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

Pramod Kumar Sah
University of British Columbia

Anu Upadhaya
Tribhuvan University

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 nineteen 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, 3003). 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.

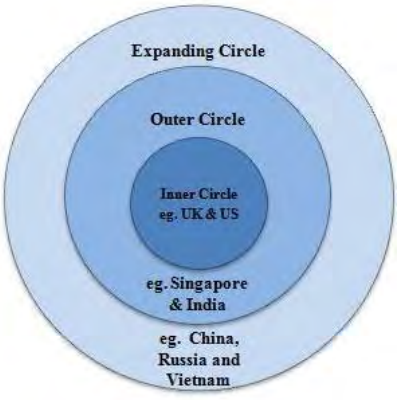

Figure 1. Kachru's (1992) three circles model of World Englishes

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 exists 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 week 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^h æn] 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 Kasmiries. 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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Notes on Contributors

Pramod Kumar Sah is a Ph.D student at the Department of Education, University of British Coulumbia, Canada. He holds an MA in TESOL with Applied Linguistics from the University of Central Lancashire, UK, and an M. Ed in ELT from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. His major research areas include multilingualism, language and literacy, World Englishes, use of mother-tongue in L2 acquisition, and corpus-based language teaching. Email: pramodtesol@gmail.com

Anu Upadhaya is a lecturer in the Department of English Education at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. She holds an MPhil in English Language Education

from The English and Foreign Languages University, India and an M.Ed. from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Email: upadhayayaaniva2012@gmail.com