

Cultural awareness and intercultural awareness through English as a lingua franca: from research to classroom practice

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Outline

- Setting the context – Global Englishes and English as a lingua franca
- Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Awareness
- Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Awareness in practice
 - Language education policy
 - Teacher education
 - Classroom practice (ELT)
 - Text books
 - Teacher and student attitudes
 - Alternative approaches

Global Englishes

L1 speakers of English
328 million (ethnologue)

Non-native English speakers
Approx. 2 billion (Crystal, 2008)

Languages on the internet 2013

▶ English	28.6%
▶ Chinese	23.2%
▶ Spanish	7.9%
▶ Arabic	4.8%
▶ Portuguese	4.3%
▶ Japanese	3.9%

<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm>



English as a lingua franca (ELF)

- "English as it is used as a contact language among speakers from different first languages." (Jenkins, 2014: 44)
- A functional definition of ELF as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice” (and often only option) (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7)
- Both definitions include NES but they are the minority and are “less likely to constitute the linguistic reference norm” (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7)

ELF



Cultural awareness

- Cultural awareness (CA) - Byram's (1997: 63–64) 'critical cultural awareness' which forms the core of intercultural communicative competence (ICC).
- In ICC focus on competence needed for communication between participants with different linguaculture backgrounds. Critical cultural awareness is crucial to ICC in providing the foundation for evaluating one's own and other's 'perspectives, practices and products' (Byram 1997: 63).
- Critical cultural awareness and other formulations of cultural awareness are often presented as a key feature of intercultural competence or as a less technical, more holistic synonym of it (Risager 2004).

CA and ICA (Intercultural awareness)

- CA commonly conceived in relation to intercultural communication between defined cultural groupings, typically at the national level. For example it is ‘an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other *cultures and countries*.’ (Byram 1997: 101, my italics)
- In communication through ELF language, cultures and countries are often *not* correlated a priori. There is no ‘target culture’. Language users cannot be familiar with the ‘perspectives, practices and products’ of all the potential interlocutors’ different cultures and countries.

- *Intercultural awareness is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based communicative forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in communication. (Baker 2011; 2012)*

ICA focuses on the INTER or TRANS cultural dimension where there is no clear language- culture- nation correlation.

- A move away from cross-cultural comparisons.
- Cultural differences, at a range of levels/scales (not only national).
- Does not make a priori assumptions about cultural difference.
- Importance of emergence and complexity.

An example -Cos Play

Phillip (French/Belgian), Nami (Thai) – Conversation in a café in Bangkok

- Phillip: oh ah just when I was waiting for you right there are like outside there is like this podium and girls dancing singing
- NAMI: where outside of MBK it's a cos play right
- P: I don't think so
- N: Japanese cos play
- P: I don't think so
- N: oh it's not (cos play)
- P: no it isn't cause my friend my student would be there they're are crazy about cos play
- N: yes, yeah my roommate too



(from Baker, 2009)

CA and ICA in practice

- The ‘cultural dimension’ in language education has become mainstream in language theory and policy and to a lesser extent in practice over recent decades.
 - Zhu (2014: 4) - language teaching and learning is often now perceived as an *inevitably* intercultural experience in which language learners learn about other cultures and peoples.
 - Liddicoat and Scarino “language learning is fundamentally engagement in intercultural communication” (2013: 6).
- Nonetheless, influence on and ‘uptake’ in classroom practice is less clear (Sercu et al. 2005; Young & Sachdev 2011; Luk 2012; Driscoll, Earl and Cable 2013)

CA and ICA in language education policy

- In Europe CEFR, makes reference to the intercultural and cultural aspects of language learning including drawing on the work of Byram (e.g. Beacco et al. 2010).
- The ‘Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century’ in the US makes extensive references to culture, the relationship between culture and language and communities (Glisan 2012)
- Also in government reports in other Anglophone settings such as Australia (Scarino & Liddicoat 2009) and New Zealand (Newton et al. 2009).
- In Asia – In Thailand Wongsatorn, et al. (2003) claim that culture forms one of the four strands of the national curriculum. In China cultural awareness is part of the National Education Curriculum for languages (Liu, personal communication).

CA and ICA in language education policy

- But...
- CEFR - 'Can sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker.' (Council of Europe 2001: 122)
- NEC (China) 'English language has different accents, such as British accent, American accent. In language teaching, in order to develop students' communicative competence, teachers should first help students to basically master one accent and then appropriately provide students with more exposure to different accents.' (Liu, personal communication, translated from MOE, 2011, p45).

CA and ICA in teacher education

- Growing body of empirical research into intercultural education in teacher education and increased linguistic and intercultural awareness (e.g. Kumaravadivelu 2008; Feng et al 2009; Dewey 2012).
- Intercultural communication and Global Englishes are part of many M-level language education programmes around the world.
- Cambridge ESOL CELTA and DELTA awards have added World Englishes, Global Englishes, and English as a lingua franca, with the corresponding increase in linguacultural diversity, to its syllabus specifications.

CA and ICA in teacher education

- But...
 - “in spite of claims they may have made about their aims and objectives, many approaches to language education have effectively marginalized culture and the intercultural by focusing solely on the linguistic system and the use of materials that are sanitized of cultural complexity.” (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013: 47).
 - Dewey (2012; 2015) likewise questions the extent to which teacher education has moved beyond narrow linguistic model of competence – particularly in reference to CELTA and DELTA.
 - Intercultural issues are frequently relegated to a ‘fifth skill’ (e.g. Tomalin 2008 on BC ELT website).

CA and ICA in classroom practice: Textbooks

- Analysis of representations of culture in text books -restricted or essentialist images of cultures (Cortazzi & Jin 1999; Gray 2010; Vettorel 2010).
- Signs of change
 - Global (Clanfield 2010) – English as Global Language
 - English Unlimited (Doff 2011) – emphasises importance of intercultural competence



CA and ICA in classroom practice: Textbooks

- But...
 - ‘Global’ still has an underlying Anglophone focus e.g. in discussing literature written in English, the text still focuses on the Anglophone world rather than looking at texts or literature produced by non-native speakers/writers
 - ‘English Unlimited’ – Culture is a ‘fifth skill’ and CEFR is ‘at the book’s core’

CA and ICA in classroom practice: attitudes

- Changing attitudes – growing evidence of an increased awareness of intercultural communication and ELF amongst teachers and students (e.g. Jenkins 2007; Phan 2008; Sifakis and Fay 2011; Csizér and Kontra 2012)
- Students in particular seem to view an international community and intercultural communication as a strong goal and motivation in English language teaching (e.g. Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér 2011)
- But...
 - Anglophone, native speaker models and cultures still dominates and are seen as the most prestigious.

CA and ICA in classroom practice: alternative approaches – Global Englishes in ELT

- Galloway (2013) - a programme in Global Englishes for Japanese university students incorporating elements of World Englishes and ELF.
 - highlighted the diverse socio-cultural contexts in which English is used.
 - Integrated elements of CA and ICA into the programme.
 - Students generally expressed positive attitudes towards a variety of Englishes and had developed a better understanding of English in intercultural communication.
 - However, for many of the students Anglophone varieties of English remained the most prestigious.

Global Englishes in ELT

- Baker (2012) - a course in Global Englishes and ICA for Thai university students.
 - This course took a perspective that examined local (Thai), regional (Asian) and global uses of English and the diverse socio-cultural contexts in which this occurred.
 - It also incorporated elements of ICA, particularly in presenting links between culture and language that were complex and dynamic going beyond national understandings of culture.
 - Again, this research demonstrated the feasibility of such an approach and both teachers and students generally reported positive attitudes towards the course.
 - However, Anglophone varieties of English were still regarded in higher prestige by some students.
 - English and ICA frequently associated with ‘many countries and cultures’ rather than fluid and emergent relationships.

Global Englishes in ELT

- Hino and Oda (2015) - a programme developed over a number of years in which students in a Japanese university explored English language news sources from around the world (Asia, Africa and Anglophone settings).
 - Through such a range of news sources students were exposed to many diverse uses of English and also cultural diversity expressed through English.
 - Hino and Oda report that the programme was crucial in developing intercultural awareness among the students and fostering a sense of identity as members of an international community of English users.
 - Perhaps most significantly was the very positive reception the programme has had among all levels of the university where it was undertaken and it has received multiple awards.

Conclusions

- Consensus (in theory at least) that language learning is an intercultural process.
- CA and more recently ICA have been an essential part of this in outlining the types of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for successful intercultural communication.
- Evidence of increasingly diverse views of culture and language and the need for CA and ICA emerging from teacher education, language education policy and ELT materials.
- Still a focus on a simplified, overly linguistic view of communication and superficial awareness of growing role of English as a global language.
- Concerns remain about the danger of essentialism and othering in overly simplistic approaches to dealing with other cultures and intercultural communication.

And finally...

Understanding language MOOC – Attitudes to Global Englishes/ELF

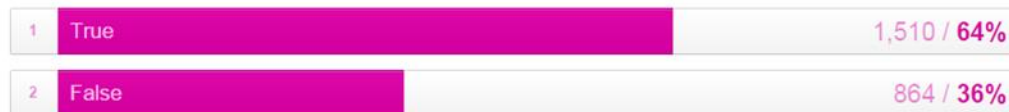
Learners of English only want to learn native speaker English.

2374 out of 2374 people answered this question



English norms in international communication should be decided by the majority of those who use it, not only by native English speakers.

2374 out of 2374 people answered this question



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Thank you!

Any questions?

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