



The Practice of

English Language Teaching

FIFTH EDITION

Jeremy Harmer

with DVD



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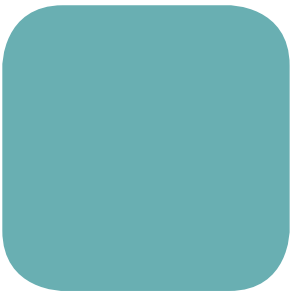
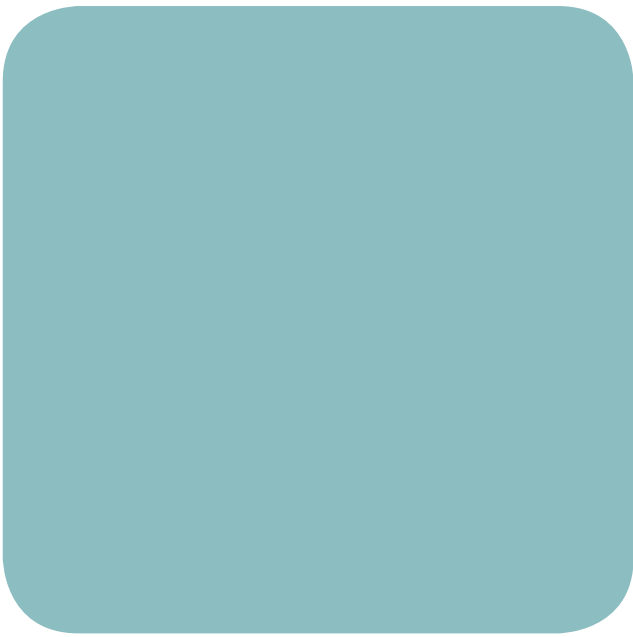
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The Practice of

English Language Teaching

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Jeremy Harmer

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Contents

- 1 The world of English language teaching**
 - 1.1 Who speaks English? **1**
 - 1.1.1 Varieties of English
 - 1.2 Who learns English, and which variety do they learn? **4**
 - 1.2.1 General English and ESP
 - 1.2.2 Business English
 - 1.2.3 Content-based language teaching (CBLT) and CLIL
 - 1.3 Who teaches English? **9**
- 2 Describing the English language**
 - 2.1 What we want to say **14**
 - 2.1.1 Form and meaning
 - 2.1.2 Purpose
 - 2.2 Appropriacy and register **17**
 - 2.3 Language as text and discourse **18**
 - 2.3.1 Discourse organisation
 - 2.3.2 Genre
 - 2.4 Grammar **21**
 - 2.4.1 Choosing words for grammar
 - 2.4.2 Some important grammatical concepts
 - 2.5 Lexis **25**
 - 2.5.1 Word meaning
 - 2.5.2 Extending word use
 - 2.5.3 Word combinations
 - 2.6 The sounds of the language **28**
 - 2.6.1 Pitch
 - 2.6.2 Intonation
 - 2.6.3 Individual sounds
 - 2.6.4 Sounds and spelling
 - 2.6.5 Stress
 - 2.7 Speaking and writing **34**
 - 2.8 Paralinguistics **36**
 - 2.8.1 Vocal paralinguistic features
 - 2.8.2 Physical paralinguistic features
- 3 Issues in language learning**
 - 3.1 What research offers **41**
 - 3.1.1 The mind is a computer
 - 3.1.2 Explicit and implicit knowledge
 - 3.1.3 Language is forming habits
 - 3.1.4 Language is communication
 - 3.1.5 Language is grammar; language is vocabulary
 - 3.1.6 The role of other languages (translation)
 - 3.1.7 Learning is about people
 - 3.2 Making sense of it all **52**
- 4 Popular methodology**
 - 4.1 Approach, method, procedure, technique **54**
 - 4.2 Three and a half methods **55**
 - 4.3 Communicative language teaching **57**
 - 4.3.1 Teaching 'unplugged'
 - 4.4 Task-based learning **60**
 - 4.5 The lexical approach **62**
 - 4.6 Four old humanistic methods **64**
 - 4.7 A procedure (presentation, practice and production) **65**
 - 4.8 Which method? What approach? **68**
 - 4.8.1 What teachers do
 - 4.8.2 Post-method and learning culture
 - 4.9 Coursebooks and other materials **71**
 - 4.9.1 For and against coursebook use
 - 4.9.2 How to use coursebooks
 - 4.9.3 Using coursebooks more effectively
 - 4.9.4 Choosing coursebooks
 - 4.9.5 Designing our own materials
 - 4.10 Looking forward **77**
- 5 Being learners**
 - 5.1 The age factor **80**
 - 5.1.1 Young learners

- 5.1.2 Teenagers
- 5.1.3 Adults
- 5.2 Learner differences 86**
 - 5.2.1 Learner styles
- 5.3 Motivation 89**
 - 5.3.1 Understanding the nature of motivation
 - 5.3.2 What affects motivation?
 - 5.3.3 What teachers can do about student motivation
- 5.4 Levels 94**
 - 5.4.1 From beginner to advanced
 - 5.4.2 The CEFR levels
 - 5.4.3 Other frameworks of language proficiency
- 5.5 Learner autonomy 97**
 - 5.5.1 Learner training/strategy training
 - 5.5.2 Autonomy tasks
 - 5.5.3 Open learning, self-access centres and student 'helpers'
 - 5.5.4 Provoking student choice
 - 5.5.5 Outside the classroom
 - 5.5.6 Homework
 - 5.5.7 All in the mind
- 6 Being teachers 113**
 - 6.1 Qualities of a good teacher 113**
 - 6.1.1 The magic of rapport
 - 6.1.2 Inside the classroom
 - 6.2 Roles that teachers 'play' 116**
 - 6.2.1 Talking to students
 - 6.2.2 The teacher as a teaching 'aid'
 - 6.3 What teachers do next 120**
 - 6.3.1 Teachers on their own
 - 6.3.2 Teachers with others
 - 6.3.3 Different ways of observing and being observed
 - 6.3.4 The big wide world
- 7 Class size and different abilities 136**
 - 7.1 Class size: two extremes 136**
 - 7.1.1 Large classes
 - 7.1.2 Teaching one-to-one
 - 7.2 Managing mixed ability 143**
 - 7.2.1 Working with different content
 - 7.2.2 Different student actions
 - 7.2.3 What the teacher does
 - 7.2.4 Special educational needs (SENs)
 - 7.2.5 Realistic mixed-ability teaching
- 8 Feedback, mistakes and correction 154**
 - 8.1 Giving supportive feedback 154**
 - 8.2 Students make mistakes 155**
 - 8.3 Correction decisions 156**
 - 8.3.1 What to correct
 - 8.3.2 When to correct
 - 8.3.3 Who corrects and who should be corrected?
 - 8.3.4 What to do about correction
 - 8.4 Correcting spoken English 158**
 - 8.4.1 Online (on-the-spot) correction
 - 8.4.2 Offline (after-the-event) correction
 - 8.5 Giving feedback for writing 161**
 - 8.5.1 Giving feedback in process writing
 - 8.5.2 Using correction symbols
 - 8.5.3 Alternatives to correction symbols
 - 8.5.4 Letting the students in
 - 8.5.5 What happens next
 - 8.5.6 Burning the midnight oil
- 9 Managing for success 170**
 - 9.1 Why problems occur 168**
 - 9.2 Creating successful classrooms 170**
 - 9.2.1 Behaviour norms
 - 9.2.2 Teaching for success
 - 9.3 Dealing with problems 173**
- 10 Seating and grouping students 177**
 - 10.1 Whole-class teaching 177**
 - 10.1.1 Seating whole-group classes
 - 10.2 Students on their own 180**
 - 10.3 Pairs and groups 181**
 - 10.3.1 Pairwork
 - 10.3.2 Groupwork
 - 10.3.3 Ringing the changes
 - 10.4 Organising pairwork and groupwork 183**
 - 10.4.1 Making it work
 - 10.4.2 Creating pairs and groups
 - 10.4.3 Procedures for pairwork and groupwork
 - 10.4.4 Troubleshooting

11 Technology for learning

- 11.1 What is on offer? 192
 - 11.1.1 Internet connectivity
- 11.2 Technology issues 196
 - 11.2.1 Digital divides
 - 11.2.2 Digital literacy
 - 11.2.3 Who does what?
 - 11.2.4 Six questions
- 11.3 Using classroom resources 201
- 11.4 Blended learning, flipped classrooms and beyond 204
 - 11.4.1 Blended learning
 - 11.4.2 The flipped classroom
 - 11.4.3 SOLEs
- 11.5 Learning online 206

12 Planning

- 12.1 Planning paradoxes 210
- 12.2 Thinking about lessons 211
- 12.3 Designing lessons 214
- 12.4 Making a formal plan 216
 - 12.4.1 Background elements
 - 12.4.2 Describing procedure and materials
- 12.5 Planning a sequence of lessons 221
 - 12.5.1 Projects and threads
- 12.6 Planning CLIL lessons 225

13 Teaching language construction

- 13.1 Studying structure and use 228
 - 13.1.1 Language study in lesson sequences
 - 13.1.2 Choosing study activities
 - 13.1.3 Known or unknown language
- 13.2 Explain and practise 231
 - 13.2.1 Explaining things
 - 13.2.2 Practice (accurate reproduction)
- 13.3 Meet, need and practise 235
- 13.4 Discover and practise 235
- 13.5 Research and practise 237
- 13.6 Review and recycle 238

14 Teaching grammar

- 14.1 Introducing grammar 239
- 14.2 Discovering grammar 246
- 14.3 Practising grammar 248
- 14.4 Grammar games 253

15 Teaching vocabulary

- 15.1 Introducing vocabulary 258
- 15.2 Practising vocabulary 264
- 15.3 Vocabulary games 269
- 15.4 Using dictionaries 271
 - 15.4.1 When students use dictionaries
 - 15.4.2 Dictionary activities
- 15.5 Keeping vocabulary notebooks and cards 275

16 Teaching pronunciation

- 16.1 What is good pronunciation? 277
- 16.2 Pronunciation problems 278
- 16.3 Phonemic symbols: to use or not to use? 280
- 16.4 When to teach pronunciation 281
- 16.5 Pronunciation and the individual student 282
- 16.6 Pronunciation sequences 283
 - 16.6.1 Working with sounds
 - 16.6.2 Working with stress
 - 16.6.3 Working with intonation and stress
 - 16.6.4 Sounds and spelling
 - 16.6.5 Connected speech and fluency

17 Teaching language skills

- 17.1 Skills together 297
 - 17.1.1 Input and output
 - 17.1.2 Integrating skills
 - 17.1.3 Language skills, language construction
 - 17.1.4 Integrating skill and language work
 - 17.1.5 Top-down and bottom-up
- 17.2 Receptive skills 302
 - 17.2.1 A procedure for teaching receptive skills
 - 17.2.2 The language issue
 - 17.2.3 Comprehension tasks
- 17.3 Productive skills 307
 - 17.3.1 A procedure for teaching productive skills
 - 17.3.2 Structuring discourse
 - 17.3.3 Interacting with an audience
 - 17.3.4 Dealing with difficulty
 - 17.3.5 What to do about language
- 17.4 Projects 311
 - 17.4.1 Managing projects

18 Reading

- 18.1 Intensive reading 314
 - 18.1.1 The vocabulary question
 - 18.1.2 Analytical reading (text mining)
- 18.2 Reading aloud 318
- 18.3 Extensive reading 319
- 18.4 Reading sequences 321

19 Listening

- 19.1 Skills and strategies 336
 - 19.1.1 Top-down listening
 - 19.1.2 Bottom-up listening
- 19.2 Extensive listening 339
- 19.3 Live listening/recorded listening 340
 - 19.3.1 Live listening
 - 19.3.2 Pre-recorded audio
- 19.4 Using film and video 343
 - 19.4.1 Viewing and listening techniques
- 19.5 Listening (and film) sequences 345
- 19.6 The sound of music 357

20 Writing

- 20.1 Literacies 360
 - 20.1.1 Handwriting
 - 20.1.2 Spelling
 - 20.1.3 Layout and punctuation
 - 20.1.4 Text construction
- 20.2 Approaches to student writing 363
 - 20.2.1 Process and product
 - 20.2.2 Genre
- 20.3 Creative writing 366
- 20.4 Writing as a collaborative activity 367
- 20.5 Building the writing habit 367
- 20.6 Writing-for-learning, writing-for-writing 369
- 20.7 The roles of the teacher 369
- 20.8 Writing sequences 370
- 20.9 Dictation activities 379
- 20.10 Portfolios and journals 381

21 Speaking

- 21.1 Spoken language 384
- 21.2 Students and speaking 385
 - 21.2.1 Reluctant students
- 21.3 Speaking repetition 387
- 21.4 Speaking activity types 388
 - 21.4.1 Acting from scripts
 - 21.4.2 Communication games
 - 21.4.3 Discussion
 - 21.4.4 Prepared talks and presentations
 - 21.4.5 Questionnaires
 - 21.4.6 Simulation and role-play
 - 21.4.7 Storytelling
- 21.5 Speaking sequences 393
- 21.6 Making recordings 404
 - 21.6.1 Getting everyone involved

22 Testing and evaluation

- 22.1 Summative and formative assessment 408
- 22.2 Qualities of a good test 409
 - 22.2.1 Washback
- 22.3 Types of test 410
- 22.4 Test item types 412
 - 22.4.1 Some typical test item types
 - 22.4.2 Skill-focused tests
 - 22.4.3 Young learner test item types
- 22.5 Writing and marking tests 417
 - 22.5.1 Writing tests
 - 22.5.2 Marking tests
- 22.6 Teaching for tests 421



The Global Scale of English is a standardised, granular scale from 10 to 90, which measures English language proficiency.

Visit [English.com/gse](https://www.english.com/gse) to learn more.

The Global Scale of English logo appears throughout this book next to activities, accompanied by a number representing a level on the scale.



Video contents

Teachers at work

Introduction

For the fifth edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, we decided to take a film crew out to see what English language lessons look like in different places, in different situations and, crucially, with different age groups. And so we asked a number of teachers if they would let us film them at work, doing one of their 'normal' lessons.

With that in mind, we went to Ankara in Turkey and filmed two teachers, Aslı Nilüfer Usluel and Emel Atasoy, working with young learners.

In the UK, we filmed at a residential summer school in the city of Oxford. Varinder Unlu and John Duthie taught teenagers from a variety of different countries and different language backgrounds.

Back in Turkey, we had the chance to record lessons (taught by Zeynep Büyüktuna and Çiğdem Özen) for adult Turkish students who were getting ready to study at an English-medium university.

In Mexico, at a private language school, we had the good fortune to film teachers Juan Pablo Monfón Jiménez, Ricardo Fajardo Cortés and Araceli Menchaca Sánchez with their adult Mexican students.

In each case, after the lesson, I was able to interview the teachers on camera so that I could ask them about their lessons and about the issues that came up as a result of their teaching choices.

General description

On *Teachers at work* you will see eight videos of the lessons that we filmed, together with conversations with the teachers who taught them. The videos vary in length for a number of reasons: in the first place, there is a limit to how much material will fit onto one DVD, and so we had to think carefully about the things we really wanted viewers to see and which parts of the interviews (see below) to include. However, we also wanted to give an idea of how whole lessons progressed and so, in each case, there is an explanation of what happens before and after the excerpts that you can see.

After each lesson the teacher concerned was interviewed on camera. As a result – and where it is appropriate – there are extracts from these interviews interspersed between, before or after the footage of the classes we recorded.

Together with the lesson videos there are also two 'documentaries' about, firstly, the use of the L1 in the classroom and, secondly, the kinds of classroom technology and aids which we found the teachers using.

Using *Teachers at work*

'Things to look out for', in the detailed contents list below, can be used to cross reference parts of different chapters in the book which deal with the issues that come up on the DVD. Readers can look for the topics on the contents pages (pages ii–v) or consult the index. They can then watch the video(s) in question to prepare themselves to read about the topic. For example, they could watch Ricardo's lesson (see below) before reading Chapter 10 on grouping students. Alternatively, they can watch the video during or after their discussions about the contents of the chapter.

For each video in *Teachers at work* there is a worksheet of tasks on the website which accompanies this book: www.pearsonelt.com/PracticeofEnglishLanguageTeaching. You will also be able to see the teachers' original lesson plans online.

However, you can also react to what you see in the four more general ways below. Some of these activities can be done individually, but it is usually more productive to take part in them with colleagues. Activity A, in particular, requires collaboration.

A *Friend or foe?*

In this activity, one viewer is a 'friend' and should say what is good about what they are seeing. The other is a 'foe' and should (pretend to) identify as many 'holes' as he or she can find in what is on show. Who 'wins' the discussion?

B *Same or different?*

How different are you from the teachers you watch? In what ways is the situation that you teach in similar to, or different from, what you see in the videos? What does this make you think about a) your teaching and b) your teaching situation?

C *How would I do it?*

If you had to teach the same students and you were doing the same kind of lesson, how would you do it?

D *What can I steal?*

What techniques and activities can you 'steal' from the teachers on the video to use in *your* lessons?

Detailed contents

Track	General description	Things to look out for
1 3:10	Introduction – Jeremy Harmer	
2 15:30	Young learners 1 (A2/elementary) Aslı (Turkey) Contents: Vocabulary (revision and learning); Grammar	Teacher for today (starting a lesson) Using vocabulary in grammatical patterns Vocabulary memory techniques Matching/mingling activity
3 19:59	Young learners 2 (A2/elementary) Emel (Turkey) Contents: Vocabulary (revision, categorisation); Grammar; Reading	Choral repetition Categorising vocabulary Circle drill Jumbled paragraph reading Jazz chants Groupwork and pairwork
4 38:42	Teenagers 1 (B1/intermediate) John (UK) Contents: Storytelling (past tense); Pronunciation	Warmer (vocabulary game) Mime Vocabulary elicitation 'Hangman' Story reconstruction Pronunciation teaching 'Charades' Groupwork
5 15:54	Teenagers 2 (B2/upper-intermediate) Varinder (UK) Contents: Vocabulary; Listening; Creative group project	Warmer (word game) Using homemade audio Creative group activity Using 'traditional' classroom aids Students in groups



6 8:05	Pre-university adults 1 (B1 /pre-intermediate) Zeynep (Turkey) Contents: Student 'interview'; Reading comprehension with true/ false questions	'Hot seat' focus on one student Unusual way of 'planting' questions Comparing answers in pairs	
7 9:28	Pre-university adults 2 (B2/upper-intermediate) Çiğdem (Turkey) Contents: EAP paragraph construction and writing	Paragraph construction Jumbled paragraph Pairwork Using an overhead projector (OHP)	
8 20:05	Adults 1 (B1 /intermediate) Pablo (Mexico) Contents: Listening; Grammar	Live listening Using pictures as a comprehension task Using the board Pairwork and groupwork True/false grammar activity	
9 24:39	Adults 2 (B2/upper-intermediate) Ricardo (Mexico) Content: A content- based 'CLIL' lesson	Warmer Prediction and guessing Different (changing) student groupings Using mobile devices Group discussion	
10 12:15	Documentary 1 Using the L1 in the classroom	Aslı, Araceli, Ricardo and Zeynep discuss the use (or non-use) of the students' mother tongue/home language in English language teaching	
11 11:39	Documentary 2 What teachers use in the classroom	Video excerpts of teachers using a range of classroom equipment, including the board, pictures, charts, flipchart (paper), masks, strips of paper, posters, magazine cut- outs, glue, computer projection and mobile devices	

Acknowledgments

I want to express the profound gratitude that Pearson and I feel for all the people who were involved in the making of the DVD that goes with this book. First among these, of course, are the teachers who invited us into their classrooms. Their enthusiasm and 'bravery under fire' was something we will always be grateful for. I cannot thank them enough.

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Introduction

When *The Practice of English Language Teaching* was first published, more than thirty years ago, most teachers used chalkboards, and the overhead projector was still a novelty in some English language classrooms. There weren't many photocopiers around, and the only things that projectors projected were photographic slides. Back then, if we wanted our students to do projects or find out any information, they would have to go to libraries and look in paper encyclopaedias.

But it's all different now. Students can research anything, listen to anything or watch anything on the internet whenever we want them to. They don't even have to go anywhere special to do it. They can use their tablet computers or their mobile phones; we can call up the internet on a smartboard/interactive whiteboard right in front of their eyes! Which just goes to show that everything has changed.

Or has it?

It is true, of course, that modern classroom technology is vastly more sophisticated than it was all those years ago. This is reflected in the way that the chapter on learning technology (Chapter 11) has changed over the last few editions of this book. But the fundamental questions of language learning and teaching are still, it seems to me, the same, however we dress them up with the latest classroom technologies at our disposal: can we persuade learners to take charge of their own learning? What is the value (if any) of explicit language instruction as compared to, say, getting students to 'absorb' language through meaningful activities and texts? How useful is repetition? And what about teaching itself? Is it an art or a science? Or should we perhaps see it as a craft? And so on.

These are the questions which this fifth edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, like its four predecessors, intends to answer. It is informed not only by what went before, but also by the articles and books that have been written in the last eight years and which have, for example, highlighted a renewed interest in repetition, the use of translation, the lingua franca core, teaching 'unplugged' and the rise of digital testing and marking, amongst many other themes. You will find all that here, together with numerous contemporary examples of teaching activities for language systems and language skills.

This fifth edition would never have seen the light of day without the support of Pietro Alongi, for which I am extremely grateful. Laurence Delacroix has guided it through the tortuous road to publication, and without Alice Willoughby, such a thing would not have come to pass. Thanks to them.

At the beginning, though, the 'dream team' of Katy Wright and Helena Gomm got the ball rolling. And it was through the long months of research and writing (and editing and all the other processes that writers go through) that Helena's wisdom, expertise and support as the book's editor were absolutely crucial. This is the fifth project we have worked on together and I, for one, hope there will be many more!

Thanks are also due to Ali Aljufri, James Belcher, Anthony Gaughan, Leila Nucci, Carol Lethaby, Leandra Dias, Ping Yang, Sung-Hee Lee, Phil Bird, Linda Hubbard, Lidia Cordoba and Maria Greenaway who wrote reports (or were interviewed) about the last edition to kick-start our

thinking about what needed to be done so that 'PELT 5' would reflect contemporary concerns and realities.

And then there are the hundreds – maybe thousands – of people whose thinking and teaching practices are reflected in the pages of this book. They are not just the writers of the many articles and books that are mentioned in these pages, but also the teachers whose talks I have attended at conferences or seen at work in classrooms; the participants in the endless (but always fascinating) discussions, both formal and informal, that happen in those places, and the authors of the great flowering of postings about our world that has taken place on various social media since the last edition of this book.

And what a world it is! A world where we need to communicate more and perhaps shout and fight less. And that's where language teachers come in. For what better calling is there than to help people understand each other better? That's what we do. And so the aim of *The Practice of English Language Teaching* is to share the knowledge of how good teachers think and work around the world, so that we can all help our students in the most appropriate ways possible to communicate as effectively as they can.

Jeremy Harmer
Cambridge, UK

A note on references:

References to articles mentioned in the text are found in the bibliography on pages 426–437. There are chapter notes at the end of most chapters with suggestions for further reading.

1

The world of English language teaching

TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) is not one single profession. There are many different ways to teach English and places where it is taught – from the general English of many school classrooms around the world, to the more specialised worlds of business English or English for academic purposes (EAP). And the language itself is not one ‘thing’ either; constantly evolving and being used in more and more diverse situations, it challenges English language teachers (and course designers) to make decisions about what kind of English to teach and, of course, how to do it.

1.1 Who speaks English?

It is likely that there was a time (in the early Middle Ages) when English was spoken almost exclusively by English people living in what is now England. Even then, however, there will have been outsiders who wanted to learn the language so that they could communicate with native speakers. At that time, English already constituted an amalgam of many different language strands, but the developing language didn’t stay where it had started. It migrated through conquest and trade to other countries, such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies, the Indian subcontinent, parts of Africa and Asia and many other corners of the globe. And it didn’t stop there. It has morphed and spread to other countries and populations, too, until it has become one of the world’s main languages of international communication and commerce.

Discussions about who speaks English have been heavily influenced by the work of Braj Kachru who, more than three decades ago, proposed a ‘three circles’ view of English in the world, where the ‘inner circle’ comprised countries such as the USA, the UK, Australia, etc. These were countries where English was the national language (and the mother tongue of most of its users). Kachru suggested there were about 320–380 million English speakers of this kind (Kachru 1985). In the ‘outer circle’ Kachru included 150–300 million speakers from countries such as India and Singapore, where there was a long history of English use, and where local varieties of the language have developed. Finally, Kachru proposed an ‘expanding circle’, where English is a dominant *foreign* language. This expanding circle included countries as diverse as China, Sweden, Turkey and Argentina.

The numbers in Kachru’s 1985 model have to be seen as informed ‘guesstimates’ rather than exact figures, partly because of the unreliability of data gathering. But one thing we can say for sure is that they are (unsurprisingly) way out of date. Two years before his ‘three circles’ article, for example, Kachru himself had written ‘One might hazard a linguistic guess

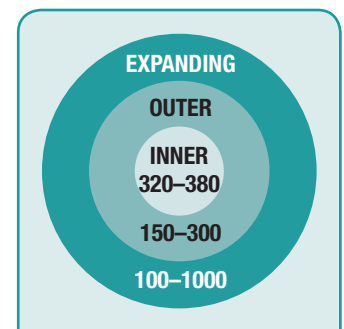


Figure 1 Kachru’s three circles (figures in millions)

here. If the spread of English continues at the current rate, by the year 2000 its non-native speakers will outnumber its native speakers' (1983: 3).

Kachru's 'linguistic guess' was absolutely right, but on a much greater scale than he might have supposed. Estimates vary, but the ratio of native speakers to non-native speakers is anywhere between 1:2 (Rajagopalan 2004) and 1:5 (Graddol 2008), and this gap is widening all the time. In terms of numbers, therefore, something like a quarter of the world's population speaks English as part of their multilingual identity, and native speakers are in a proportionately ever-decreasing minority. Of course, when we are discussing English 'speakers', we first have to decide what 'speaking English' means. If we were to include everyone who is learning English at beginner levels (as well as those who are competent speakers), we would get a very different figure from the total of people who speak English at upper-intermediate level – the B1 or B2 level (Common European Framework of Reference) or 51–67 (Global Scale of English). We will discuss these ways of describing student levels in 5.4.

English sometimes seems as if it is everywhere, though in reality, of course, it is not; Graddol (2008: 207) quotes one estimated forecast of three billion 'functional users' of English by 2040, but this still leaves about 60 percent of the world's population having poor or no English skills. Moreover, the English that is spoken around the world is not necessarily always the same kind of English, as we shall see – and that has implications for language teaching.

1.1.1 Varieties of English

There is more than one version of English, of course. In the south of England, many people speak 'standard southern English' (SSE), the variety of British English which appears in many coursebooks and exams for learners of English. But if you travel north, you will find English that is clearly not standard southern English; similarly, in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, many people speak other different varieties of the same language. There are, of course, plenty of similarities of grammar, lexis and pronunciation and, in most cases, a mutual intelligibility, but there are also significant differences in terms of language construction and pragmatic use. And in England itself, different regional areas have clearly identifiable language varieties.

Variation of a similar kind is found on a far bigger scale in the USA, of course. We might identify General American (GA) as a kind of US equivalent of standard southern English (Celce-Murcia 2014a: 69) – one which, like its British counterpart, is also used in teaching and examining all over the world. But anyone who has ever been to North America (or who has watched US and Canadian movies) must be aware of the many and varied regional and ethnically diverse Englishes which are present all over the North American continent. And so, even in native-speaker countries, many language varieties coexist.

As we have said, teachers, exam boards and materials writers generally opt for one of two 'inner circle' varieties – GA or SSE – but these varieties, too, show differences of grammar (*Did you see him yet?* | *Have you seen him yet?*), vocabulary (*elevator/lift*, *pants/trousers*), pronunciation (*advertisement* vs *advertisement*; /ɒ/ vs /ɔ:/ for *law*) and spelling (*analyze/analyse*, *color/colour*). In most cases, though, these varieties are remarkably similar and almost always mutually understandable.

Outside the 'inner circle' versions of English, the situation is equally fascinating. First of all, there are recognisable and well-established 'outer circle' varieties such as Indian or Singaporean English. Secondly, where English is becoming a language of inter-country communication in, for example, South East Asia (Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, etc.), it is

arguable that a recognisable new form of Asian English may be emerging. And finally, we need to be aware of the enormous number of speakers of English who speak it as a second or additional language (see 1.1 above), whether they themselves are Argentinian or Japanese, Italian or Mexican. The chances are that these people will not be speaking English with 'natives', but instead with second-language English speakers from other countries. This, incidentally, is now the reality in many large urban areas in 'inner circle' countries – such as London, New York, Toronto or Melbourne, for example – where a significant number of inhabitants may not have English as a home language and may be speaking to other English speakers who use a variety of different Englishes.

One kind of English which receives a great deal of attention – and which reflects the reality we have been discussing – is called English as a lingua franca (ELF). This is another and more widely-used name for what is sometimes called English as an international language (EIL). ELF is English used as 'a means of communication between people who come from different language backgrounds ... not a language variety in the traditional sense of the term' (Jenkins 2012: 487). It can be observed 'over the internet, on Facebook, as well as in an office in Beijing, a university in Amsterdam, a market stall in Marrakesh, a bar in Milan, and a hostel in São Paulo' (Cogo 2012: 98). One of the most noticeable features of this phenomenon is that ELF speakers seem to be very 'accommodating', jointly ensuring that communication is successful in a way that might horrify native-speaker examiners who demand accuracy based on native-speaker norms. Indeed, there seems to be a disconnect between the way English is frequently examined and taught (teachers – and coursebooks – tend to insist on accuracy based on native-speaker norms), and the way in which English is used by the majority of its speakers. 'Native-speaker reference books,' writes David Graddol, 'may be developing as better guides to native-speaker usage, but are less useful as models for learners' (Graddol 2008: 115).

When Barbara Seidlhofer studied ELF conversations, she found a number of 'deviations' from native-speaker norms. Typical features of ELF speech included 1) frequent failure to use the third person singular of the present simple (e.g. *She look very sad*), 2) the use of the relative pronouns *who* and *which* interchangeably (*a book who*, *a person which*), 3) adoption of all-purpose questions tags such as *isn't it?* Or *no?* (where native speakers typically used more grammatically-based options such as *He could have been more careful, couldn't he?*), and 4) the pluralising of nouns which are considered uncountable in some native-speaker varieties (*furnitures*, *advices*) (Seidlhofer 2004: 220). Elsewhere, Jennifer Jenkins noticed that most ELF speakers do not differentiate between strong and weak forms (of words such as *to*, which can be pronounced /tu:/ or /tə/) and that they substitute voiced and voiceless /ð/ and /θ/ with /t/, /s/ and /d/ (*think* becomes *sink* or *tink*). This may be because /ð/ and /θ/ 'do not occur in the majority of the world's languages' (Jenkins 1998: 122).

How should we approach this reality? Jennifer Jenkins herself suggests that teachers should not 'correct items that are emerging as systematic and frequent in ELF communication', and that we should 'avoid idiomatic language'. In pronunciation teaching, she advocates that we 'focus on the core items and leave the non-core to the learners' choice' (Jenkins 2004: 40). This latter suggestion has been taken up by Robin Walker in his book on teaching the pronunciation of ELF (Walker 2010).

To some, it has sounded as if ELF researchers have been proposing a kind of 'reduced' version of English, and that this should be the target of language study – and indeed, talking about concentrating on a basic core seems to give weight to these claims. But as most

researchers insist, ELF is not so much a *variety* as a *process of accommodation*, which, though it may have some recurring features, is in constant flux as its speakers interact with each other. As most students, at some stage, need certainties to cling onto, this could present problems for teachers in deciding what language to teach. And when students ask *Can you say X in English?*, the response they least wish to hear is *Perhaps ... perhaps not*, even though that would frequently be the most truthful answer! Especially when they are starting out, students will hope for a clear model, and this may include (because many learners aspire to it) a native-speaker variety of English as an ‘appropriate pedagogical model’ (Kuo 2006: 219).

Perhaps, as Andy Sewell suggests, ‘adopting an ELF perspective on teaching does not mean that norms and standards are no longer required, but that these are mutable concepts and that learners need to be introduced to language variation when they are ready’ (Sewell 2013: 7). Thus, teachers may well adopt any significant or functioning variety of English as the norm (in Kachru’s terms, ‘inner’ or ‘outer circle’ varieties) to get things going, but will ensure that their students are exposed to more ELF-like language as time goes on. They might even have their students study ELF conversations to analyse the language used in them and try to work out how the same things might be said differently (Murray 2012).

1.2 Who learns English, and which variety do they learn?

English is studied at schools, colleges, universities and private language institutes. For children and young adults, this is usually because English is on the curriculum, or because they need to learn it in order to study at an English-medium college or university. On the other hand, where adults make a choice to study English, they may do so for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they want to travel, perhaps they want to use social media in English, perhaps they want to get involved in online gaming or perhaps they are going to live in an English-speaking country.

For many years, a distinction has been made between learning English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). ESL learners are often immigrants to an English-speaking country and need the language in order to communicate with local people. However, they also need to know how to do things in English in that country. ESL classes, therefore, may not focus exclusively on general English (see 1.2.1), but may instead concentrate on things they need to do in the society they are living in, such as filling in a form for a driving licence or describing symptoms at a doctor’s surgery. The curriculum (and the topics and activities they take part in) may mirror the lives they are leading outside the classroom.

EFL students, on the other hand, often do not have the same priorities. If they are studying in their own country, they may not need to know how to fill in a US tax form or apply for a mortgage in Australian English, for example. They may wish for a less culture-specific form of the language, and less obviously situated activities and tasks.

The EFL/ESL distinction is less easy to sustain than it once was, however. In the first place, as we have seen in 1.1.1, immigrants may use their English to talk to other ESL speakers, rather than communicating with native speakers. Secondly, a lot of English takes place in cyberspace, where students may have very specific reasons for wanting to use it. Indeed, we might well think of them as internet ESL speakers because for them, the internet is an English-speaking ‘country’. In a world where English is, as we have seen, so widely used, maybe everyone is an ESL student!

But, of course, if immigrants to Canada are studying English in Toronto, we are likely to offer them different learning opportunities from those we offer students in Hanoi or Rio de Janeiro because, in the end, a lot will depend on why they are learning English in the first place.

1.2.1 General English and ESP

General English is taught all over the world as a school subject, with no specific purpose in mind, except that language learning is thought to be good for learners, and English is a language that is worth learning. Such teaching has been the predominant model for a long time in schools, colleges and private language schools.

Typically, syllabuses for general English courses are organised in terms of the grammar and vocabulary to be taught, together with pronunciation elements and language skills work (listening, speaking, reading and writing). In general English lessons, teachers decide on what language they want to teach and then find content and activities which will help their students learn it. This is in stark contrast to syllabuses which take content (subject matter) as their starting point (see 1.2.3).

However, many people do have clearly identifiable reasons for learning English. Perhaps they want to work as nurses in a hospital in an English-speaking country, or perhaps they need to learn the English that is used by pilots and air-traffic-control employees; maybe they wish to work as lawyers, or they wish to study science and technology. In this case, they will be learning English for specific purposes (ESP). Such students have a clearly defined academic, professional, learning or vocational need, and this will influence the language they study and the syllabus they follow.

Experts have identified many different kinds of ESP, including EST (English for science and technology) and, importantly, for the increasing number of students who pursue tertiary education in the language, English for academic purposes (EAP). EAP students typically need to develop their skills in such areas as referencing, essay structuring, note-taking and making presentations, etc. (Strike and Tebbutt 2013).

How do teachers know what to teach in an ESP course? One way of doing this is to conduct a *needs analysis*. Ideally, this will involve having an understanding of the situations the students are in or are likely to be in and the language events, genres (see 2.3.2) and items this involves. So, for example, David Wood, in preparing his students for work placements, analysed the language chunks and formulaic structures (see 2.5.3) that native speakers used in the workplace. In class, his students then role-played typical workplace situations (which they themselves might be involved in) where these language elements could be used (Wood 2009). In other words, what happened in the workplace determined what the teacher offered the students in their speaking lessons.

In a different context, Henry Emery suggests that if we want to teach aviation English (for pilots and air-traffic controllers), we need to know the kinds of exchanges our students will be involved in. This would ideally involve teachers or course designers sitting in aeroplane cockpits or air-traffic-control towers watching, listening to (and recording) the kind of language that they need if they are to operate efficiently (and safely!) in their professional domain (Emery 2008). But however we gather our data, what is important is that we identify the type of English our students need and the situations they need it in. In the case of air-traffic control, this may involve highly idiosyncratic technical language such as:

Fastair 345 cleared straight in ILS approach runway 28, descend to altitude 3000 feet QNH 1011, report established on the localizer.

However, aviation professionals will also need to know how to use plain and clear English, demonstrated in utterances such as *There is metal debris on the runway* or *We are having problems with the hydraulic systems*. Furthermore, in exchanges between cockpits and towers 'it is essential ... that pronunciation doesn't impede the effective transmissions of messages' (Emery 2008).

Designers of ESP courses, then, try to pin down (through various forms of needs analysis) exactly what the students will need to do in and with the language, and this will determine the content and syllabus of the course.

Good course designers find out, where they can, not only what others say is needed, but also what the students themselves say their needs and wants are because 'learners do want and appreciate the opportunity to express their views about their course and wish to exercise some degree of control over the way the course proceeds' (Davies 2006). However, for David Mann this is problematic because any group of students is 'a bunch of diverse individuals with mutually contradictory notions of what [is] best for them' (Mann 2014: 70). We might go further and suggest that what students need and what they want are not necessarily the same thing at all.

The main thing to remember is that where we can identify what our students really need, and include, too, what they want, we will have clearer aims and objectives for our lessons than we sometimes do for more general contexts.

1.2.2 Business English

The teaching and learning of business English (BE) is now commonplace, partly due, of course, to the role of English as a lingua franca (see 1.1.1) and its predominance in international commerce. However, as with all ESP, there are a number of issues which BE teachers and materials designers have to confront. Where, for example, do the lessons take place, and what stage of their business lives have the students reached? Some BE lessons take place at secondary school, whilst others are designed for university students of business. Some BE study takes place in-company, when teachers go to the offices where their students are working. Lessons here may involve business role-playing so that the students can put what happens in the lesson straight into practice in the workplace (see Wood above).

Clearly, the content of BE lessons will depend on whether the students are studying for some future life of business or whether they are currently in work in a business environment. If the latter, we may conduct a detailed needs analysis to find out what happens in the student's office and what that student needs to do (as we saw above). We can then tailor our lessons to those needs. Even when students are not yet in a workplace (but are intending to work in a business environment), we can find out what that environment is like, as Stephen Evans did in Hong Kong. Evans had business people keep detailed 'week-in-the-life' diaries, complete surveys and agree to be interviewed (Evans 2013). This allowed him to build a picture of the ways in which people in the environments he investigated wrote emails, read and wrote reports, took part in formal and informal meetings or conducted phone conversations. With this information, he could then design tasks to develop his university-level students' ability to use English effectively in the workplace. Interestingly, Evans found that the

most appropriate approach for his students was task-based learning (see 4.4), where, rather than studying grammar and vocabulary in a more traditional way, they could practise engaging in purposeful communication.

In reality, however, many BE coursebooks look remarkably like general English coursebooks, as Bill Reed noted in a review of many BE titles (Reed 2011). They have the same kinds of exercises as their general English equivalents, although the vocabulary and contexts reflect business environments.

Which is the best approach? As with all ESP, it will depend on who the students are and what they need and want. Perhaps we will focus on language, as in many general English courses, but with added business elements, or perhaps we will allow the business content to determine the shape of our course.

Having made our decision, we can plot a course on the axes of a language and business quadrant (see Figure 2). Wherever our lessons are on the diagram, though, it may be, as Phil Wade found, that business lessons ‘still worked best when the focus was on a theme’ (Wade 2012: 49).

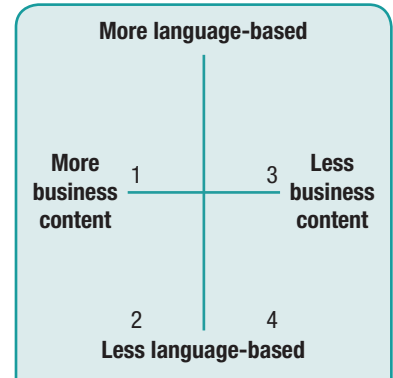


Figure 2 Balancing content and language

1.2.3

Content-based language teaching (CBLT) and CLIL

Many educators, almost exclusively in school and university contexts, are interested in the teaching of content through, and with, English. This stands in stark contrast to general English teaching. The aim of language teaching is that the students will learn a language, whereas in content teaching, the content is the most important thing. When content is taught in an L2 (the *target language*) the idea is that the language will be learnt as well. It's as if with content as the focus, the language comes along to join the party, and the students will learn it as it occurs.

To some extent, this is similar to ESP, except that the term *content-based language teaching* (CBLT) is usually used to describe the study of academic subjects rather than as a way of talking about language study for a particular professional purpose.

As Margaret Ann Snow shows, CBLT comes in many forms. At its most *content-driven*, it is likely to include total immersion, where the students do all their studies in the target language. At the other end of the spectrum – *language-driven* teaching – the focus is on the language, but the course includes specific content, in a more deliberate and organised way than in some general English courses (Snow 2014: 439). Entirely English-medium instruction is a form of total immersion, but in bilingual schools some teaching will take place in the students' first language (L1) as well. There are 'halfway houses', too, such as theme-based language teaching, where a major organising principle for a scheme of work is content-based topics and themes (see 12.5.1).

Does CBLT work? Various results suggest a high rate of achievement. For example, the immersion programmes that started in Canada in the 1960s and still go on today (where young English-speaking learners are taught for a large part of the time in French) suggest that 'students achieve success in subject-matter learning ... they achieve high levels of comprehension in French and can express themselves both orally and in writing on topics related to academic subjects' (Lightbown 2014: 16). But there are doubts about their levels

of grammatical accuracy and their pragmatic competence in French, even after many years of study. This suggests that whilst the results are very encouraging, CBLT does not seem to be a panacea for all ills.

CLIL (content and language integrated learning), a European variant of CBLT, mixes the teaching of content and language so that the students learn both the content and the *specific language they need to express that content* at the same time. In other words, whereas in general English lessons, the syllabus selects the language to be taught and someone then looks for content to exemplify that language, in CLIL lessons, content is selected and then CLIL planners look for the precise language which will enable the students to understand and talk about that content. Thus, the students may have to learn technical words and structures that would never normally be included in a general English lesson at that level.

This choice (and teaching) of language to express content is a defining characteristic of CLIL. If, for example, the students need to say things like ‘water evaporates’, then we will help them to say this. But this does not mean that we have to spend days teaching the present simple (as we might do in a general English course); instead, we may help the students with just enough of the present simple to talk about evaporation, but nothing more. In this way, the teaching of language is integrated into the teaching of the content and takes place alongside it. That is because some language in CLIL (like *evaporate*) is *content-obligatory language*: you have to learn it if you want to talk about the content.

CLIL is not just concerned with content and language, however. CLIL experts also identify three other Cs, namely *communication* (students have to be able to communicate content, and to be able to communicate with each other), *cognition* (students need to develop their thinking skills) and *culture* (students need to be able to relate content to the culture in which it is embedded and to be able to understand their own culture through comparison with other behavioural norms). In the area of cognition, CLIL practitioners refer to HOTS (higher order thinking skills) and LOTS (lower order thinking skills). In simple terms, a lower order type of question might be *What is this?* or *How many of these are there?* whereas a higher order kind of question might be *Why is this like it is?*, *What causes there to be so many of these?*, etc. Higher order skills are a form of critical thinking (see 5.5.7).

One issue that marks CLIL out from some other approaches is the tolerance of the students’ L1 in the classroom. In some cases, content teachers can explain concepts in the students’ L1 before language teachers teach the same students how to deal with (and talk about) the content in the L2. As Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou suggests, ‘CLIL ... respects the role that the L1 can play both in promoting and supporting L2 learning but also in creating and establishing a supportive and safe atmosphere for learners who are beginning CLIL’ (Ioannou-Georgiou 2012: 499). We will discuss attitudes to L1 use in 3.1.6.

CLIL enthusiasts claim high levels of success, suggesting that students with average abilities achieve higher levels of skill than they have typically achieved in traditional classes (Dalton-Puffer 2011). Others report that teachers’ experience of CLIL has been very positive. They found that ‘the enriched content gives language learning a purpose, it is challenging and discursive, and encourages thinking skills, opinion giving and justification’ (Hunt, Neofitou and Redford 2009: 113).

Just as with CBLT, in general there are varying degrees of CLIL, from entirely CLIL-centred curriculums (‘hard’ CLIL), to single lessons which are content-centred (‘soft’ CLIL). Many language teachers do a form of soft CLIL when they bring scientific or academic-flavoured

content into their lessons; but unless these lessons are driven by the content (rather than language), they may not be considered as ‘true CLIL’ at all by some.

So why don’t all schools use CLIL or some other form of CBLT? Well, in the first place, and most importantly, CLIL may well demand a very special kind of teacher – someone who is equally at home with content teaching and language teaching (and has the linguistic abilities to match), and this may well imply spending a lot of time and money to train or retrain teachers from both disciplines.

An alternative is to get subject teachers who work in the target language to work with language teachers. The language teacher can prepare the students for the content that they will work with, or help them with difficulties they have experienced. However, such coordination demands significant organisation, financial support and, crucially, a willingness to cooperate.

Other people have worried that the L2 acts as an extra barrier to the students’ content learning, especially where teachers are not totally confident in their own L2 language use. This may have been behind the Malaysian government’s decision, in 2009, to stop the teaching of maths and science in English in Malaysian schools, or maybe it simply wasn’t possible to find enough teachers with equal levels of content and language knowledge. And perhaps it goes deeper than that. When the government of the city of Valencia in Spain abandoned the teaching of citizenship in English in 2008, it was partly in response to the crowds that filled the streets protesting against the imposition of English in this part of the curriculum. These citizenship lessons weren’t really CLIL lessons at all, but their demise points to the emotional sensitivity of teaching content in an L2.

Where CLIL lessons are properly planned for and well taught, the results can be very powerful. But content-based lessons do demand different kinds of lesson planning, as we shall see in 12.6.

1.3 Who teaches English?

English is taught in countries all over the world, and to students from as young as three or four right through to people in old age. Simple mathematics will tell us that there are simply not enough native-English-speaker teachers (NESTs) to meet that demand. On the contrary, in the vast majority of contexts, English is taught by non-native-English-speaker teachers (NNESTs), people who have the language as a second or additional language. And yet, despite this obvious fact, there is still, for some people, a belief that the ‘best’ teachers of a language are native speakers. This is the belief that Adrian Holliday calls *native-speakerism*, and which he describes as ‘a pervasive ideology within ELT, characterized by the belief that “native speaker” teachers represent a “Western culture” from which spring the ideals both of the English language and English language teaching methodology’ (2006: 385).

It is certainly true that in some situations, people still seem to believe that NESTs are the ideal. Some of these people are the native-speaker teachers themselves: for example, white British teachers who rely on their ethnicity to ‘prove their efficacy’ (Mitra 2014a). But it is not just the teachers. Many students (and parents of students) have the same beliefs, and, as a result, it is still the case, in some situations, that NESTs, sometimes unqualified, can walk into jobs where they are preferred over their NNEST colleagues.

To many people, this perceived NEST superiority is just crazy. For a start, as Lia Kamhi-Stein points out, ‘being a native speaker of English is not the same thing as being proficient in English’ (Kamhi-Stein 2014: 566). There are native speakers of languages whose ability to use those languages is significantly inferior (or less developed) than that of some second-language speakers of those same languages. Native speakers will almost always be more fluent, but some second-language speakers may have more highly-developed vocabulary in certain areas, or an ability to discuss certain topics, such as literature or philosophy, in more depth and with greater facility. And if, as we have seen in 1.1, multilingual and non-native English users outnumber their native-speaker counterparts so significantly, it is difficult to see why those native-speaker varieties should dominate the world of English language teaching anyway. Perhaps, as David Graddol suggests, ‘native speakers may increasingly be identified as part of the problem rather than the source of a solution ... as teachers, native speakers may not possess some of the skills required by bilingual speakers, such as those of translation and interpreting’ (Graddol 2008: 114) – though, of course, many NESTs speak more than one language and do make the effort to master their students’ L1.

And then there is the issue of teaching ability. Which, for example, is more important, a teacher’s proficiency in the language or their professional preparation as a language teacher? Perhaps we should describe teachers on a continuum of target-language proficiency and professional preparation (Pasternak and Bailey 2004) and forget about their ethnicity or country of origin (see Figure 3).

We are not saying that there is anything ‘wrong’ with NESTs who are proficient in the language and who, through training and inherent ability, have appropriate teacher skills. Indeed, they may have some advantages – such as a linguistic confidence about their language in the classroom, which non-native-speaker teachers sometimes lack. In certain circumstances, too, a teacher’s *inability* to communicate effectively in the students’ L1 (because they have only recently arrived in the country they are working in, for example) has a positive rather than a negative effect in much the same way as multilingual classes provoke inter-student communication in English. Some students like having NESTs and this can be motivating for them – even if, as we have said, there are no good reasons for this preference. Interestingly, the same students often have difficulty differentiating between native-speaker and non-native-speaker accents (Kamhi-Stein 2014). In some situations, too, professional interactions between NESTs and non-NESTs can be very beneficial (Carless 2006: 335). But in the end, the most important thing about good NESTs is that they are ‘good’ at the language and ‘good’ at teaching.

Non-native-speaker teachers, however, have many advantages that their ‘native’ colleagues do not. In the first place, they have often had the same experience of learning English as their students are now having, and this gives them an instant (even if only subconscious) understanding of what their students are going through. Where they teach a group of

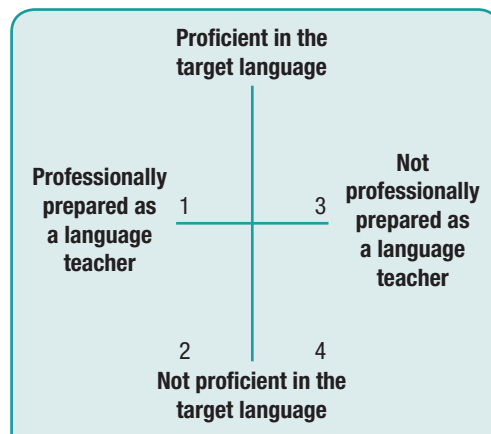


Figure 3 Pasternak and Bailey’s continua of target language proficiency and professional preparation

students who speak their own native language, they are able to maximise the benefits of L1 and L2 use in the ways we discuss in 3.1.6 (although many primary and secondary school classes around the world are becoming increasingly multilingual, especially in urban areas). Non-NESTs are frequently considerably more familiar with local mores and learning styles than visiting native speakers are. And anyway, on the basis of numbers alone, as we have seen, they are the people delivering ELT in most cases. In the end, just like their NEST colleagues, the most important thing about good non-NESTs is that they are ‘good’ at the language and ‘good’ at teaching.

The world has changed and is continuing to change. Whereas it would have been considered unthinkable even 15 years ago to have non-NESTs working in, say, private language schools in countries like the USA or the UK, nowadays many teachers in such situations do not have English as their first language, and many will have grown up in non-English-speaking families and environments. Like their students, they will have learnt English as a second or additional language. It would be difficult, then, to disagree with Suresh Canagarajah who said in a 2009 interview that:

‘The time has come for the NNEST professionals to move from the periphery of the profession to the center. It is time for us to argue that we represent the experience that is the norm for the majority of English speakers around the world – i.e. multilinguals for whom English is an additional language in their speech repertoire and identity. It is time for us to reshape pedagogy and linguistic theories to address the concerns of those who enjoy (or those who desire to develop) hybrid proficiencies and identities as we all do. The time to be defensive, apologetic and even confrontational is gone. There are no more battles to be fought. There is the serious task of living up to our responsibility of making knowledge that is relevant to the majority of people in the world – multilinguals. Perhaps that’s the label we have to start using – not non-native speakers of English but multilingual speakers of English.’ (Canagarajah 2009)

For, as Graham Hall argues, the strengths of non-native speakers are ‘increasingly recognized’ and for now and in the future, ‘more attention will be given to what teachers do rather than where they are from’ (Hall 2011: 228).

Chapter notes and further reading

Who speaks English?

Graddol has written extensively about English in the world (2008), in India (2010) and in Brazil (forthcoming). Like many other commentators, he suggests that English use may not go on growing for ever and that English as a lingua franca is or may be challenged by Mandarin, Arabic, Hindi and Spanish, for example.

Varieties of English

Kirkpatrick (2007) is a book about the implications of world Englishes for English language teaching. See also Celce-Murcia (2014a).

English as a lingua franca

A must-read is Seidlhofer (2011). Prodromou offers a corpus-based analysis (2010). Dewey provides a short and cogent reply to Sewell (2013) and goes on to say that ELF research ‘promises to be especially valuable for further understanding communicative effectiveness and, provided we can overcome the constraints of a more traditional structural approach, should also prove constructive for (re)devising learning models and materials’ (Dewey 2013: 348). See also Sung (2013).

ESP (English for specific purposes)

A good ‘state-of-play’ article about ESP and the issues it raises (for its time) is Belcher (2006). See also Johns and Price (2014).

Many teachers have their students examine authentic workplace communication through transcripts of conversations and discussions with native-speaker informants. See, for example, Crandall and Basturkmen (2004). Holmes and Riddiford (2011) have their migrant students analyse language exchanges in their workplace placements in order for them to understand ‘different social dimensions in a new sociocultural context’ (380).

Lansford suggests that ‘ESP materials developers and teachers have the job of “curating reality” – turning it into something that meets the needs of the audience in much the same way that TV producers distil 24 hours of human tedium down to the half hour of entertaining antics that make for television’ (Lansford 2014: 60). Vogt and Kantelinen (2012) discuss VOLL (vocationally oriented language learning), once seen as a form of ESP, but now thought by some to be slightly different.

Business English

Trinder and Herles (2013) are among those who identify BELF (business English as a lingua franca) as a focus of study. Evans (2013) points out that it is frequently interspersed with the local language where a business is situated. Coulter (2014) argues for a professional standard in business English.

Frendo (2005) is a book on business teaching which is still well worth reading, and there are five-minute business activities in Emmerson and Hamilton (2005).

The Business English Teacher offers a range of activities and insights into the world of the BE teacher (Barton, Burkart and Sever 2010).

Sharma and Barrett (2013) is an e-book which offers a wide range of business apps. Finally, Soosaar’s short article (2013: 50) describes how she has her Estonian students do 20-hour business projects in which they ‘develop and launch a new product or service, complete with marketing and advertising’.

Content-based language teaching (CBLT)

See Brinton, Snow and Wesche (2003) and Lightbown (2014). There is a short introduction in Hartley (2013). Barnard (2010) has some critical comments to make about content-based teaching and young learners.

CLIL

A good introduction to CLIL is Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010). See also Mehisto, Frigols and Marsh (2008), Harmer (2012: Units 102–110), Bentley (2010) and short articles by Spratt (2011). Gierlinger (2012) has fun making provocative statements about CLIL.

For CLIL teaching activities see Deller and Price (2007) and Dale and Tanner (2012). A chapter on CLIL in Wright and Rebuffet-Broadus (2014) shows how teachers can use content and language integrated learning in experimental lessons during their training courses.

Harmer (2011) is a blogpost questioning the merits of CLIL. It attracted 114 comments about its appropriateness in many different settings.

CLIL and immersion

Lasagabaster and Sierra (2010) argue that CLIL is a very different ‘animal’ from immersion teaching, a view echoed by Ting, who writes, ‘No matter how perfect the teacher’s English, a teacher blabbing about physics in English is not CLIL because CLIL attends to the learners’ ability to use language. CLIL thus shifts classroom dynamics away from teacher-centred lecturing to learner-centred learning’ (Ting 2011: 315). However, this view is challenged by Somers and Surmont (2012).