

# English as World Language: Difficulties and Consequences in Selecting Educational Resources

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## **Abstract**

*The English language has expanded far throughout the world. English is thought to be the best contender to becoming a universal language. Most people use it as their native tongue, and more than 70 nations use it as an official language. It also enjoys a privileged position as a foreign language taught in schools in more than 600 countries (Crystal 1997). However, there were several ramifications for English language teachers as the language gradually became a lingua franca. The particular requirements of their international pupils were mostly disregarded by TESOL professors, who exhibited a strong ethnocentrism. The methods and tools they chose to employ were organically derived from the nations where English was spoken as a "native" language. As a result, students felt disoriented and stagnant, were unable to comprehend their otherness, and were not sufficiently equipped to utilize the language for cross-cultural communication. In order to increase learners' cross-cultural awareness and knowledge, this study looks at a number of recommendations that have been presented for teaching EIL and culture as difference as an essential component of social interaction.*

**Keywords:** *World language, Cultural awareness, teaching resources.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The English language has expanded far throughout the world. English is thought to be the best contender to becoming a universal language. Most people use it as their native tongue, and more than 70 nations use it as an official language. It also enjoys a privileged position as a foreign language taught in schools in more than 600 countries (Crystal 1997). However, there were several ramifications for English language teachers as the language gradually became a lingua franca. The particular requirements of their international pupils were mostly disregarded by TESOL professors, who exhibited a strong ethnocentrism. Those who spoke English as a "native" language favored using an approach and materials that naturally came from those nations. As a result, pupils were unable to comprehend their otherness, felt alienated, and stagnated. They were also not sufficiently equipped to utilize the language for cross-cultural communication.

In order to increase learners' cross-cultural awareness and comprehension, this research aims to analyze a number of recommendations that have been presented for teaching EIL and culture as difference as an essential component of social interaction. This paper focuses on two main topics: first, the issues and recommendations regarding the pedagogy and materials that should be used to teach EIL; second, the current debate about giving native speakers too much credit; and third, how to help students understand the otherness of the target culture and its various dialects, not just as a product (output of cultural facts) but also as a process that determines beliefs, actions, and ways of thinking. Finally, this article will show how these suggestions may be implemented and what consequences they can have in the Greek setting.

## **II. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS**

Smith (1976) maintained that students do not have to absorb the cultural norms of native speakers; rather, the purpose of learning a language is to let them express their thoughts and culture to others. Kachru (1992) expanded on Smith's viewpoint by arguing that English should be separated from its colonial background and not always associated with "westernization." In a similar vein, Widdowson (1994) notes that it is time to take control of English by utilizing it for certain objectives and adapting it to suit our need. This division of English culture affects education in a number of ways: Native culture should not be the exclusive source of the resources. By incorporating local cultural settings, ELT materials should provide learners with the language and knowledge necessary to effectively explain their culture to others. Additionally, as Roux (1999) argues that no communication can be culturally neutral, Alptenkin (2002) contends that the only way to avoid presenting

English meaning in fragmented and "trivialized ways"—where communicative functions are conveyed as simple speech acts realized through specific structures and portray an idealized image of the English culture—is to proceed with instructional materials that emphasize diversity both within and across cultures. According to EIL Alptekin, teachers should use educational resources and activities that are based in both local and global settings that are relatable to the lives of language learners. Cook (1999) asserts that materials just need to show that L2 users are real people who serve as examples for pupils to follow. Furthermore, Seidhofer (2002) asserts that in order to help pupils transition across cultures, instructors themselves may and need to engage in activities that go a bit beyond what is outlined in textbooks. According to Dendrinos (2001), English instruction should also provide pupils the freedom to switch between their first and second languages. According to her, students will need to serve as translators and report language information they have processed from one language to another, rather than being monolingual consumers of the newly learned language. Therefore, instead of emphasizing artificially monolingual communication environments, she recommends that language courses must inevitably create the circumstances for them to develop new abilities.

To help students develop a critical knowledge of the conflicting communicative practices, teachers should also challenge the cultural message of the textbooks, as Canagarajah (1999) advocates. Therefore, instructors should disclose and critically examine any cultural tensions that occur in the classroom. Instead of merely correcting the cultural question by giving the correct response, teachers should investigate, expound, and assist students in becoming more sociolinguistically competent. Jiang (1999) argues that instructors may teach language and culture at the same time even if they use "cultural bumps," which are situations in which a person from one culture finds himself in an unfamiliar or unpleasant scenario while engaging with persons from another culture. Additionally, McKay (2002) asserts that teachers should acknowledge the need of incorporating culturally relevant issues into their English lessons. Additionally, teachers must to identify and advocate for an approach that fits the local educational environment. McKay extends this notion by arguing that the EIL teaching approach ought to permit the use of a pedagogy that is suitable for the local context. McKay contends that the technique should no longer be solely associated with nations where English is the primary language, much like the setting of EIL materials. Every nation should take responsibility for its language and choose literature and teaching strategies that fit the local environment. She cites the example of Chile as a nation where this is effectively occurring, with professionals functioning locally while thinking "globally" (Kramsch and Sullivan 1996).

In order to empower students and offer them the chance to share their culture with other English speakers, McKay (2002) also suggests dedicating time and attention in the classroom to the local culture. Going a step further, Canagarajah (1999) proposes an EIL pedagogy. According to her, a context-sensitive and culture-specific method of teaching languages needs to be created. This method will help students deal with culture and clear up cultural misunderstandings while also allowing peripheral nations to conduct language instruction pertinent to their sociocultural needs. According to Canagarajah, teachers should encourage pupils to utilize language freely based on their needs rather than rotely repeating certain communication fragments. According to Canagarajah, this "critical pedagogy" enables students to be introspective, acquire a meta-cultural awareness, and adapt the new codes to their own requirements. This may even be accomplished by creating and utilizing hybrid texts in the classroom. The necessity to expose students to a wider variety of accents and dialects, as well as the endeavor to elevate non-native instructors to the rank of successful role models that students can connect to and emulate, is the second problem that emerged in EIL instruction and will be examined in this article.

Because so many people are learning English as a second or third language, English is happy to be an international language. According to Prodromou (1997), non-native English speakers communicate in English up to 80% of the time. Thus, native speakers' accents and dialects can no longer be associated with the English language. As a result, learners need to improve their comprehension of a wide variety of cultures and dialects. According to Modiano (1999), EIL teachers need to use extreme caution when instructing in order to avoid extending and advancing the forces of "linguistic imperialism." A teacher may instill in his students the idea that this variety and accent is better than others and that the other varieties are less important if he implicitly explains this to them, for instance, by presenting vocabulary based on one variety without giving them equivalents from other varieties. Pupils will believe that they should use this more prestigious and appropriate registration. According to Modiano (1999), this will lead to the establishment of bias and a declining attitude toward the other often peripheral kinds. Students will also be forced to adopt a "nation centered" perspective rather than an international one on the language. Kachru (1986) states that one way to safeguard and promote international communication is to promote more indigenized varieties of English as a socially acceptable means of communication.

According to Llurda (2004), people use language to declare their membership in certain ways. Promoting an attitude and a teaching that just emphasizes one variation is consequently unnatural. In this manner, students won't have to conceal their nationality, and their foreign accents won't be viewed as a sign of failure. According to Trifonovitch (1981), it is crucial to help our pupils become proficient interlocutors and increase their "linguistic frequency." According to Trifonovitch, teachers should educate their pupils how to communicate rather than just "talk." According to him, this may be accomplished by introducing students to a wide variety of accents via listening resources that are specifically created and based on non-standard English dialects. Students will be able to learn about many cultures and develop methods for asking questions and building relationships if they are able to recognize and accept diverse variations, especially those from the outside circle. Trifonovitch (1981) broadens his perspective by proposing an examination system independent of the culture of English-speaking nations. He envisions an examination system that, based on the needs and interests of the pupils, takes into account the many values in various social circumstances. By doing this, children will learn to understand and tolerate a variety of accents and dialects and will become aware that English is a universal language (Canagarajah 1999).

Furthermore, according to Medgyes (1994), teaching a variety of styles lessens the risk of dominance or "ostracism" by the academic community, which many students from the expanding circle confront. Instead of accepting the normal values the new language symbolizes with all the negative representations it offers, peripheral learners will have the opportunity to negotiate with English to achieve positive identities and use language in their own terms. The "context and the speaker" strategies that Canarajah (1999) suggests (i.e., employing resources and techniques that the students have approved of and using student-generated language) will instill equality and democratic values in discourse communities. He does, however, highlight the shortcomings of this approach, arguing that "learning about their dialect may make students feel good but it is not sufficient to challenge the power of the dominant codes the dominance is sustained by economic and political relations."

McKay and a number other linguists encourage the choice of a suitable approach, argue for the necessity of appreciating the issues included in textbooks, and, above all, acknowledge the usefulness of non-native English speaker instructors (NNEST). In actuality, Carddol (1999) predicts that NNEST would eventually overtake native teachers. Because of this, Cook (1999) makes the case that we should not compare native and non-native instructors and that we should go beyond the native teacher paradigm. NNEST does offer a number of drawbacks, as Medgyes (1994) notes. They are not as good listeners or writers as native speakers, and they have a language deficiency. Even though native speakers may have an edge in grammar, non-native speakers most frequently struggle with vocabulary and pronunciation. Even so, their knowledge of grammar is still "bookish" because they were taught using grammar books that offer a standardized, highly controlled perspective of the language as a system with rigid rules. They can only lessen the issue by working hard and being exposed to the language, but as Medgyes (1994) notes, the issue cannot be fully resolved. Furthermore, as study by Medgyes (1994) demonstrates, non-native instructors are destined to take on roles during instruction because, despite their limited knowledge of English-speaking nations' cultures, they must appear to be well-informed in every way. According to Medgyes (1994), this can lead to worry and a "inferiority complex," which can even be harmful to the pupils because a stressed-out teacher is more likely to pass on his own nervousness to his students.

However, the non-native speaker teaching paradigm is being promoted more and more these days. Many EIL researchers concentrate on the benefits of the NNEST in their study. In this regard, Cook (1999) argues that bilingual educators can serve as role models for successful language acquisition as they offer a more realistic example for students to follow. When a native speaker reaches a level of excellence that surpasses his pupils' demands, learners may feel overpowered. Cook, on the other hand, is in favor of non-native instructors being as knowledgeable about English culture as their native colleagues through travel and the proliferation of other channels. Most significantly, Cook (1999) and Medgyes (1994) assert that the primary benefit of NESTs is their ability to effectively prevent and anticipate students' difficulties because they have experienced the process of becoming bilingual and expressing themselves in a different language. Additionally, by aligning the students' potential with societal expectations, they may be used to help them create more achievable objectives (Medgyes 1994). As a result, they are naturally skilled at helping pupils develop their language skills. According to McKay (2002), a NEST's strength is his knowledge with the local way of life. It has a thorough understanding of the requirements of its pupils and can adapt any new teaching strategies accordingly. Lastly, NESTs may utilize LI to resolve any issues that may arise throughout the teaching process and be more sympathetic to their wants and issues, as suggested by McKay (1999).

### **Applications and Implications in the Greek Context**

I will briefly explore the historical background of language instruction in Greece as well as the linguistic mindset of the populace before going into how the concepts above may be implemented in the Greek setting and potential challenges. According to Kachru (1985), Greece is a member of the expanding circles, which indicates that English is a foreign language chosen by the Greek government for students in the Greek setting. According to Triadis and Vasiliou (1972), the environment and history of the country—a mountainous region with limited resources and a lengthy Ottoman occupation—are compatible with the Greek character and culture. According to Triadis and Vasiliou (1972), they appear to be highly amiable and willing to make any sacrifice for friends and family, yet they are wary of outsiders and fiercely competitive with the outside group. Additionally, because of American meddling in ethnic matters, the English language was negatively associated and "marked."

However, the Greek population, which has always spoken only Greek, has seen two significant shifts in the last 20 years: the country's 1981 entry into the European Union and the large-scale immigration wave that began in the late 1980s. People's views on EIL issues were impacted by these developments, particularly teachers. Greek language instruction became part of the national curriculum as they began to acknowledge English as a lingua franca. English is currently taught to students starting in the third grade. Although Sifakis and Sougari (2003) assert that recent curricula in state schools refer to the need to integrate the international character of English, it is unclear to what extent teachers are prepared to implement EIL practices in their classrooms. Like in other expanding circle countries, English taught in Greece is derived from the inner circle varieties, primarily British and American English (although as mentioned above, American English is less popular due to the country's history).

Regarding the question of whether to hire native speakers or non-native speakers, I think that while some educators are in favor of hiring native teachers and favoring materials that are rooted in English-speaking cultural traditions (Oxford and Cambridge publications are highly preferred), they also express a lack of confidence in non-native teachers by claiming that they are private and that hiring native teachers increases student enrollment, institute prestige, and appeal to students. However, both native and non-native instructors in public schools are required to complete an exam that assesses their language skills and understanding of ELT methods. Therefore, regardless of a teacher's native or non-native proficiency, only qualified teachers are hired. Additionally, Greek publishing businesses with combined Greek and British or American roots produce a good number of course books each year. Additionally, a lot of teachers attempt to create a locally based pedagogy, modify the ELT methodology, and alter the course book setting after realizing that some elements of the approach are ineffective in the Greek context.

However, the situation becomes more complex when we take into account the problem of teaching various English dialects and accents, particularly those from outer-ring nations. One may understand this response against non-standard English by taking into account Greece's enormous immigrant population. According to Dimakos and Tassiopoulou (2003), the current state of high unemployment and growing economic insecurity has led to the general unfavorable perception of immigrants and the general lack of interest shown by Greeks in the sociocultural identity and communication practices of foreigners. According to Sifaki and Sougari (2003), Greeks believe that the languages of immigrants pose a danger to the integrity of their own language. As a result, they maintain strong opinions on the significance of inner circle standards for the global language. Teachers themselves felt that they should be able to pronounce English correctly, according to Sifakis and Sougari's (2003) study on the extent to which Greeks have conventional ideas concerning inner circle variations. Only a very tiny percentage of instructors believed that an intellectual accent was a suitable model, whereas the majority said that local accents were significant as models. Teachers who participated in the study, however, appeared to think that none of the guidelines or criteria was essential for effective communication.

Furthermore, as Sifakis and Sougari contended, the popularity of the Ns proficiency examinations in Greece may have contributed to the perception among Greek instructors that a good accent is equivalent to a native speaker's accent. Many of the ideas included in the assignment's first section are already being implemented in Greece; however, they still need to be improved for better context, validity, and promotion. For example, two years ago, a new examination system called ELT was launched as an alternative to the Ns proficiency examinations. It was centered on the demands of students and local culture, but I believe it still needs more time to be refined and universally accepted. On the other hand, if educators understand what Timmis says, they have the right to speak their own dialect of English. The latest ideas about pronunciation and dialects will also be implemented, and we should concentrate on the elements of the language that are crucial for global communication.

### III. CONCLUSION

With reference to the Greek context, this article illustrated the necessity of teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds to successfully handle the foreign language, cultivate an awareness of a wider range of cultures, including their own, guarantee intelligibility among English speakers, and determine the potential benefits and applications of these in various contexts.

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