

## World Englishes in English Language Classes

Semahat AYSU\*

<sup>1</sup>*School of Foreign Languages, Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, Turkey*

*\*(saysu@nku.edu.tr)*

**Abstract** – English was previously the native language of England, Scotland and Ireland and migration from these countries to North America, Australia and New Zealand created new English dialects (Jenkins, 2009) and later imperialism of some nations such as the UK and the USA, Africans and Asians in their colonies made this language, English, a world language (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). The term “World Englishes (WEs)” has appeared and the varieties of English have been developed by Kachru (1990) in terms of three circles of English, which are classified as the Inner Circle in which English is used as the native language (L1), the Outer Circle where English is used as a second language and the Expanding Circle in which English is used as a foreign language. There exists a problem about which variation of English should be included in English language teaching. In the literature, there is a growing body of research that has examined the pedagogical effects of WEs on English Language Teaching (ELT), namely English language classrooms. One of the misunderstandings about WEs “is that British or American English is superior to that of India, Africa, or Singapore” but she warns us and note that “The world is changing” (Narin, 2022, p.123).

*Keywords* – World Englishes, Language Learning And Teaching, EFL, ELT, ELF

### I. INTRODUCTION

English was previously the native language of England, Scotland and Ireland and migration from these countries to North America, Australia and New Zealand created new English dialects (e.g. [10]) and later imperialism of some nations such as the UK and the USA, Africans and Asians in their colonies made this language, English, a world language (e.g. [6]). It became an international language especially after World War II (e.g. [12]). Thus, the term “World Englishes (WEs)” has appeared and it refers to the spread of English in various societies in the world (e.g. [14], [18]).

Speakers of English come across different forms of English on TV, or while travelling or meeting different people from other countries (e.g. [18]). This is summarized by (e.g. [18]) as in the following “people use strange words; it may take you a while to recognize familiar words because they are pronounced somehow differently; and sometimes people build their sentences in ways that will seem odd to you in the beginning” (p. 2). Therefore, it

could be stated that there is not one language and there appears a term “Englishes” as it is described by linguists. World Englishes is described as “the different forms and varieties of English used in various sociolinguistic contexts in different parts of the world” (e.g. [15], p.108). The underlying reason why different Englishes appeared is its use as lingua franca. People whose native language is different from one another can interact through English (e.g. [13], [18]). Thus, varieties such as English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (e.g. [10], [13]) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as Second Language (ESL) (e.g. [10]) have appeared.

### II. CATEGORIZING WEs

The varieties of English have been developed by (e.g. [11]) in terms of three circles of English, which are classified as the Inner Circle in which English is used as the native language (L1), the Outer Circle where English is used as a second language and the Expanding Circle in which English is used as a

foreign language but Reference [20] criticizes that Kachru's model does not include ELF and its effect on the development of English.

Also, the varieties of English have been discussed by (e.g. [12] p.2) as in the following.

1) those that are used as the primary language of the majority population of a country, such as American and British; (2) varieties that are used as an additional language for intranational as well as international communication in communities that are multilingual, such as Indian, Nigerian, and Singaporean; and (3) varieties that are used almost exclusively for international communication, such as Chinese and German. Apart from Kachru and Smith's discussions about varieties of English, other varieties are added to the literature as in the following

"*New Englishes*, coined by Platt, Weber, and Ho (1984, cited in (e.g. [18]), p.30), is explicitly restricted to the newly grown second-language varieties especially of Africa and Asia, like Tanzanian or Indian English" (e.g. [18], p.30).

"*Postcolonial Englishes*, used predominantly in Schneider (2007, cited in e.g. [18], p.30), unites all the varieties which have shared origins in (mostly) British colonization activities, emphasizing this historical origin and the processes which have resulted from it. So it excludes British English but includes American or Australian English, the *New Englishes*, and English related creoles" (e.g. [18], p.30).

No matter how Wes is categorized, there exist differences in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar and this might be caused by "language change in the course of time and language contact between speakers of different languages who communicate with each other and transfer forms from one language to another in bilingual or multilingual minds, as it were" (e.g. [18], p.38).

### III. WES AND ELT

Pedagogical effects of WEs on English Language Teaching (ELT), namely English language classrooms, have been examined by various researchers (e.g. [2], [9], [13]) as the question has raised about which variation of English should be included in English language teaching should merely based on the standard English (e.g. [9]).

Reference [13] notes that WEs resulted in some questions in terms of English language teaching as it is important to decide what kind of English should

be taught. He has some suggestions for teaching English in the Expanding Circle e.g. in Turkey that "Awareness should be created and cross-cultural communication strategies should be studied. It is of utmost importance for teachers to develop a greater tolerance of differences and adjust their expectations according to the settings." (e.g. [13], p.37)

Reference [4] suggests an outline for teaching WEs in ELT considering more pragmatic and humanistic needs of learners while discussing today's difficulties in standard English, curriculum and material design, testing and training teachers. Importance of teacher training is also emphasized by (e.g. [7]).

With the global spread of English and WEs varieties, particularly in foreign language settings Reference [7] draws our attention to a problem, which is that institutions tend to hire people as an English teacher without paying attention to their teaching education or background. This leads to the following problems:

"1) Native speakers (NS) are considered privileged teachers with or without a degree, striking a blow at the English teaching profession as a whole; 2) experienced multilingual local teachers lose the opportunity for such (often more lucrative) positions; and 3) students are often faced with inappropriate curriculum and "unattainable" goals" (p.11).

In the following, studies about WEs in ELT will be discussed from the perspective of both teachers and students in different education levels of different countries. Reference [5] notes 2 reasons why WEs is examined, which are listed as follows: "the increased use of English in public spaces worldwide may be seen as the instantiation of processes related to economic and cultural globalization (as well as 'glocalization'). Second, there are direct connections with the socio-historical development of the world" (p.32)

Reference [2] examined the use of World Englishes-informed pedagogy in Japan. This study was conducted in the secondary school context and data were collected through written reflections and interviews. Findings of the study revealed that students were aware of the diversity in English language apart from British and American English. Also, there was an increase in students' desire and interest to learn different types of English.

Reference [9] revealed the attitudes of prospective English language teachers in the EFL setting towards World Englishes. A mixed-method design was employed in the study and data were collected through survey, interviews and a whole-class discussion. Results showed that students had both positive and negative attitudes as they stated they wanted to know different varieties of English.

In the study of [3] the views of English language teachers working at different education levels about Standard English and World Englishes were investigated in EFL context using a questionnaire. 110 EFL teachers participated in this study and results showed that teachers are aware of ELF-related issues and they accept native speaker standards as reference whereas they note that intelligibility during interaction is important rather than native-like accent. Therefore, both native and non-native teachers have advantages in teaching. Additionally, Reference [19] investigated not only the views of teachers but also the views of students about ELF and WEs. 44 English teachers and 104 students studying English Language and Literature participated in the study. Participants stated that British and American varieties were seen in the textbooks and they believed that standard English was easier to learn.

Reference [1] (2023) examined two English textbooks used in the elementary school in Indonesia in terms of to what extent World Englishes is represented. Data were gathered through document analysis and qualitative approaches. It was found that the textbooks include samples from inner and expanding circles such as pictures or reading texts. Similarly, Reference [8] investigated English course book, which is delivered by The Ministry of National Education and used in the eleventh grade in Turkey. Researchers identified that the course book audio tracks include only British or American accents rather varieties of English. They suggest that dialogues in the books between native and non-native speakers of English or between non-native and non-native speakers of English should be covered in the course book.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Beside all these issues in teaching varieties of English in different context stated above, Reference [17] puts emphasis on the studies about the interaction between WEs and other languages. In

other words, language contact and multilingualism should also be examined today because World Englishes is considered as the result of “individual and group second-language acquisition and sometimes language shift” (e.g. [18], p.26).

One of the misunderstandings about WEs “is that British or American English is superior to that of India, Africa, or Singapore” but they warn us and note that “The world is changing” (e.g. [16], p.123).

#### REFERENCES

- [1] R. N. Annisa, and R. I. Gusdian, “World Englishes Representation in English Textbooks of Indonesian Elementary Schools”, *English Learning Innovation (englie)*, vol. 4(2), pp.97–108, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.22219/englie.v4i2.25646>
- [2] R. Aoyama, and L. Denton, “Creating space for world Englishes perspectives in the ELT classroom: Voices of high school students in Japan”, *Teaching English as a Second Language Electronic Journal (TESL-EJ)*, vol.26(1), 2022. <https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.25101a5>
- [3] Ö, Ardiç Kıyak, “English Language Teachers’ perceptions of World Englishes and English as a lingua franca”, *The Literacy Trek*, vol. 7(2), pp. 37-64, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.47216/literacytrek.904635>
- [4] S. K. Bhowmik, “World Englishes and English language teaching: A pragmatic and humanistic approach”, *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, vol.17(1), pp. 142-157, 2015.
- [5] K. Bolton, “World Englishes and linguistic landscapes”, *World Englishes*, vol. 31(1), pp.30-33, 2012.
- [6] J. Brutt-Griffler, *World English: A study of its development*, Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2002
- [7] F. Esseili, K. McIntosh, C. Torres, E. Lawrick, C. McMartin-Miller, and S. Y. Chang, “World Englishes: Practical implications for teaching and research”, *English Faculty Publications*, vol.119, 2009. [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/eng\\_fac\\_pub/119](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/eng_fac_pub/119)
- [8] L. G. Genç, and S. Meral, (2020). “Evaluation of an English coursebook in Turkey based upon sociolinguistic aspects”. *PESA International Journal of Social Studies*, vol.6(2), pp.171-181, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.25272/j.2149-8385.2020.6.2.07>
- [9] N. Gürel-Cennetkuşu, “Attitudes towards World Englishes: A case study from an EFL context”, *Socrates Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Studies*, vol.17, pp.12-26, 2022.
- [10] J. Jenkins, *World Englishes: A resource book for students*, Routledge, 2009.
- [11] B. B. Kachru, “World Englishes and applied linguistics”, *World Englishes*, vol. 9(1), pp. 3-20, 1990. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.1990.tb00683.x>
- [12] Y. Kachru, and L.E. Smith, *Cultures, contexts, and world Englishes*. Routledge, 2008.
- [13] F. Kilickaya, “World Englishes, English as an international language and applied linguistics”, *English Language Teaching*, vol.2(3), pp.35-38, 2009.

- [14] R. Mesthrie, and R. M. Bhatt, *World Englishes: The study of new linguistic varieties*. Cambridge, 2008
- [15] M. Napratilora, and R. Devianti, "Understanding of world Englishes", *Jurnal Pendidikan & Konseling*, vol.2(1), pp.108-125, 2019.
- [16] G. Narin, "English and its labelling", *Eurasian Journal of English Language and Literature*, vol.4(2), pp.111-125, 2022.
- [17] A. Onysko, and P. Siemund, "Editorial: Englishes in a globalized world: Exploring contact effects on other languages", *Frontiers in Communication*, vol. 7(1029561), 2022.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2022.1029561>
- [18] E. W. Schneider, *English around the world: An introduction*, Cambridge, 2011.
- [19] İ. Tosuncuoğlu, and Ö. Kırmızı, "Views of university instructors and students on English as a lingua franca (ELF) and World Englishes (WES)", *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, vol.15(1), pp.158-173, 2019.
- [20] F. Van Splunder, "All Englishes are equal (but some are more equal than others)", *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Dergisi*, vol.30(1), pp.1-9, 2020.