

Accents of English as a Lingua Franca: A Study of Textbooks and Tests in China

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Abstract

This study investigates the current situation of English textbooks used in Chinese senior high schools to explore whether the English textbook series provide non-native accents of English for students, and if they do, to what extent and in what kinds of situations. In addition, this study also looks into the English tests in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) in China to examine whether the listening sections in these English tests include non-native accents of English for test takers. Therefore, the backwash effect of tests on teaching materials was discussed. Through both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study revealed that Inner Circle accents are extremely predominant in both textbooks and tests; there is no Outer Circle accent in both textbooks and tests, and thus non-native accents only consist of Expanding Circle accents. Considering the backwash effect of tests on textbooks, it is mainly recommended that examination boards should take the initiative to change the English tests in NCEE, and that instructors' awareness and attitudes towards ELF should be refined.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca (ELF), non-native accents, English teaching, teaching material, textbooks, tests

Introduction

English as a lingua franca

The conventional method for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) has attached much importance to the native speakers' behaviour, contending that students and teachers should imitate native speakers in both linguistic and cultural aspects. The language competence of native speakers has become the unique model and the ultimate goal in English learning and teaching (Rajagopalan, 2004). However, with the rapid development of English status, there are an increasing number of non-native speakers (NNSs) of English, who have outnumbered native speakers (NSs) of English worldwide (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997). This phenomenon indicates that English not only serves as the

mother tongue among NSs, but also acts more as a lingua franca among NNSs. English as a lingua franca (ELF) refers to English utilised as a vehicular language by people of different language backgrounds (Kirkpatrick, 2007), and it is depicted by Mauranen (2003, p. 514) as “a new variety that emerges in situations where interlocutors do not share an L1”.

From the perspective of ELF, the key function of English is to enable different people with different languages to communicate with each other. The ability to use English as a vehicular language to perform successful interactions is the ultimate goal. It is noteworthy that the communication might also involve speakers for whom English is the first or second language, even though the majority of ELF speakers are NNSs (Seidlhofer, 2004). Nevertheless, concerning English teaching, Jenkins (2002) argues that an international community should gradually replace the British or American one to become a new target community. This means that NSs should no longer serve as the yardstick with which to judge NNSs. Graddol (2006) even makes a prediction of the “death” of EFL, seeing English as a basic subject in which there should not be a standard. Yet, it is still necessary to have some norms of English in the teaching and learning of English, and ELF concept does not suggest getting rid of native varieties as norms regardless of contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2007). However, as regards accents and pronunciation, Jenkins (2000) points out the occasional inappropriateness of native models.

ELF aims to prepare NNSs to smoothly interact with other NNSs, since ELF ideology necessitates comprehending English spoken with a variety of non-native accents. Jenkins (2000) claims that English learners should have sufficient exposure to a wide range of non-native accents in order to perform successful EFL interactions. In addition to enhancing the comprehension of the accents, exposure is also called for so as to promote a broader outlook of difference. Seidlhofer (2004) also argues that English learners should be provided with a foundation for understanding both native and non-native varieties which can be fine-tuned to adjust their own English. However, Jenkins (2009) puts more emphasis on the exposure to non-native accents than that to native accents, as English learners have more opportunities to communicate with NNSs than NSs. Hence, this calls for new English teaching methodology to modify the traditional one where the native accents have dominated. If NNSs have only been exposed to native accents during their English education, it could be difficult for them to understand other NNSs. Jenkins (2000) suggests that learners should be provided with repeated exposure to different accents in order to improve their familiarity with various accents.

ELF, English teaching and materials

Although the ELF notion has received more attention and interest, the impact it exerts on English teaching practice and English teaching materials is still very limited (Jenkins, 2002). Many ESL and EFL English textbooks are still primarily concentrating on Inner Circle norms, even though a few textbooks have introduced different speakers from Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles (Brown, 1995). Matsuda's (2003) research in Japan found that the Inner Circle varieties are still the focus of the local English textbook, and British and American varieties are the typical representation of English. In other nations such as China, this field has not gained much investigation, which is the main rationale for carrying out the current study.

Jenkins (2004) considers the authors of English textbooks as gatekeepers who often neglect the importance of ELF; most of them overlook ELF speakers in their teaching materials, despite the fact that NNSs models would be most beneficial to learners. With regard to audio materials, Jenkins (2000) points out that few published materials have included the audio recordings of speakers with various non-native accents. On the other hand, Seidlhofer (2003) claims that some textbooks include limited Outer Circle accents such as Singapore or Indian accents in order to enrich the cultural instruction.

Teachers' attitudes towards non-native accents are crucial, because they have a great influence on deciding the textbooks used for English teaching. Although ELF perspective has aroused much questioning and reconsideration about language pedagogy, many English teaching practitioners still regard NSs as the authority and criteria in their real teaching practice (Jenkins, 2007). Many studies have been conducted to investigate the identity of ELF speakers in which the participants are primarily teachers and learners of English. Interestingly, contradictory or ambiguous findings have been uncovered. Jenkins (2007) notes that teachers hold paradoxical views on ELF: on the one hand, they tend to agree on the notion of ELF; whereas on the other hand, they do not truly believe that ELF varieties are justifiable. Jenkins (2000) claims that one possible explanation for not really employing ELF notion in the actual teaching practice may be that most EFL teachers have negative attitudes towards non-native English. For instance, it is revealed that native speaker norms in teaching are preferred by both teachers and students (Timmis, 2002). It is also found by Decke-Cornill (2002, p. 261) that English teachers in Germany "felt very much compelled to teach their classes 'proper English'". Furthermore, it is found that Greek teachers of English lack awareness of the role of English acting as a global language, and hence they merely conform to the native models (Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). Jenkins (2007) points out that non-native accents have received more unfavourable attitudes from NNSs compared with those from NSs. She also indicates that the negative

attitudes are mainly due to the emotional and irrational dependence on American or British English. Jenkins's investigation also demonstrates that a number of non-native English teachers believe that a native-like accent is a significant indicator of a successful teacher.

In terms of English learners, a study carried out by Chiba, Matsuura, and Yamamoto (1995) demonstrates that Japanese students show preference for Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) compared with non-native accents of English. In addition, a study conducted by Pihko (1997, p. 51) reveals that Finnish pupils as English learners even often see non-native English accents "unsophisticated, ugly or irritating". Jenkins (2007, p. 164) also claims that "non-native speakers were unable to conceive of NNS accents as being better than or even as good as NS English accents".

Apart from the unfavourable attitudes towards non-native accents, there is another explanation for not applying ELF into practice, that is, there is a very limited amount of explanatory reference and specific instructions on ELF, so that teachers and students have little chance to become familiar with the notion of ELF (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004). However, with more and more studies on ELF corpora coming out, deeper understanding about the application of ELF into practice has been gradually achieved. Furthermore, Ranta's (2010) study suggests that particularly young Finnish teachers of English have realised and accepted the lingua franca status of English worldwide, and they are trying to introduce ELF ideology to their students in their teaching practice. This may result in new attitudes towards non-native accents, and generate new pedagogical implications.

ELF and English language tests

Lowenberg (1992) points out that even though ELF ideology has attracted much attention, relatively little attention has been attached to the variability inherent in the linguistic norms for English which are generally tested. Furthermore, many researchers pertaining to English language testing seem to implicitly assume that the benchmark for English proficiency worldwide should be the norms accepted and adopted by NSs of English. Jenkins (2009) also mentions that NSs varieties, particularly British and North American ones are still the goal of teaching and testing in many parts of the world. She continues to contend that examination boards have to change their traditional ideology and create new criteria for English tests based on the notion of ELF; otherwise, little is likely to change. This means that tests have a "backwash" effect on teaching and learning: that is, teachers aim to teach and learners desire to learn the very language and skills which are tested in examinations (Hughes, 2003). "The term 'impact' is also increasingly used to describe the way a test can affect teaching, materials, and the broader learning context" (Taylor, 2006, p. 54). Hence, tests appear to be the

pivotal engine to shift people's attention from NSs model to a wider outlook of ELF. On the other hand, however, Taylor (2006) argues that there seems to be no simple linear relationship between teaching and testing, namely, teaching and learning will automatically change according to the changes of tests, because sufficient research has suggested that backwash and impact are far more complicated than this (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Saville & Hawkey, 2004).

The Current Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the present situation of English textbooks used in Chinese senior high schools to explore whether the English textbook series provide non-native accents of English for students, and if they do, to what extent and in what kinds of situations. In addition, this study is also to look into the English tests carried out from the year of 2009 to 2013 in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) in China to see whether the listening sections in these English tests include non-native accents of English for test takers. Therefore, the backwash effect of tests on teaching materials will be explored.

Clarification of terms

In this study, Kachru's (1985) model is adopted to classify different English accents, namely, Inner Circle (countries with native speakers of English), Outer Circle (English as an official language) and Expanding Circle (English as a foreign language) (Kopperoinen, 2011). However, this categorisation has its limitations: as the language policies in some countries continually change, it is difficult to judge whether English serves as a second language or a foreign language (Kachru, 1985). Nowadays, there are approximately twenty nations such as Denmark which are transiting from the status of English as a foreign language (EFL) to that of English as a second language (ESL) (Graddol, 1997). Moreover, English is in effect used as the first and only language by some Outer Circle speakers, in Singapore for example (Jenkins, 2009). Another problem of this model is that it does not consider the actual linguistic performance of speakers (Jenkins, 2009). Despite these weaknesses, this model is employed since it is a useful tool for classification in this study.

The term "native accents" is used to refer to Inner Circle accents; "non-native accents" refers to Outer and Expanding Circle accents.

Material & Method

The textbook series are called *New Senior English for China*, which are used in many senior high schools in China. There are five compulsory textbooks constituting the whole series, namely, from *Student Book 1* to *Student Book 5*. Most senior high school students have to spend three years completing the five compulsory textbooks, which aim to prepare them for the English test in NCEE at the end of their studies. Therefore, the English textbooks are designed and used for the final English test in NCEE. In this study, *Student Book (SB1)*, *Student Book 3 (SB3)* and *Student Book 5 (SB5)* which are respectively used for the first-year, second-year and third-year students were selected to analyse by listening to the tapes designed for the three books. All the audio materials, consisting of the recordings of instructions, texts, vocabularies as well as language exercises were examined. Five English tests of National Version II carried out from 2009 to 2013 in NCEE were chosen to collect data on English accents through exploring the listening sections embedded in the English tests. The audio recordings of listening sections consist of dialogues and monologues in English, whereas the instructions are in Chinese.

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods are adopted, whereas the former is predominant in the data analysis, since the amount of non-native accents is calculated. In addition, qualitative method is also employed to examine the situations in which non-native accents appear. Specific descriptions of accents are used to identify all the accents available in the data. Trudgill and Hannah's (2002) *International English: A guide to varieties of standard English* is adopted as the main source for identifying native accents (Inner Circle accents). Swan and Smith's (2001) *Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems* is used as the primary source for non-native accents.

Results

Overview: Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle accents

One of the most significant findings in this study is the amount of non-native accents compared with native ones. The following Figure 1 demonstrates the distributions of the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle accents in the data. From this figure, it can be seen clearly that the Inner Circle accents are extremely

predominant in both textbooks and tests, whereas the Outer and Expanding Circle accents are very limited. More specifically, there is no Outer Circle accent in both materials, and thus non-native accents only consist of Expanding Circle accents in this study. In textbooks, only one per cent of Expanding Circle accents which are exclusively Chinese accent are found. In tests, no Expanding Circle accents are found, and all accents are Inner Circle accents

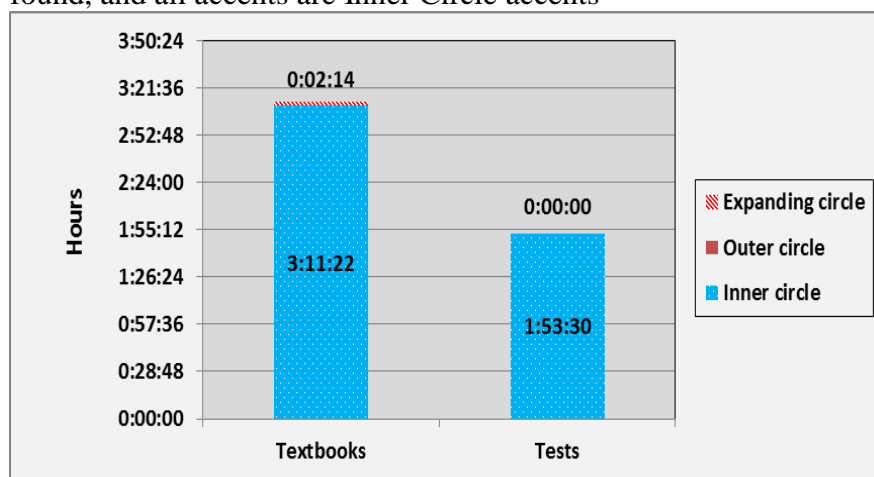


Figure 1. Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle accents textbooks and tests

Inner Circle accents in textbooks consist of RP, GA and “other variation”, whereas only GA is found in tests. As the focus of this study is on non-native accents, Inner Circle accents are not discussed here further.

Contexts of non-native accents in textbooks

The very few Chinese accents of English are found in two listening exercises called “Using Language” in *SBI*. One is a situation in which a presumably Chinese student writes a letter to another Chinese (see Appendix 1). The introductory speech is as follows:

Read the letter that Lisa wrote to Miss Wang of ‘Radio for Teenagers’ and predict what Miss Wang will say. After listening, check and discuss her advice.

Here, “Miss Wang” seems to indicate that she is a Chinese. Lisa might be a Chinese, since the audio recording of Lisa’s letter is spoken with a Chinese accent of English, and also many Chinese students have their English names in learning English. However, this prediction cannot be guaranteed.

A second situation is one where a Chinese office secretary writes a letter of invitation to another presumable Chinese (see Appendix 2). The introductory speech is as follows:

Here is a letter of invitation. Read it carefully and imagine that you are the student who has been invited to give a speech.

In the letter of invitation, Tangshan is a city in Hebei province, China. Thus it can be seen that the letter is sent from a place in China and also mostly sent to a Chinese student, since the instructions ask Chinese students to imagine they are the one invited to give a speech. Moreover, the signature indicates that the letter addresser is a Chinese, since it is a Chinese name. Therefore, this letter is spoken with a Chinese accent of English.

In summary, Chinese accents appear in the contexts where Chinese people and Chinese events are involved, and the non-native speakers' names in the texts provide a clue regarding the Chinese accent.

Discussion

Predominant Inner Circle accents in textbooks

The current study demonstrates that the explored textbook audio recordings have included a very few non-native accents. Yet, this does not suffice to say that ELF notion is substantially applied into the English teaching materials for Chinese senior high school students. Despite the fact that most communication in English at this present time takes place between NNSs, native accents are still holding a dominant position in most texts. It can be argued that textbooks should be revised to better mirror the real situation which students tend to face in their daily lives. Chinese senior high school students tend to use English often with NNSs such as Japanese and Korean students, because there is an increasing number of student exchange programmes between China and many non-English-speaking countries such as Japan, Korea, and Russia. Also, the communication on the Internet is rapidly growing, where most of the other participants are NNSs of English. English is mostly used as a vehicular language between Chinese students and other NNSs. Therefore, it would help familiarise students with various English accents in order to have successful EFL communication if students could be exposed to as wide a range of accents as possible during their English schooling (Jenkins, 2000).

As illustrated above, the Chinese accent of English is introduced to students, serving as the only representative of Expanding Circle accents. The recording of Chinese accent only lasts for less than three minutes, taking up approximately one

per cent of the total recordings. Hence, a question can be raised as to whether such limited extracts are beneficial to students. Of course, this is a complicated question how much exposure of non-native accents could be adequate for students. On the one hand, these extracts can be seen as useful to raise teachers' and students' awareness of other English accent varieties. On the other hand, however, it appears to be unnecessary to merely include the Chinese accent, since Chinese students are frequently exposed to this accent when communicating with their peers and teachers. One possible rationalisation for including the Chinese accent could be to offer students encouragement to bravely speak English with their own accent, which is considered significant by ELF researchers (Jenkins, 2004). Although much more other non-native accents are expected to be introduced in the textbooks, the limited amount of Chinese accent reflects a step towards ELF ideology.

As indicated above, it is a difficult question to decide how many non-native accents ought to be provided in teaching materials. According to Jenkins's (2000) argument, however, teaching materials should include more non-native accents than native ones. Specifically speaking, Outer and Expanding Circle accents should occur throughout some texts, and more examples of these accents should be offered in listening exercises. It is worth mentioning the *Unit 2 "English around the world"* in *SBI* (see Appendix 3). This unit reflects the notion of ELF, but does not sufficiently apply it into the materials. The term "World Englishes" appears in the beginning of this unit, and some different uses of words between British English and American English are covered, for example, elevator/lift, rubber/eraser, petrol/gas, in a team/on a team. As for accents, only British and American accents are found in the text recording. Interestingly, in a listening exercise, Texas English dialect is spoken in the recording of the text (see Appendix 4). However, this dialect still belongs to the Inner Circle accent. Therefore, it could be claimed that the textbook publishers were aware of the notion of ELF and aimed to introduce different varieties of English, but seemed to have a restricted understanding of ELF, believing that "World Englishes" only refer to British and American Englishes. This seems to correspond with the argument that textbook publishers as gatekeepers do not attach much importance to ELF, and they often marginalise ELF speakers in their teaching materials (Jenkins, 2004). Furthermore, this may also reflect the claim that many textbook publishers who are often engaged in teaching have negative attitudes towards non-native accents of English (Jenkins, 2007). Hence, it has become essential to provide publishers and teachers with detailed introduction and guidance on ELF ideology and how to apply it into practice (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004).

Predominant Inner Circle accents in English tests

The NCEE in China is a very high-stake achievement test, which concerns a huge number of Chinese senior high school students (Hughes, 2003). The total marks of NCEE, to some extent, determine the students' fate for their further study and career. Therefore, textbook publishers and English teachers often regard the English tests in NCEE as the benchmark in order to enhance students' ability to obtain high marks in the tests. In other words, what is going to be tested during the English tests has a profound backwash effect on what is going to be taught in the textbooks (Saville & Hawkey, 2004). Even though the textbooks have taken in some new elements of ELF, it is far from sufficient to apply ELF into the real teaching practice. As Jenkins (2006, p. 49) suggests, "it is changes in teaching which keep pace with changes in testing and not vice versa". Therefore, it could be argued that English tests exclusively with the native accents result in the textbooks with almost purely native accents except little Chinese accent. Moreover, it is very pivotal for the examination boards to have a deeper understanding of ELF and add more ELF elements in the influential English tests. It is strongly recommended that the examination boards should realise the international community of English (Jenkins, 2002) and design listening comprehension tests with various non-native accents, which subsequently would give rise to the demand for more non-native accents in teaching materials (Kopperoinen, 2011). However, examination boards should be very prudent not to create testing criteria differing only in name from their existing one; rather, they are supposed to truly realise the pluricentricity of English, the language rights and identities of various speakers in international communication (Jenkins, 2006). It could be strongly predictable that, with the development of ELF ideology, the future English teaching materials, teachers' awareness of and attitudes towards ELF would change step by step in accordance with the changes of English tests.

Conclusion

A conclusion can be drawn from the results of this study that Chinese students of English are primarily exposed to native accents of English at their senior high schools, which cannot make sure that they have a good understanding of non-native accents and conduct successful international communication. According to the ELF ideology, it can be pointed out that the present proportion of non-native accents in Chinese senior high school English textbooks is far from sufficient given the new role of English as an undeniable global language. However, it appears to be reasonable that the textbook publishers would not like to create books which do not accord with the English tests in NCEE. When considered from the backwash effect of testing, it can be claimed that English tests are where the change should begin; the status of ELF should be admitted and accepted there. Therefore, in order to change the current situation of English textbooks,

examination boards should take the initiative to change the English tests in NCEE. Nonetheless, the attitudes of textbook authors and teachers are also critical. Provided that they believe that the aims of English teaching and learning should be shaped in accordance with the ELF ideology, there would be more non-native accents on textbooks tapes.

Limitations to this study must be acknowledged. Due to the fact that three out of five textbooks and five recent English tests were selected as the samples to investigate, this small scale does not allow for findings to be generalised. It might be possible that Outer Circle accents and more Expanding Circle accents could be found in the textbooks and tests which have not been explored yet. Secondly, it was sometimes challenging to classify different tracks, as only some typical characteristics of one particular accent are discovered in some of the tracks, while RP and GA still dominate the majority of the texts. As mentioned above, these tracks were referred to as 'other variations'. Nevertheless, it is hoped that insights obtained from the findings of this study might open a door for more research on ELF in teaching materials and English testing in Chinese context. Furthermore, hopefully, this study could also contribute to raising English teachers' and examination boards' awareness of ELF, and exploring appropriate methods for well applying ELF ideology into the real teaching and testing process.

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Notes on Contributor

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Appendix 1

Unit 1 Friendship

Using Language

Reading and listening



- 1 Read the letter that Lisa wrote to Miss Wang of *Radio for Teenagers* and predict what Miss Wang will say. After listening, check and discuss her advice.

Dear Miss Wang,

I am having some trouble with my classmates at the moment. I'm **getting along** well with a boy in my class. We often do homework together and we enjoy helping each other. We have become really good friends. But other students have started gossiping. They say that this boy and I have **fallen in love**. This has made me angry. I don't want to end the friendship, but I hate others gossiping. What should I do?

Yours,
Lisa

- 2 Listen to the tape and try to spell the words as you hear their pronunciation. Then divide each of the sentences into several sense groups.

- 1 There is nothing wrong with you and this boy _____ friends and _____ together.
- 2 _____ your friendship with this boy would be a _____ thing to do.
- 3 Teenagers like to _____, and they often see something that isn't real.
- 4 My advice is to _____ your classmates. That way you will _____ them that you are more _____ than they are.

- 3 Listen to the tape again and use the exercise above to help you answer the following questions.

- 1 What does Miss Wang say about their friendship?
She says that _____.
- 2 Why doesn't she think that Lisa should end their friendship?
She thinks that _____.
- 3 How does she explain why Lisa's classmates gossip about their friendship?
She says that _____.
- 4 What is Miss Wang's advice?
She asks Lisa to _____.

Speaking

Do you agree with Miss Wang's advice? Discuss it in small groups. You may use the following expressions in your conversation.

AGREEING

I agree. Yes, I think so. So do I. Me too.
Exactly. No problem. Sure. Certainly.
Of course. All right. You're right/correct.
Good idea. I think that's a good idea.

DISAGREEING

I don't think so. Neither do I.
That's not right. Yes, but
I'm afraid not. No way. Of course not.
I'm sorry, but I don't agree. I disagree.

Appendix 2

Unit 4 Earthquakes

Using Language

Reading and speaking

- 1 Here is a letter of invitation. Read it carefully and imagine that you are the student who has been invited to give a speech.

Office of the City Government
Tangshan, Hebei
China

July 5, 200 _____

Dear _____,

Congratulations! We are pleased to tell you that you have won the high school speaking competition about new Tangshan. Your speech was heard by a group of five **judges**, all of whom agreed that it was the best one this year. Your parents and your school should be very proud of you!

Next month the city will open a new park to honour those who died in the terrible disaster. The park will also honour those who helped the survivors. Our office would like to have you speak to the park visitors on July 28 at 11:00 am. As you know, this is the day the quake happened thirty-_____ years ago.

We invite you to bring your family and friends on that special day.

Sincerely,
Zhang Sha
Zhang Sha

- 2 Now in pairs prepare a short speech, in which you should:

- thank those who worked hard to rescue survivors and list some of the things the workers did to help them;
- thank those who worked hard to build a new city; (For example: they built new homes and offices in only seven years. The UN honoured them for their quick work.)
- thank the visitors for listening to your speech.

I would like to **express** my thanks to ... who ...

Here, I wish to express my thanks for the great efforts ...

I'd also like to thank ...

No words are strong enough to express our ...

It was terrible when ...

It seemed as if ...

I remember ...

I felt ...

Not long after that ...

Luckily, ...

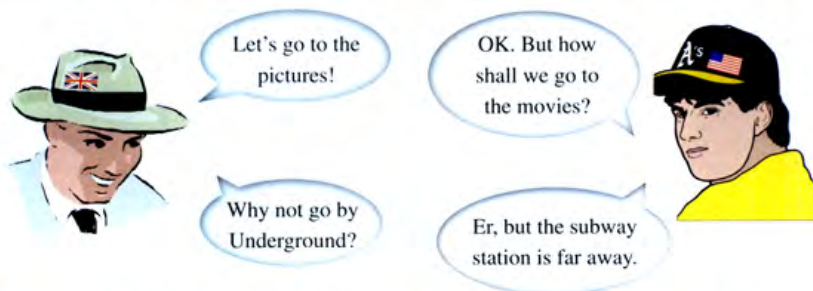
- * 3 Look at the stamps of new Tangshan and discuss in groups what had to be done to rebuild a city after an earthquake.



Unit 2 English around the world

Warming Up

1 Do you know that there is more than one kind of English? In some important ways they are very different from one another. They are called world Englishes. Look at these examples. Can you understand the different kinds of English these people are using?



2 Guess which of the following words is British English and which is American English.

elevator / lift in a team / on a team rubber / eraser petrol / gas

Pre-reading

- 1 With your partner, list the countries that use English as an **official** language.
- 2 Which country do you think has the most English learners?
- 3 Look at the title of the following passage and guess what it is about. Then read it quickly and see if you are right.

Reading



THE ROAD TO MODERN ENGLISH

At the end of the 16th century, about five to seven million people spoke English. Nearly all of them lived in England. Later in the next century, people from England made **voyages** to conquer other parts of the world and **because of** that, English began to be spoken in many other countries. Today, more people speak English as their first, second or a foreign language than ever before.

Appendix 4

Unit 2 English around the world

Listening

- 1 Before you listen, look at the picture below and read the exercises. In doing so, you can get some idea about the listening and predict the content. Discuss your ideas with your partner.
- 2 Imagine that you are in Houston, Texas, a city in the American South. This is an example of the local dialect. Listen and read through the text and take note of the **accent** and intonation.

Hey, y'all, this here is Buford. I come from a big oil town in Texas. Now, y'all need to understand that we ain't really a state, but a whole 'nother country. Now let me tell ya a story 'bout when I was just a pup. One hot summer's day I was swimmin' with my cousins Little Lester and Big Billy Bob. We was jumpin' in the water and feelin' good. Then along comes this catfish 'bout the size of a house. Well, alright, maybe a little smaller than that. Little Lester starts to thinkin' it's goin' to eat him sure 'nough. Man, you shoulda seen him! He got outta the water fast as **lightning** and climbed up a tree. Big Billy Bob and I just laughed and laughed. To this day, Lester won't go near that place.



- 3 Listen again and put these sentences in the right sequence.

- _____ Lester climbed a tree.
- _____ Buford, Billy Bob and Lester went swimming.
- _____ Lester thought the catfish would eat him.
- _____ Buford and Billy Bob laughed.
- _____ Lester saw a catfish.
- _____ Now Lester is too afraid to visit the place.

- 4 Answer the following questions after listening.

- 1 What does Buford think of Texas? How do you know?

- 2 How large was the catfish?

- 3 Why did Lester get out of the water so quickly?

- 4 Why did Buford and Big Billy Bob laugh?
