

English as a Lingua Franca: Recent developments in ELF research and their pedagogical implications¹

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Abstract: The current state of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) used in communication between nonnative speakers of English seems to require a change in the way English is taught and learned. However, English has still been taught and learned as a foreign language as if it were mainly used in communication with its NSs. This article attempts to review some of the recent advances in ELF research and then to draw their pedagogical implications.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), interlanguage theory, ELF core, accommodation skills

1 Introduction

In recent years, the term ‘English as a Lingua Franca,’ or ELF, has been increasingly used as a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages (L1s) (Jenkins 2006b, 2006c, and 2007; Seidlhofer 2001, 2004, 2005a, and 2005b, for example). Lingua franca is “a shared language of communication used between people whose main languages are different.”²

What is distinctive about ELF is that, in most cases, it is a ‘contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native language nor a common culture. Defined in this way, ELF is part of the more general phenomena of ‘English as an International Language’ or ‘World Englishes’ (WEs).

No one knows exactly how many people speak or use English on the earth, partly because it is very difficult, if not impossible, to define ‘English speakers’ or ‘English users.’

How good should one’s English be if one can be regarded as an English speaker or user?

All you can do, therefore, is to estimate. Even if you use a conservative estimate by Strevens (1982) of the 800 million users of English, about 56 percent are nonnative users with 350 million native speakers (NSs) and 450 million nonnative speakers (NNSs).

The optimistic figure by Crystal (1985) of 2 billion English users increases this percentage significantly. 1.65 billion NNSs account for as much as 83 percent of all English users.

Whether you are conservative or optimistic, the important fact about the current state of English is that NNSs of English significantly outnumber its NSs.

A vast number of NNSs routinely interact with other NNSs, in which cases, English is used as a lingua franca. These ELF speakers are not learners of English but users of the language in their daily lives for a range of purposes in a variety of social settings.

2 Spread of English

The spread of English has been captured by Kachru (1992) as taking place in three stages or circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle.

The Inner Circle refers to the traditional bases of English, where it is the primary language. Included in this circle are the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. According to Kachru (1992), the varieties of English used in this circle are 'norm-providing': they provide people outside of the Inner Circle with standards or norms of the language they learn and use.

The Outer Circle involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in nonnative settings that have passed through extended periods of colonization by members of the Inner Circle. There, the language has become part of a country's institutions (therefore, the variety is called 'institutionalized').

India, Singapore, and over fifty other countries are included in this circle. The varieties used here are what Kachru (1992) calls 'norm-developing'. They have developed their own norms. English performs important internal roles in the daily lives of large numbers of bilingual and multilingual speakers.

The Expanding Circle includes those nations which acknowledge the importance of English as an international language. Historically, they do not belong to the group of countries which were colonized by members of the Inner Circle, and English does not have any special intra-national status or function. In other words, the language is not institutionalized. They constitute the context in which English has been traditionally taught as a foreign language as the most useful vehicle of international communication. These are, in Kachru (1992)'s terms, 'norm-dependent' varieties, which are dependent on the norms of the Inner Circle varieties.

One result of such an amazing spread of English is that many researchers have begun to talk of 'Englishes' or 'World Englishes' in the plural rather than 'English' in the singular, recognizing the fact that the language now has

a growing number of varieties, not only two global varieties, British and American English.

This view of English recognizes that local linguistic and cultural influences have affected the way English is spoken in different countries around the world: they have affected pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, among other aspects of the language.

Still more importantly, this view accepts that these influences have led and are continuing to lead to the emergence of a range of English varieties which differ from standard NS English. The logical extension of this view is that there seems to be no good reason to continue to respect and comply with NS standards or norms of English.

English now has multicultural identities, both formally and functionally. That is the sociolinguistic reality of English. Then, why is this sociolinguistic reality of English not fully recognized by those involved in English language teaching?

The answer to this question is rather complex. It involves issues of attitude, history and economics, among other things. But one thing is certain: these attitudes are nurtured by several false assumptions about the users and uses of English across cultures.

3 Six fallacies

Let us take a brief look at each one of the six fallacies about the users and uses of English Kachru (1992: 357-359) has identified.

Fallacy 1: That in the Outer and Expanding Circles, English is essentially learned to interact with native speakers of the language.

This is only partially true. The reality is, as we have already seen, that English has become the main vehicle for interaction among its nonnative users.

In such interactions, British English or American English is not relevant. They are even perceived as inappropriate, partly because they are often not as intelligible for NNSs as many of the ELF varieties, as we will see later.

Fallacy 2: That English is necessarily learned as a tool to understand and teach American or British cultural values.

This is again true only in a very limited sense. Although it is true that you could teach some cultural elements through English, in many regions in the Outer Circle, English is used as an important tool to impart local traditions and cultural values rather than as a tool to understand and teach British or American culture and cultural values.

In addition, there is no good reason to suppose that the study of British or American English and/or culture will promote international understanding. There is no good reason either to suppose that ‘integrative motivation,’ i.e., one that involves admiration for NSs and a desire to become a member of their culture, may not be the ideal motivation for success in English as a lingua franca.

Fallacy 3: That the goal of learning and teaching English is to adopt the native models of English.

This claim has no empirical validity. In the Outer Circle, the local model and the educated varieties of such models have always been used in the classroom. Even in the Expanding Circle, many people are learning English to communicate with other NNSs from a variety of L1 backgrounds.

Fallacy 4: That the international varieties of English are essentially “interlanguage” striving to achieve “native-like” character.

This assumption does not apply to varieties of English in the Outer Circle. As we will see later when taking a look at interlanguage theory, varieties in the Outer Circle are not deficient varieties fossilized in the middle and the people in the circle are not striving to identify with NSs of the language.

Fallacy 5: That native speakers of English as teachers and material developers provide a serious input in the global teaching of English.

Actually, NSs do not play a significant role in the global spread and teaching of English. English has been taught predominantly by nonnative teachers and many textbook materials have been written by nonnative material developers.

Fallacy 6: That the diversity and variation in English is necessarily an indicator of linguistic decay.

This fallacy has resulted in the position that deviation at any level from the native speaker norms is an error. This view ignores the appropriateness of local varieties of English, which do differ from the native speaker norms but function perfectly in their sociolinguistic contexts.

Therefore, variation in English should not be taken as linguistic decay but as linguistic innovation or revolution.

4 Advances in ELF research

Research into WEs and ELF began around 1990 and it is still in its infancy. However, a substantial bulk of research has been completed or under way, helping to correct the false assumptions made by many people.

Recent advances in ELF research can be neatly categorized as follows:

- 1 Debate over standards,
- 2 Challenges to interlanguage theory,
- 3 Challenges to linguistic imperialism,
- 4 Description of WEs/ELF, and
- 5 Identification of the ELF core.

Let me go into each one of these developments in more detail.

4.1 Debate over standards

In 1991, Kachru (1991) responded to Quirk (1990) in a disagreement that became known later as the *English Today* debate, since their papers appeared in the journal named *English Today*.

Their opposing positions were labeled by

the two scholars themselves: Kachru (1991) referred to Quirk's position as *deficit linguistics*, while Quirk (1990) referred to Kachru's position as *liberation linguistics*.

Quirk's position is that nonnative Englishes are inadequately learnt versions of correct native English forms and therefore not valid as teaching models. In other words, he regards nonnative English as 'deficit' and takes a monocentric view of English: he insists that English should have only one center in terms of standards or norms.

On the other hand, Kachru regards nonnative Englishes not as deficit but as 'difference,' allowing more than one center. Thus, his position is called a pluricentric view of English, in contrast with Quirk's monocentric view of English. Kachru has 'liberated' NNSs from NS norms. That is why he is referred to as a liberation linguist.

An ELF approach should be a pluricentric one which recognizes that, while speakers of English around the world need a sufficient amount of the language in common to enable them to communicate with each other, they are still entitled to use different English varieties which project their identities and protect their language rights in international communication.

Kachru argues that Quirk's position or view of English is based on the false assumptions or fallacies we have mentioned before.

In addition, regarding the ownership of English, Widdowson (1994) has declared that ownership has shifted from the center (= the Inner Circle countries) to the periphery (= the Outer and Expanding Circle countries), that is, the owners of English have shifted from its NSs to NNSs. Therefore, NSs are not in a position to force their own standards or norms to NNSs.

Learners are present and future members of an international community consisting largely of NNSs like themselves and are entitled to/have every right to transform their linguistic world or language rather than merely to conform to the NS version presented to them.

In other words, NNSs can be the *subject of* language innovations rather than being *subject*

to NS norms.

4.2 Challenges to interlanguage theory

Many researchers involved in WEs and ELF have challenged the concept of interlanguage, which has been central to traditional second language acquisition research, and English language teaching for that matter.

But, before taking a critical look at interlanguage theory or the concept of interlanguage, it may be instructive to explain what interlanguage theory is, in the first place.

According to Selinker (1972), a second language (L2) speaker's competence lies at some point on an interlanguage continuum between their L1 and their L2. Any differences between their output and standard British or American English are to be regarded as errors, caused mainly by L1 interference or negative transfer from L1.

Thus, unless the L2 has been acquired to a native-like level, it will deviate in certain respects from the language spoken by its NSs. If the learners continue to improve, they will proceed along the continuum in the direction of NS competence.

But in many cases, learner language stops developing, presumably because of a decrease in motivation on the learners' part to be more like NSs once they have attained a certain level of communication ability and their errors become fixed. In other words, their language is fossilized.

The main arguments presented against interlanguage theory are that Outer Circle English speakers are not attempting to identify with Inner Circle speakers or to comply with the norms of the Inner Circle varieties of English (Jenkins 2006b).

In addition, a major problem with interlanguage theory and traditional second language acquisition research, which is dependent on interlanguage theory, is that they focus on language acquisition by individual learners and interlanguage error rather than acquisition by entire speech community and new varieties.

As long as they deal with language

acquisition by individual learners, they are likely to focus on errors. In contrast, if they deal with language acquisition by entire speech communities, they are more likely to focus on the emergence of new varieties of English.

The concept of interlanguage is identical with a deficit view of English, in which variation is perceived as deviation from NS norms and described in terms of errors or fossilization.

Large numbers of English language teaching professionals, including many involved in language teaching and testing, still appear to regard any difference from British or American NS standards as deficiencies, or as errors caused by L1 transfer rather than new varieties.

To sum up, difficulty of traditional second language acquisition researchers lies in the fact that they are not able to distinguish ELF from English as a Foreign Language (EFL). They still think of English as one foreign language. That seems to be the main problem.

There are several differences between EFL and ELF (Jenkins 2006c: 140).

1 EFL is English learned as part of the modern foreign languages for use in communication with NSs. This is the case when you learn Chinese in order to communicate with its NSs, namely Chinese people. That is fine as long as a language is learned as one of the modern foreign languages.

On the other hand, ELF is English learned as part of WEs for use in communication among NNSs.

2 EFL has a deficit perspective, explaining any deviance from NS norms as an error, which is caused by negative transfer, interference and fossilization. EFL uses these metaphors in an attempt to explain why learners fail to master the language.

On the other hand, ELF is supported by a difference perspective, perceiving deviance from NS norms as a difference or an innovation. ELF uses metaphors such as 'contact' and 'evolution' to explain why learners use the

language in the way they do.

There is vast amount of variation among NSs. Therefore, it seems unreasonable to expect NNSs to produce a more rigidly consistent kind of English than is typical or expected of NSs.

For example, 'there's five cars in my picture' or 'I've got less cars in my picture,' if noticed by an oral examiner, would be disapproved despite the fact that both 'there are' and 'fewer' plus plural count noun are rare in informal NS speech, and that these 'errors' generally pass unnoticed in NS spoken English.

Another example is that a learner in an ELT speaking exam would be rewarded for their knowledge of 'real English' if they were to say 'three teas' or 'two coffees' instead of 'three cups of tea' or 'two cups of coffee.' On the other hand, if they extended this use of uncountable nouns to 'wine' and said 'two wines' instead of 'two glasses of wine' they could be penalized for lack of competence with the countable/uncountable distinction.

As Lowenberg (2002) demonstrates, while NS and NNS innovations often start life as forms that are widely perceived as errors in the standard language, the NS 'error' gradually becomes accepted as a new standard form, whereas the NNS 'error' is likely to be categorized as such forever. This is sort of discrimination against NNSs based on their language status. That is not fair.

3 EFL is 'conformative' in that it attempts to conform to NS norms with a strong monolingual bias, which takes for granted the community in which only one language is usually used.

On the other hand, ELF is 'transformative' in that learners can transform their linguistic world, in which bilingualism is not an exception but the rule.

4 In EFL communication, code-switching and code-mixing are considered errors caused by interference from L1, while in ELF communication they are considered very important bilingual resources.

I do not always use English to

communicate with my native English speaker colleagues. I usually switch back and forth between English and Japanese, depending on the demands of contexts and on topics. In lingua franca communication, code-switching and code-mixing are seen as natural and entirely appropriate phenomena within the bilingual repertoire.

4.3 Challenges to linguistic imperialism

A third development can be seen in some researchers' challenges to linguistic imperialism. They have adopted a critical stance toward the spread of English, because it has made it possible for English to be overwhelmingly dominant like an empire, with its mega-power, controlling or wanting to control other languages.

According to Phillipson (1992), in linguistic imperialism, the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.

The critical linguists can be divided into anti-imperialists such as Phillipson, who would prefer English(es) not to be the most widely used world language and those (Canagarajah 1999, for example) whose concern is more with resisting the hegemony or greater control of NS standards.

These challenges to linguistic imperialism have not so far led to noticeable changes in English language teaching and teacher education policy. However, they have raised many teachers' and teacher educators' awareness of the extent to which the spread of English works in NSs' interests and sometimes makes NNSs feel less important or inferior.

4.4 Descriptions of WEs/ELF

A fourth development can be seen in the linguistic description of WEs and ELF at the level of phonology, vocabulary and syntax. Instead of describing individual WEs, Seidlhofer (2004) has focused on the vocabulary and grammar which seem to be

commonly used among ELF users without causing communication problems.

Her objective is to find out which items are used, by speakers of English from a wide range of L1s, systematically and frequently, but differently from NS use and without causing communication problems.

She argues that typical errors, such as the third person singular present tense -s marking in their verbs, appear to be generally unproblematic and no obstacle to communicative success, though most English teachers would consider them in urgent need of correction and that consequently often spend a great deal of time and effort for teaching them in their lessons

Seidlhofer has identified some salient features of ELF vocabulary and grammar which differ from NS usage but do not cause communication problems.

1 Non-use of the third-person present tense s
e.g. 'She look very sad.'

2 Interchangeable use of the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
e.g. 'a book who.../a person which ...'

3 Omission of the definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in NS English and insertion where they do not occur in NS English
e.g. 'White House'

4 Use of all-purpose question tag such as *isn't it?* instead of *shouldn't they?*
e.g. 'They should arrive soon, isn't it?'

5 Increasing redundancy by adding prepositions
e.g. 'discuss about...'

6 Pluralization of nouns which are considered uncountable in NS English
e.g. 'informations' 'advices'

7 Use of *that*-clauses instead of *to*-infinitive constructions
e.g. 'I want that we discuss about my

dissertation’

On the other hand, one of the main causes of communication breakdown that Seidlhofer’s research has identified is *unilateral idiomaticity*. This occurs when one person uses a NS idiomatic expression such as an idiom, phrasal verb, or metaphor, that the other person does not know.

In this respect, it is very interesting to note that, as Jenkins (2000: 159) argues, we cannot assume that ‘NS’ is the most intelligible and therefore that conformity to NS norms will result in greater intelligibility.

Ultimately, it is probably true to say that NSs of English are more intelligible than NNSs of English only to other NSs.

It should be stressed, however, that linguistic descriptions alone cannot, of course, determine what needs to be taught and learned for particular purposes and in particular settings.

4.5 Identification of the ELF core

Jenkins (2000) has gone one step further than simply describing the linguistic features of WEs and ELF and identifying features which do not cause communication problems. She has gone so far as to prescribe what teachers should prioritize in their lessons.

Building on earlier research in which listeners from a range of L1s were asked to rate the comprehensibility of speakers from different L1s, Jenkins (1998, 2000, and 2002) identifies a number of pronunciation features which appear to be crucial or core in safeguarding the intelligibility of pronunciation for nonnative listeners who do not share the speaker’s L1.

She also identifies the non-core items, which do not seem to interfere with communication. Thus, she distinguishes the features of English which tend to be crucial for international intelligibility and therefore need to be taught from the non-native features that tend not to cause misunderstandings and thus do not need to be a focus for those learners who intend to use English mainly in international settings.

She has found, for example, that being able to pronounce some sounds that are often regarded as ‘particularly English’ or unique to English but also particularly difficult: namely the sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are not necessary for international intelligibility.

Thus, Jenkins has found that ELF users can safely disregard native norms without any threat to intelligibility for the listeners in at least the following areas: weak forms, features of connected speech, word stress, stress-timed rhythm, and intonation.

Let me explain each one of these.

1 Weak forms

Weak forms, that is, the use of schwa instead of the full vowel sounds in words such as ‘to’ ‘from’ ‘of’ ‘was’ and ‘do.’

Weak forms are excluded from the core, because they are not helpful at the best and even harmful at the worst to intelligibility for ELF listeners.

2 Features of connected speech

Features of connected speech such as assimilation, elision and linking are not important or not helpful and even harmful to intelligibility

3 Word stress

Word stress rules are highly complex, containing a lot of exceptions. In addition, there is too much variation even among the inner circle varieties.

Some words such as ‘advertisement,’ for example, have optional stress patterns. You can place the primary stress either on any of the syllables: AD, VER, or TISE. You cannot simply teach word stress.

4 Stress-timed rhythm

English is said to be a typical stress-timed language in which there is a constant amount of time, on average, between two stressed syllables. When spoken faster, a stress-timed

language usually shortens, obscures, or drops vowels to carry more syllables between two stresses without changing its rhythm so much. That's where weak forms appear.

However, in ELF, stress-timed rhythm does not exist.

5 Pitch movement

Pitch movement is said to play a part in signaling the speaker's attitude and grammatical meaning, but it is difficult to assign attitudes or meanings to particular patterns of intonation and therefore it is very difficult to teach them.

On the other hand, her lingua franca core items include: most of the consonants sounds, aspiration, pronouncing a sound with giving off a breath after /p/, /t/ and /k/ fortis (voiceless) plosives, appropriate vowel length before fortis/lenis consonants, consonant clusters at the word-initial, word-medial positions, and nuclear stress.

1 All consonant sounds except voiceless and voiced dental fricatives (/θ/ and /ð/)

Some substitutions of the sounds (e.g., /dæt/ for /ðæt/ and /dis/ or /zis/ for /ðis/) are acceptable because they are intelligible in ELF.

In addition, British /t/ sound which occurs between two vowels instead of American intervocalic /r/ is recommended.

2 Aspiration after /p//t//k/

If the phonemes /p/, /t/, and /k/ are not aspirated, they are likely to be misheard as /b//d//g/ respectively because they sound like their voiced counterparts.

3 Appropriate vowel length before fortis and lenis consonants

For example, in 'feed,' in which the long vowel is followed by a lenis (voiced) consonant, the long vowel is not reduced. However, in 'feet,' in which the long vowel is followed by a fortis

(voiceless) consonant, the long vowel is reduced.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon has not been properly dealt with in many lessons.

4 Consonant clusters in word-initial and word-medial positions

Consonants should not be omitted in word-initial and word-medial positions while can be omitted without reducing intelligibility in some word-final positions.

For example, the word 'product' pronounced as /pʌdʌkt/ by dropping out the 'r' sound was not intelligible to NNSs, while the word pronounced as /purodakuto/ by adding vowels to the consonants was intelligible to them.

This may be different from what many teachers have been teaching to the students: adding vowels to the consonants will jeopardize intelligibility.

5 Maintenance of contrast between long and short vowels

6 Nuclear or tonic stress

Accurate use of nuclear stress is essential in ELF. By default, the nucleus falls on the last content word in the tone unit. But by moving the nucleus from the last content word to another word in the tone unit, you can convey extra meaning. This is called 'contrastive stress.' The primary stress is placed on the part of the sentence that is thought to be most important by the speaker.

4.6 Accommodation skills

In addition to training in the core items, learners need practice to develop their accommodation skills (Jenkins 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2007).

Accommodation is a major factor in all spoken interaction regardless of whether it involves NSs or NNSs. When speakers adjust their speech to make it more like that of an interlocutor, they are employing a strategy

known as ‘convergence.’ One of the motivations for convergence is communicative efficiency, i.e., the desire to be easily understood. In communication between speakers from different L1s, the communicative efficiency motivation is thought to be particularly salient.

There are two types of accommodation skills: productive and receptive, though they are, in fact, two sides of the same coin.

On the one hand, at the productive level, speakers need to develop the ability to adjust their pronunciation according to the communicative situation in which they find themselves. In other words, they need to ‘accommodate’ (or more specifically, ‘converge’) towards their listeners.

At the receptive level, on the other hand, listeners need to develop greater tolerance of accent difference. They also have to accept that they cannot always expect target-like pronunciation, even in the core areas and that they must learn to cope with a certain amount of L1 transfer.

Speakers can accommodate towards their listeners in three ways: they may converge on one another’s forms; they may converge on a more target-like form; or they may avoid a NS form.

As was mentioned earlier, one of the main causes of communication breakdown is unilateral idiomaticity, which occurs when one speaker uses a NS idiomatic expression such as an idiom, phrasal verb, or metaphor, that the interlocutor does not know.

So, as a accommodation strategy, it is very important to avoid using certain NS forms, involving idiomatic language. If successful communication is the primary objective of the interaction, speakers will be more effective if they use the neutral verb ‘to relax’ rather than the phrasal verb ‘to chill out’. They would be responsible for any breakdown of communication because they did not pay attention to the intelligibility needs of their interlocutor and accommodate by avoiding NS idiomaticity.

5 Pedagogical implications

This gradually accumulating body of research has led and continues to lead to a better understanding of the nature of ELF, which I think is a prerequisite for informed decisions to be taken in language teaching.

As Kachru (1992) argues, what is needed is a paradigm shift of two types: one in teaching and another in the view of English.

First, a paradigm shift in teaching or pedagogical goals. The old goal in pronunciation was for learners to sound as ‘native-like’ as possible, a concept which has little relevance for ELF, as we have seen. It was unrealistic and often unattainable.

The new goal is mutual intelligibility among NNSs rather than the imitation of the way NSs speak English. It is realistic and often attainable.

Second, a paradigm shift in the view of English. English is overwhelmingly used as a lingua franca by nonnative users and it is important to view some of the deviations from NS norms not as errors or deficits but as differences or innovations as long as they do not cause communication problems.

By acting on these insights, teachers can free up variable teaching time for more important items such as the lingua franca core items and accommodation skills.

For the purpose of promoting intelligibility through teaching ELF, teachers can prioritize the lingua franca core items and accommodation skills, which appear to have the greatest influence on intelligibility in ELF over the non-native features which tend not to cause misunderstandings.

One of the criticisms frequently leveled at ELF researchers is that they are promoting a policy of ‘anything goes.’ But that’s not the case. ELF researchers have attempted to distinguish between what is crucial and what is not for mutual intelligibility and they just maintain that it is better to focus on what is crucial.

Then, what can you do to act on these insights? Now, let us see what Kachru and Jenkins have proposed for the teaching of WEs and ELF. You might be able to get some hints for your own lessons.

5.1 Proposals for teaching WEs

First, Kachru (1992: 360-361) has proposed that teaching WEs should include at least three things:

- 1 Students should be provided with an overview of English in its world context, with discussion of major varieties;
- 2 Students should be exposed to major varieties of English, native and non-native; and
- 3 Students should develop neutral, not biased, attitudes towards other varieties of English.

This is very important, given the fact that Japanese learners of English are very likely to respond negatively to English spoken with L1 accents.

5.2 Proposals for teaching ELF

Second, Jenkins (2000: 209-210) proposes the notion of accent addition rather than accent reduction.

The prevailing, traditional concept of *accent reduction*, in which learners are forced to eradicate their L1 accents, is being questioned by those who are working on the acquisition of ELF.

In contrast, Jenkins has advocated the concept of *accent addition*, in which learners are encouraged to add L2 pronunciation features to their repertoire in accordance with their needs and preferences.

Items are added in five stages. It is important to note that she has distinguished between productive and receptive repertoire and that only receptive repertoire or comprehension skills are focused on in many of the stages. It is also important to note that learners are not required to cover all the stages, while teachers are.

Stage 1: Core items should be added to the learner's productive and receptive repertoire.

Stage 2: A range of L2 English accents/

varieties should be added to the learner's receptive repertoire.

Stage 3: Accommodation skills should be added.

Stage 4: Non-core items should be added to the learner's receptive repertoire, and

Stage 5: A range of L1 English accents/varieties should be added to the learner's receptive repertoire.

It is interesting to note that Jenkins attaches higher priority to the addition of L2 English accents/varieties over its L1 counterparts, Australian English, for example.

6 Conclusion

We have seen that research into ELF has made a couple of things crystal-clear. First, it is essential to bear in mind the fact that, in ELF, the primary need of L2 speakers is to be able to understand each other rather than L1 speakers, that is, NSs.

Second, therefore, ELF learners do not necessarily require the full NS grammatical competence, whether it is phonological, lexical, or syntactical, to function appropriately in English in international contexts.

The acquisition of a native-like competence is no longer the ultimate objective of the majority of learners, nor is communication with NSs their primary motivation for learning English. Instead, what they need above all is to be able to communicate successfully with other NNSs of English from different L1 backgrounds.

Unfortunately, however, these facts have not been taken into account by many English language teachers. It is somewhat surprising that correctness continues to be judged in relation to NS usage in ELT classrooms around the world.

This is presumably because many teachers think that unless major examination boards, such as Center for University Entrance Examinations and the STEP (Eiken), accept

what has been said above and change their tests in a way that they can test learners for communication skills rather than for NS correctness, it is natural that they and their learners will be reluctant to accept any curriculum change.

Changes in testing should come first. Then changes in teaching will follow. Until the examination boards are able to conceive of 'correctness' in terms of mutual intelligibility, there may be very little hope that classroom practice will change along the same lines.

But I believe in the power of English language teachers to appeal to those examination boards for changes in the way they make tests and they score them. I hope the view of ELF to be used in communication among NNSs will change the way English will be taught and tested.

Notes

1 This article is based on a lecture I gave in English to a group of senior high school English language teachers at Shikoku University in Tokushima on August 24, 2007.

2 *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 7th Edition.

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