Addressing Cultural Bias in Contemporary English Language Teaching

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By

Stephen Branigan

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INTRODUCTION

This book arose out of a PhD project which examines English language teaching (ELT) from the perspective of the issues that have emerged out of the language's evolution. That was from a foreign language which was traditionally learned for the main purposes of interacting with Anglophone native speakers, to its contemporary status which is an international lingua franca and involves communications with other cultures of which native speakers may be a minority. In a modern context, English is as likely to be learned in order to be used as a global language among second language (L2) speakers from non-Anglophone countries in non-Anglophone settings as for the purposes of visiting or living in an Anglophone country. The consequences of this evolution are that the language can no longer be considered as belonging exclusively to native speakers, nor should the institutions of ELT (educators, publishers, etc.) continue to fail to acknowledge this change in the nature of how the language is used in current times by neglecting to recognise that people of non-Anglophone cultures may:

- be speakers of English in their own right.
- when learning, require a different approach to methodology, less Anglophone content and culture in favour of more local context, intercultural skills to interact with a variety of cultures, materials and content that serve the needs of intercultural communication and avoid any kind of Anglophone acculturation, and a language teaching model whose outcomes do not rest on the mimicking of native speakers.

The goal of the project was to identify ethnocentricities and cultural bias inherent in ELT and then demonstrate how it can be refocused to be inclusive of all learners of English in its contemporary form as a lingua franca. This is achieved by first acknowledging the ethnocentric bias in ELT that stems from its historical roots in colonialism and the fact that the advance of English brings political and economic benefits for Anglophone countries, namely the UK and USA. Next, the traditional over-focus of Anglophone culture and content in methodology and lesson materials should be investigated. The needs of contemporary learners should be

examined, in addition to investigating the intercultural skills (needed in L2 to L2 communication) required by both teachers and students. Solutions can then be put forward as to how to rebalance the overemphasis of Anglophone content and methodology in favour of a more localised and intercultural context, and accommodate the skills needed by contemporary learners whose motivation is more likely to be to interact interculturally in the language instead of exclusively with Anglophone culture as has been in the past.

i. Background to the work

The research problem arose out of my own experience as a native English speaking teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) beginning in Poland almost twenty years ago. As I embarked on my early career, initially in the private sector, there was something about my observations of EFL that seemed not quite right, though, before my research, it was hard to identify exactly where the root of the issue lay. Such observations were:

- My ELT training courses actively discouraged the employment of any local language (L1) by trainees or learners, did not contain any intercultural skills training, appeared to award a lower final grade to trainees who did not enthusiastically employ aspects of the Communicative Approach that involved games and entertaining activities at the expense of deeper-learning methodology that was regarded as “outdated”.
- As a native-speaker of English, it seemed I was given privileged status as a teacher despite, especially at the beginning of my career, having fewer qualifications and less experience than most local teachers.
- Meetings were held in English (in Poland) when organised by Anglophone institutions such as examination providers or publishers, despite all or the majority of attendees being Polish.
- Local English speakers were often embarrassed by their Polish accent; those who mimicked Received Pronunciation the most successfully were perceived to be of a higher standard.
- The English language was generally always represented by a British flag, sometimes American.
- Polish learners were often given English names in classes; their Polish name was often perfectly pronounceable by foreigners.

- Coursebook topics often centred around stereotypical British institutions such as The Queen, the Houses of Parliament, etc. When culture was represented it was that of the L2, more precisely, British.
- Coursebooks practised Received Pronunciation exercises; my own pronunciation often diverged somewhat from the models given which was difficult to explain to the learners and challenging to teach.
- Language and grammar contained in materials was often not that used in real life, and sometimes superfluous to practical communication.
- Dialogues in coursebooks generally exclusively involved native speakers; occasionally an actor portrayed an L2 speaker who was always portrayed as a less competent English speaker.

To sum up the above observations, the whole ELT industry (particularly in the private sector) seemed to accommodate me, an Anglophone native speaker of English, and less so the local English teachers, or indeed any non-native speaker who worked in the same industry. What is more, non-native teachers were complicit in maintaining this status quo in a tacit acceptance of their inferiority. Inevitably, those who have just completed EFL teacher training courses and embark on the first steps of their career will encounter the same experiences I did and will even come to consider them the norm as the following chapters will show that not much has changed in the intervening years.

On consideration, a good deal of the observations outlined above did not seem to accommodate the actual needs of learners which is what, ideally, teaching should be all about if there is to be a successful learning outcome. As to those needs and motivation for learning English, while a contingent of learners would use their English in order to emigrate to the UK, for example, that was not the primary goal for the majority. Younger people were preparing to pass high-school or university exams, others taking regular courses were doing so for the purposes of travelling abroad and/or conducting business with bordering European countries and beyond. Placing native speakers and their culture (or a version of it) at the centre seemed counterintuitive to some of those needs. That is why an enquiry into why such a status quo existed and continues to exist in ELT seemed pertinent, as it would have the potential to place the actual needs of learners at the centre of ELT as its solution.

ii. Research questions

Taking into account the issues outlined above, the work addresses the following research questions:

Q.1	To what extent is there ethnocentricity and cultural bias contained in ELT?
Q.2	What are the needs of contemporary English learners, particularly with regards to culture and the kind of language they will learn?
Q.3	How can ELT be more interculturally aware and better address the needs of contemporary learners?

This information is useful to those who are already teaching EFL and may wish to cater better to the cultural needs of their learners. They may even be experiencing resistance or a lack of learning due to overwhelming Anglophone/native-speaker content in their courses. It is especially useful to those who are embarking on their career and perhaps even travelling abroad to teach for the first time. This is because EFL training courses often do not cover sufficiently the aspect that there is a cultural bias inherent in ELT content, ideology and practices which often does not serve the needs of learners. As will be shown in the book, a teacher who is aware of this at the outset is able to consider current materials or adapt others to reduce the content that either explicitly or implicitly accultures learners. With this knowledge they are able to refocus their pedagogical practices to what their learners need to communicate effectively in English while respecting their own (L1) culture.

iii. Outline of the book chapters

The book is divided into nine chapters. Some contain the findings of this author's studies to add empirical weight to the issues discussed and conclusions drawn. In part one, the first two chapters investigate the main areas of ethnocentricity and cultural bias in ELT, chapters three to five in part two consider the needs of contemporary learners and a better way forward in terms of lesson content and methodology, while the final four chapters in part three look at implementing solutions to the issues found.

More specifically, part one, chapter one takes a historical look at the early spread of English to its contemporary status as a global language. It examines the extent to which this has been a natural occurrence or influenced by political and economic interests in exploring the concept of Linguistic Imperialism. Chapter two looks at the methodology of

Communicative Language Teaching which is most common in contemporary ELT training courses, publications and classrooms. The chapter examines whether, as a Western approach, it is adaptable to universal cultural contexts and intercultural communication.

Part two, chapter three discusses ELT coursebooks and their cultural content, in particular those that are produced in Anglophone countries and marketed internationally. Academic criticism of such publications is presented in addition to scholarly recommendations on how they could better meet the needs of the contemporary learner. This chapter looks at the findings of a study that examines a first edition (1996) and an up-to-date edition (2020) of the same book title to examine what changes one publisher has made to cultural content and its proportions from one edition to the next. Chapter four, in seeking to examine the requirements of contemporary learners, refers to the role that culture plays in ELT and explores the need for Intercultural Sensitivity and its related concepts when dealing with the multicultural context of modern ELT. It includes the findings of opinions from a group of Chinese students studying in Europe as to their views on the proportion of their own and other cultures that should be included in their English lessons. Chapter five looks at the traditional native-speaker model of ELT and examines whether other models should be considered. It includes the results of a study that analysed opinions offered on the subject on a discussion web site and compares them with the views of academics.

Part three, chapter six, in an attempt to move towards resolving intercultural issues in ELT and address the needs of contemporary learners, considers Intercultural Communicative Competence as a necessary skill that should be included in the English language classroom. It looks at the obstacles to attaining such skills encountered by both teachers and learners. Understanding these obstacles enables the integration of ICC skills in English language lessons, thus improving the effectiveness of intercultural communication which is especially important in L2 to L2 interaction. Chapter seven investigates the implementation of methodology that would enable the integration of intercultural skills into lesson content. It finds that such considerations may be integrated into current mainstream methods without any radical overhaul of practices, curricula, etc. Chapter eight attempts to address the findings to all three research questions in a practical way by constructing a concept English language lesson that endeavours to eliminate ethnocentric bias, reduce excessive native-speaker content and Anglophone culture, and provide learners with the practical tools, language and intercultural skills that are needed to communicate in English with a variety of cultures which include

native speakers. Finally, chapter nine looks at the findings of a study which examined students' reactions to the lesson content produced in chapter eight, in an attempt to ascertain the degree to which such content is useful and applicable in the "real world" of English language teaching, thus providing a model which can be reproduced.

PART ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE AND MAINSTREAM METHODOLOGY

Chapter One: English as a global language: Accident or design?

Chapter Two: The Communicative Approach to ELT from an intercultural perspective

This part examines the recent evolution of the English language into that of a modern lingua franca and identifies sources of cultural bias in contemporary ELT. English spread with the expansion of British territories and ELT originated from the need to educate locals in the language of their rulers. Chapter one demonstrates how the expansion of English has not always been benign and has benefitted Anglophone countries both politically and economically. Furthermore, culturally biased assumptions continue to exist in contemporary ELT as demonstrated by the concept of Linguistic Imperialism. Chapter two demonstrates that the main methodology of ELT, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), itself is a product of Anglophone culture, suited more to Western styles of learning, and has its origins in teaching learners from an L2 culture to interact with native English speakers which renders it less conducive to the L2 to L2 interactions of a more contemporary lingua franca communication.

CHAPTER ONE

ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE: ACCIDENT OR DESIGN?

1.1 Introduction

No one would argue against the fact that English has brought great benefits to those who have acquired it as a foreign language. It enables people to communicate and share information in a lingua franca across a globalized world, facilitates trade, travel, research and learning, just to mention a few of the great advantages. The aim of this chapter is not to dispute the above attributes, rather to explore whether the global language we ELT teachers bring to our students is as benevolent, well-meaning and fruitful to their lives as we assume it to be. Or is the teaching of it infused with the baggage of the remnants of colonialism, cultural dominance and advanced by market and political forces? To do this, it is necessary to first explore how we got to the point of English as a global language, the degree to which its spread was organic, i.e. happening naturally over time, and how much the above mentioned market and political forces might have been responsible for its success. This is achieved in large part by David Crystal's work (Crystal, 2003) describing how English arrived at its global status, and Robert Phillipson's concept of Linguistic Imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) which makes a strong argument that the spread of English and ELT teaching has neither been a natural process, nor benign in nature. Once these questions have been addressed, the findings can be used to explore the implications for modern ELT and how such knowledge can be used to ensure it pivots less around the Anglophone centre in favour of a pluralistic approach.

1.2 A brief history of the emergence of a global English

There is nothing inherent in English that makes it an ideal candidate for a global means of communication. Indeed, other languages have been used in the past to communicate between different cultures. Greek, Latin, Spanish, and French which was the language of the aristocracy in Europe and

the language of diplomacy until after the first world war (Crystal, 2003, 102; Phillipson, 1992, 32). Neither is English easier to learn, its grammar is not simpler than other languages, and its vocabulary is not smaller in amount. As Crystal notes (Crystal, 2003, xii), until the 1950s, there was no sign it would evolve into the omnipresent language of today. In the 1600s it was still but an insignificant language (Troike, 1977, 2 as cited in Phillipson, 1992, 7). In the four centuries that have passed it has become the main medium of international communication in the world.

Crystal (2003, 30) describes the language as having spread westwards and northwards into areas in which the Celtic languages had been spoken: Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria and southern Scotland. Trudgill (1984, 2) describes this process as having begun as far back as the fifth century. In Ireland, from the twelfth century onwards, Anglo Norman rule became well established and spread to three quarters of the island (Ó Riagáin, 1997, 4). Ireland in fact, is a typical pattern of how the language would go on to take root and become established as the dominant language in a country. Amongst the general population, the Irish language was still the principal one in the sixteenth century. At that time a policy of planting, replacing the old, catholic aristocracy with a new protestant, English-born one was implemented. From that period onwards, English became firmly rooted in the military, administration, law and education (Ó Riagáin, 1997, 4). A major act in the demise of the Irish language (Gaelic) came when it was banned in national schools in 1831. Teachers were not allowed use it as a medium of education and pupils could receive corporal punishment for using it within the boundary of the school (Ó Ceallaigh and Ní Dhonnabhain, 2015, 182). If these policies represented the stick of the political system, the carrot was that English was the language of social mobility, of education and a better position. At that time in Ireland, in what was to become an unprecedented period of mass-emigration, English also facilitated a new life as an émigré in the United States and mainland Britain.

David Crystal in *English as a Global Language* (Crystal, 2003, 31) describes the subsequent conquests of the English after Ireland. On the North American continent, English outposts were established from 1607 and by 1640 25,000 English settlers had arrived. Later, huge waves of immigrants would arrive from Ireland in particular. Slave traders in the Caribbean purposely kept slaves of different languages together in an attempt to reduce communication and therefore the possibility of revolt. This resulted in the development of pidgin English as a common means of communication between slaves and sailors. James Cook discovered Australia in 1770 and later followed New Zealand. Penal colonies were set up in Australia due to prisons which were overcrowded in the British Isles. Crystal goes

on to state that 130,000 prisoners were transported in the first 50 years of establishment. These convicts were mainly of London and Irish origin. He goes on to outline the eventual control of South Africa in 1806, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Singapore, the territory of Hong Kong, large swathes of Africa and parts the South Pacific.

By the nineteenth century these conquests had developed into what became known as the British Empire. School children of the empire would be familiar with a map of British territories, an empire upon which it was often said the sun never set. The natural implication here for the spread of English is that the language followed as the empire expanded.

In parallel with the occupation of territories by English speakers, there were other factors that influenced the expansion of the language. Throughout the nineteenth century, Britain was the most industrialized nation in the world and a centre of global trade; in no small part due a readily-available market for its goods throughout the empire and beyond. Crystal (2003, 80) continues that the majority of innovations of the industrial revolution originated in Britain. By extension, those who wished to import, install and maintain the technology needed to be able to communicate in English. As an aside, it is worth noting that this would become true of the USA in the twentieth century. The systems of education throughout the empire would be based on the English model with Crystal (2003, 56) providing the examples of the Universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras being established in 1857 with "English as the primary means of instruction". By the early twentieth century, the language still remained within the sphere of influence of the UK and USA. Perhaps though, as a sign of what was to come, Phillipson (1992, 32) describes the agreement that both English and French would be the languages used at the Treaty of Versailles, marking the end of the First World War. This strikes as an interesting moment in the trajectory of the language, at the dawn of great societal shifts arising from the war's impacts, as up to this point French had been the international language of diplomacy. The League of Nations was set up in 1920, the first of multiple international organisations that would be established in the twentieth century; English and French became its two official languages.

Crystal (2003, 10) describes further developments that helped strengthen the popularity of the language in the early to mid-twentieth century: "The telegraph, telephone, radio, multi-national organisations, the growth of competitive industry, international marketing and mass-entertainment industries". The first radio broadcasts were in English. The BBC was launched in 1922, the BBC world service in 1932 (this was originally called The Empire Service and as its name suggests was capable of broadcasting across the empire). On the other side of The Atlantic, The

Voice of America was established in 1942. In the century that would become America's, Crystal (2003, 99) describes Hollywood's dominance of cinema from the 1920s. It is remarked that even to this day, it is unusual for a blockbuster film to be in a language other than English. It is a similar situation with music; American music such as jazz and Glen Miller were popular before the Second World War, and popular music increasingly dominated the international airwaves after the war. It must be noted here that the American influence on popular and mass media, especially in Europe and places under its sphere of influence, like Japan after the Second World War, cannot be underestimated. The war and the emergence of the USA as a superpower was a huge factor in the exposure it gave to the language and by extension increased contact with Anglophone culture. Bands such as the Beatles became popular worldwide in the 1960s and the social movements of that period onwards were also aligned with the music of the time. Crystal (2003) remarks that the first time many people heard English would be on the radio.

Whereas the nineteenth century was a British one when it came to power and influence, and hence the spread of the English language, the twentieth century belonged to the US. The American superpower dominated economically; Crystal (2003, 10) summarized, "the language behind the dollar was English". He also goes on to describe how mass tourism became more popular in the twentieth century. English became the language of the sea and aviation. More recently, the developments in ICT and globalisation have meant that it has become much easier to do business, travel, study, etc. abroad. Faster and cheaper digital communication platforms, information, entertainment, markets, etc. are universally available via the internet which increases the benefits of a lingua franca in the twenty first century.

1.3 The benefits of English as a global language

There is no doubting the power and benefits of English as an international language. There is no denying the following: Knowledge of the language enables travel abroad; communication with people in many different countries where it is used as a modern lingua franca; the research of information on the internet where the dominant language tends to be English; education where progress is dependent on English grades; international study where it is a requirement; research where published works in the language are more prevalent; the gaining of employment where it is often a necessity in an increasingly globalized work environment. In addition, Hollywood blockbusters can be watched in their original forms, the biggest worldwide musical hits and stars of popular music can be understood

with all the nuances that are only apparent in their original language. The arguments for its acquisition as a language that opens doors, of progress and social mobility are obvious and unarguable.

1.4 Linguistic Imperialism

By the end of the Second World War, the British empire was in retreat and its influence had begun to wane while American economic, military and political power, and influence on popular culture increased. It is at this point the concept of Linguistic Imperialism that Robert Phillipson refers to in *Linguistic Imperialism* (Phillipson, 1992) begins to take on a particular pertinence when it comes to the continued path of English to global-language status.

So what is Linguistic Imperialism? Phillipson provides the definition: "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992, 47). His essential argument is that English has been advanced often not merely for the well-meaning benefit of local populations, but rather to profit the commercial and political interests of Western powers, namely Anglo-American. Linguistic Imperialism is dealt with extensively in this opening chapter as this author feels, not least because of the controversy it aroused since its publication in 1992, it has provoked awareness and discussion amongst scholars and educators as to the more hegemonic aspects of ELT that have become imbedded in its practices. Examining and confronting these issues provides a good starting point from which to address cultural bias. Thus far, this chapter has already established that the diffusion of English until the mid-twentieth century stemmed in great part from Britain's imperial past. Crystal (2003, 112) goes on to explain that from the 1950s "ELT has become a major growth industry…". Phillipson (1992, 4) describes ELT as "a billion pound business". If we consider the training and export of native teachers from Anglophone countries, the publishing of ELT materials, foreign students studying at UK and US schools and universities, this is not at all hard to imagine.

Phillipson (1992, 32) looks back to colonial times and refers to "missionaries who descended on Africa (who) were strongly nationalistic as well as being interested in the souls of the natives…" implying here that they were as keen on inculcating them in the culture and ways of the empire as they were religious instruction. Golding and Harris (1996, 57) relates to this by stating that on the African continent colonists, particularly the British, understood that maintaining power once a territory was taken often lay the provision of education, what we would today refer to as soft-

power, than the potency of the military. British Council was founded in 1934 at a time when there were signs that the power of the empire was not what it once was. Phillipson refers to a key policy document a few years later in which the organisation identified the need for a recruitment drive for English teachers (Phillipson, 2009, 31). The implication he makes here is that teachers of English would take over from missionaries in the conversion of the locals; not so much to a religion as to the way of life and values of the UK. Phillipson (2009, 14 –19) goes on to outline that both the Americans and the British have vigorously promoted the language since the 1950s and discusses the tendency for the USA since its independence to consider it its mission to impose its values abroad. He supports this by stating that included in British and American aid packages to third-world countries are provisions for English teaching, including teacher training. It is not hard to see that in obtaining aid and learning the language, people would be instilled with an appreciation of the culture and values of Anglo-American ways which is ultimately a good investment for corporate interests. There were many criticisms of such policies. For example, Day (1981, 78-83) describes a situation on the US Pacific Ocean territory of the island of Guam where an ESL programme was contributing to the decline of the local language of the Chamorro indigenous people.

British Council

British Council currently has offices in more than 100 countries. A clear achievement for the promotion of the English language and ELT, they boast that in 2019-2020 they connected with 80 million people directly, and indirectly a further 791 million through "online, broadcasts and publications" (Internet: britishcouncil.org, accessed 25/1/21). Phillipson offers particular criticism of the organisation in its role as the ambassador and promoter of ELT for the UK; both in its policies of the reinforcement of cultural links with the UK and the amounts of revenue it is able to generate in doing so. In fairness to the organisation, its website is very transparent to its activities, and revenues are publicly available. Some of its purposes according to its own website (Internet: britishcouncil.org) are to: "promote a wider knowledge of the UK…", "encourage cultural, scientific, technological and other educational cooperation between the UK and other countries…" In addition, "We strategically align our work to the long-term international priorities of the UK government…" This final statement is a solid affirmation that the link continues between British Council and UK politics. Its revenue for the year 2018-2019 was 1.25 billion pounds sterling (Internet: britishcouncil.org). These statements and figures by the or-

ganisation itself lend support to the arguments of Linguistic Imperialism and the market and political bias that it attributes to English Language Teaching, a billion pound industry. Indeed, Phillipson (2009, 5) also refers to the increasing monetisation of higher education in the UK with over half a million foreign students attending foreign language schools and ELT becoming an important contributor to the British economy. We must also consider the contributions of top publishers and exam-providers such as Cambridge, Oxford, Pearson-Longman, etc., the details of which are beyond the scope of this work.

English and Power

Pennycook (2017) in *The cultural Politics of English as an International Language* also refers to the links between ELT and inequalities of power and culture. He makes the point of the inevitability of the influence of politics in education: "…all education is political, that all schools are sites of cultural politics…", and discusses the provision of ELT in the form of Third World aid that has been criticised as having the dual purpose of creating dependency on the West. The very idea of an international world, he states, is one of the West's invention for exploitative reasons and he criticises Crystal's celebration of English's global status as not considering the inequalities involved and the imbalance of benefits tilted towards the Anglo-American centre (Pennycook, 2017, 180). More recently the terminology has shifted to Global North/Global South (Shome, 2019). Not referring strictly to geographic positioning, Global North represents advanced economies more associated with "the West", while the Global South refers to less developed countries. Hamza R'boul (2021, 35) refers to those in the Northern Hemisphere possessing a "preconceived sense of superiority" invoking aspects of colonialism and racism, and certain fields of research being "dominated by northern knowledge (ibid.), with expectations for "non-westerners to conform to Western values". As an example of such power dynamic, Phillipson (1992, 10) describes how the British government reacted to the fall of communism and the Soviet sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe. The British foreign secretary in 1990 expressed the aim of replacing Russian as the primary second language with English. A cursory look at school curricula in contemporary Poland, for example, would reveal the policy to have been a huge success; English has largely replaced Russian. To illustrate this, Reichelt (2005, 217-226) provides a figure of approximately 20,000 English teachers in Poland by 2005, compared with a mere 1500 in the pre-1990s.

The dominant effect of English

A central principle in the concept of Lingusitic Imperialism is that the spread of English should not come at the expense of other languages, especially when learning a local language might be more useful or practical than English. Phillipson (https://www.tesolacademic.org, accessed 20/1/21) refers to the terms of Linguicism and Linguistic Human Rights. Day (1981, 78) uses the more drastic term Linguistic and Cultural Genocide when referring to the Chamorro on the island of Guam mentioned earlier. As a further example of the West's imposition of its language and culture, Phillipson refers to universities from the UK and USA being exported to China, The Middle East and Europe. This Western-style education often disregards the need for the more local features of education such as local law, local culture and local solutions to local problems, etc. Phillipson (1992, 5) argues that the use of one language is naturally going to lead to the exclusion of the other. To illustrate this with an example, if a multi-national company located in a non-Anglophone country uses English as its working language, as often happens, only those people who speak English will get employment there. In fact, there may no longer even be a need to recruit the local population anymore in favour of English-speaking migrants. In addition to the costs on other languages, Crystal (2003, 124) states that giving English a favoured status in society creates a world of haves and have-nots; in the sense that those who do not have the means to be educated in the lingua franca may suffer in terms of upward mobility.

Then there is the pressure on those to use English even when they might not feel an internally motivated need to acquire it. Crystal (2003, 115) refers to the widely quoted statistic that 80 per cent of the information on the internet is in the English language. Therefore, those who wish to use the internet to its full potential in areas of research, etc. would need English. Indeed, with the main software of the ICT revolution coming from the USA, such as Microsoft, Apple, Google, Facebook etc., it is easy to concur. Phillipson (1992, 6) refers to the privileged position of English in science, technology, medicine, computers, research, books, periodicals, aviation, diplomacy, international organisations, news agencies and educational systems. It is clear to see the pressure that is placed on anyone wishing to advance in these areas. Additionally, when it comes to research, there is a dilemma that Crystal (2003, 125) refers to: the potential worldwide audience a researcher will reach by publishing in the English language at the risk of sacrificing her/his cultural identity. Finally, on a societal level national institutions such as l'Académie Française struggle with maintaining the integrity of their national language when dealing with products in shops with English names and instructions, product marketing with whole sections in English and aimed

exclusively at a specific customer profile, web browsers and web sites that are English language only. This also acts as a force to learn the language or face exclusion (www.theguardian.com, accessed 17/7/22).

The influence of Linguistic Imperialism on ELT methodology

Phillipson's five tenets:

- English is best taught monolingually
- The ideal teacher is a native teacher
- The earlier English is taught, the better the results
- The more English is taught, the better the results
- If other languages are used much, standards of English will drop

Phillipson, 1992, 185

All of them are misconceptions, he says. Lightbown and Spada (2013, 96-98) discuss the "younger the better argument" and research that shows starting learning English as a second language does not necessarily assure success. Granted, native speakers start from birth; however, as a second language there are other factors at play, such as the new language hindering their acquisition of their first language. In addition, the more advanced cognitive development of an older child allows them to learn more at a faster pace too, resulting in those who start later at the ages of 10-12 being well able to catch up with those who started earlier. As to the monolingual argument, Lightbown and Spada (2013, 175) find that results can be better both in English and the subject matter being taught when learning occurs with the assistance of the first language. Personal experience has confirmed this when, particularly low-level, learners can be observed successfully working out the meaning of a word or phrase in their first language. As to the final tenet, Michael (2013) who conducted research in Nigeria, wrote of a case study of 100 students of the University of Ibadan that showed no difference in the results of an English test between students who lived in English-speaking homes and those who lived in homes where local languages were spoken.

Phillipson refers to the native speaker fallacy in *ELT: The Native Speaker's burden?* (Phillipson, 1992). The White Man's Burden, a reference to 19th century colonial missionaries, discussed earlier, is immediately evoked along with the parallel assumption that the native speaker is the model from which to learn. In the modern era of English as an international language when there are more "non-native" speakers of English than "native speakers" (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006, 87) (to be discussed in

more detail in chapter two), there is little practical justification for so-called experts emanating from the Anglo-American centre. "While historically the spread of English was integrated into the process of colonisation…English no longer stems from such epicentres…" (Modiano, 2001, 343).

It is worth pointing out at this stage that the term "native speaker" will arise regularly throughout this book. This is because the author considers the cultural background of the English native speaker different to that of the non-native speaker of the language and thus has implications for both the teaching of and learning of the language. The term itself is controversial as it can be hard to define and by nature can be exclusionary. That is why a loose definition of someone who comes from an Anglophone country and speaks the language from an early age is offered here. Admittedly, a person from an Anglophone country may not speak English, children of Anglophone parents living in a non-Anglophone country may speak English perfectly, etc. That is why Ben Rampton (1990) brought into question the term "native speaker" as it is such a nebulous concept; "we cannot assume that nationality and ethnicity are the same" (Rampton, 1990, 98). Cheng et al. (2021, 14) refer to "issues of social and cultural identity", and the term excludes marginalised populations. The latter authors advise that before embarking on research authors should examine their own assumptions when it comes to the term.

Regarding pedagogy, Medgyes (2001, 2020) demonstrates how both "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" English teachers are equally effective in their own right, though with different teaching characteristics which will be discussed further on in chapter six. In spite of the accepted qualities of both non-native and native teachers, it is still possible to find job positions that advertise for holders of British or American passports only, for example, proving that such native-speaker fallacy still exists. Phillipson (1992, 14) in fact, refers to the native teacher as a "menace" if he/she is insufficiently trained or qualified and that merely being a native speaker of the language is not a qualification to teach it. He describes the ideal teacher as one who has near-native competency, who has learned the language herself/himself through the eyes of someone who comes from the same culture and first language as their learners. At that point, they have an in-depth knowledge of where English differs from the local language. In this respect, a native speaker would be deficient.

Considering the historical origins and the wide reach of the ELT industry and its organisations, it is easy to see how Phillipson's tenets could have been promulgated and become ingrained into contemporary methods, materials and beliefs. Suresh Canagarajah (1999, 12) in *Resisting Imperi-*

alism in English Teaching sums this up in describing a great deal of contemporary methodology that is based on the foundations of "educational philosophies and pedagogical traditions which can be traced back to the colonial mission of spreading Enlightenment values for civilizing purposes…". Canagarajah's work illustrates how alien and out-of-context the British content of their English classes appeared to students in a periphery country, war-torn Sri Lanka, and the strategies that need to be employed in order to contextualise such content. The implication is that methodology and learning material produced by one culture for another culture which the learners cannot identify with is not necessarily going to bring about the best learning outcomes. This aspect will be discussed further on in chapter two and three.

1.5 Discussion

Some academics disagreed with Phillipson's arguments. Bisong (1995), for example, argued that periphery countries were not understood correctly, particularly by those who come from monolingual linguacultures. He provided the example of Nigeria which has up to 450 different languages of which people may use up to five. There, a parent may send their child to an international school to learn English for no more than the pragmatic advantages that knowledge of the language can provide. He further argues that 3-4 hours of English classes could never threaten their L1. Berns et al. (1998) were more forceful in their disagreement with criticisms of Phillipson's zealous rhetorical style as well as what they perceived as inaccuracies and generalisations such as Scandinavia is a country and Japan is poor and oppressed. In addition, they found him to offer no solutions which led them to question whether, in fact, he was suggesting the cessation of ELT altogether in the countries in question. Although Canagarajah's work agrees with the central points of Linguistic Imperialism and the power inequalities English as a foreign language carries with it, he criticises the concept's

> "orientation to domination is too simple and unilateral as it ignores how linguistic and cultural conflicts are highly mediated encounters with the values and traditions of the local communities filtering or negotiating dominant discourses in unpredictable ways".
> Canagarajah, 1999, 207

In other words, we may choose to interpret a community's use of English either as a submission to domination as per Phillipson, or a pragmatic use of a linguistic tool as per Bisong. Canagarajah notes also that periphery

communities find ways of resisting the imperialistic aspects of English while holding on to the beneficial aspects. He ultimately takes a more balanced view than Phillipson. "The position of English is complex and many sided" Pennycook (2017, xi).

When it comes to the teaching profession, Canagarajah (1999, 3) makes the point that "few ELT professionals have considered the political complexity of their enterprise". The cases put forward by Canagarajah, Phillipson and Pennycook, for example, certainly provide an argument that they should. Phillipson more recently, between 2008 and 2013[1] (https://www.tesolacademic.org), noted that ELT organisations do not take seriously the arguments of Lingusitic Imperialism, and there is evidence of not much having changed in the profession. This can be observed by British Council's continued link with government, discussed earlier, course materials which still focus on the centre (Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013; Mishan, 2021), and training courses too (Gallagher and Geraghty, 2021). Rajagopalan (1999, 205) concluded that teachers themselves do not need to feel guilty about the imperialistic aspects of ELT because languages will always compete with each other and be associated with issues of power. However, Canagarajah (1999, 213) states that Rajagopalan's rationale does not release them from certain responsibilities to overcome oppressive aspects of ELT, nor allow them to be passive technicians, in the sense that they follow lesson materials without first considering the potential inequalities contained within. Modiano (2001, 339) discussed "…a need to gain a better understanding of those aspects of the ELT practitioner's behaviour which can be perceived as furthering the forces of Linguistic Imperialism", and perhaps educators should reflect on their own practices and whether they are done out of habit or acculturation, furthering those forces. Pennycook (2007, 90) in *The Myth of English as an International language* states that "…we don't have to accept all of Phillipson's imperialistic claims to nevertheless acknowledge that there are widespread social, cultural, educational, economic and political effects…", and we must adjust our methods and materials in acknowledging and avoiding the potential for cultural inequalities and imbalances of power between the L1 linguaculture and that of English, the L2. Modiano (2001, 340) advises that teachers must have an "ecology of language" mindset. Both Pennycook (2017, 300) and Canagarajah (1999, 19) advise the practice of critical pedagogy in the English language classroom. That is, not following the course content passively, rather questioning and confronting issues of inequality and power imbalance, etc. when they arise.

[1] The exact year could not be determined from the recording.

With regard to the language itself, Modiano (2001, 340) questions "the pressure to attain near-native proficiency" which learners experience from centre-method ELT that relies on Standard English as the model. Advocates of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) subscribe to the view that ultimately this is not achievable for the learner and places the L2 speaker of English in the category of a second (lower) class speaker of the language. Jennifer Jenkins' (2009, 200) definition of ELF is "the common language of choice among speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds". That is why ELF (to be discussed in chapter five) is an attractive concept to those who wish to use English as an international language as it focuses on L2 to L2 interlocutor's achievement of mutual comprehension rather than Standard English proficiency. This also has the effect of removing the power from native English speakers. "When inner-circle speakers participate in ELF communication they do not set the linguistic agenda" (Jenkins 2009, 200), which is why ELF is seen as non-controversial and overcomes the criticisms of Linguistic Imperialism.

1.6 Conclusion

It cannot be denied how pragmatic a global language is and English has fulfilled that purpose. As to how much the rise of English as a global language can be proportioned to either accident or design, this chapter has shown that the answer is cloudy and complex. The origins in its expansion lie in British territorial conquests and the British Empire. The rise of American power in the twentieth century further enhanced its potency. While the American influence on cinema, music and popular culture, along with new technology such as radio, TV, and internet exposed the language to more and more people worldwide, there were other factors at play too. Linguistic Imperialism presents a very solid argument that Anglo-American promotion of the English language after the 1950s was ultimately of commercial and political benefit to Western powers and their neoliberal ideals through organisations such as British Council and TESOL. Phillipson's five tenets imply Western-centric misconceptions that extend into the teaching and methodology of ELT. There are further implications too, such as Anglophone culture and the English language usurping local ones, as well as imposing themselves, for example, on people who want to publish research, use the internet, etc. This chapter would conclude that all stakeholders in ELT should acknowledge that the rise of the English Language to a global language has not always been benign. Issues of inequality, power imbalances and cultural domination mean that a great deal of intercultural sensitivity should be employed in policies,