu.be/xuRrp83jCuQ
- Hiberno /Irish English: https://youtu.be/QJFayFOASMg
- Ngugi Wa Tiong'o: «English is not an African language»
https://youtu.be/0nGFSwXNXiY
- Jamaican English: https://youtu.be/nDSPtQrX4A8

c) Should the English of the subject incorporate the idea of variability?

Participants were asked to negotiate their positions, find agreement whenever possible, and disregard what was not negotiable. At the end of this first phase, all groups where reshuffled and every member was asked to report from their previous discussion. Again, groups were asked to negotiate their positions and take notes.

Finally, a plenary session was organized. All participants were asked to sit down in a large circle and were given the following instructions:

Go back to your notes:

a) Are your ideas in line with linguists' positions about World Englishes and ELT?

b) Have you changed your mind while you were discussing this topic with your colleagues?

c) Start a plenary discussion on the following theme: How would you raise your students' WE awareness?

d) Take notes. You are going to need them later on.

This activity was very successful. Everyone had a chance to express their opinions and contribute to harmonize and integrate their views.

When this activity was over, I introduced the next one, the aim of which was to make attendees design a project work on the integration of WE into the English syllabus. Participants were also asked to implement their project work with their classes, in the following weeks, and report their feedback on this activity through our forum, on the Moodle platform.

The title of the project work was: *Bringing WE to the English Classroom*. I divided attendees into groups of four. Each group was asked to design innovative activities for a class of high-school students, to introduce WE and enhance learners' WE awareness. Attendees were asked to plan a cycle of learners' tasks based on action research and dynamic assessment.

Here is the participants' assignment:

Bringing WE to the English Classroom

1. Focus on one problematic aspect in ELT related to WE (e.g. students' attitude towards standard English and language variability; students feeling ashamed of their non-native speaker accent; lack of intercultural competence; etc.).
2. Design a set of innovative learning activities to cope with the problematic area(s) you have selected.
3. Prepare a lesson plan on WE. Remember to specify:
   a) Main goal(s) (e.g. raising learners' awareness of WE; improve learners' intercultural competence, etc.)
   b) Specific aims (e.g. in terms of integrated skills, can-do statements, etc.)

      c) Expected results

      d) Innovative learning activities and cooperative work on WE.

      e) The teacher's role.

      f) Materials, media, technology devices, etc.

    4. Describe how you would implement classroom observation and action research to assess your project work and improve it.

At the end of this activity, all groups prepared a poster where they provided an outline description of the project work they had designed. Then, in turn, each group presented their poster to the others and a concluding question and answer session was carried out.

In the days that followed our meeting, I kept in touch with participants through our forum on WE, which was hosted on the Moodle platform. Moreover, I also started an open debate online on the topics of the supplementary readings I had uploaded to the *Virtual Library*. Meanwhile, participants had also attended a few other sessions, held by my colleagues. Therefore, I expected that all participants had had the possibility to reflect on the main topics that had been addressed during the course and had developed a deeper awareness of the pedagogic implications of ELF and WE. Nevertheless, I have to say that participants' involvement in web- mediated asynchronous discussions was well below expectations, partly due to teachers' lack of time to dedicate to these optional activities. Indeed, we have to say that Italian school teachers usually have a busy agenda especially between January and February, i.e. between the first and second term of the school year. In any case, it should not go unnoticed that most trainees did not prove to be highly motivated in participating to online forums.

Conclusions

All in all, I can say that the activities that were carried out during the session that I have described in sections 1 and 2 reached their goals, although they were not entirely satisfactory. In particular, while attendees participated very actively during our meeting, the same cannot be said about their commitment to the work they had been asked to carry out from home (e.g. participation to our forums on the Moodle platform; reading additional academic papers; etc.), and with their classes (e.g. the implementation of their project work on learners' WE awareness).

Presumably, among the causes of these partially successful results there may be a) attendees' lack of time to dedicate to teacher development at home; b) attendees'

poor ability to work online; c) the objective impossibility to go to the attendees' schools and support teachers while experimenting with innovative activities with their classes. These are major drawbacks to take into consideration, should this teacher development course be repeated.

Nevertheless, participants expressed their positive feedback about the experience of this teacher's development course and were ready to reconsider their ideas about today's plurality of WE and the importance to reshape the English syllabus in order to make learners ready to cope with language variability in authentic communication.

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