Negotiation of Writing Norms

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Abstract

This paper discusses two writing norms: monomodality and multimodality. Monomodality is based on the standardized native-speaker norm representing the monolingual view while multimodality focuses on pragmatism and pluralism. There has been a debate over the issue--which norm is useful to international students at the university level. "Glocalization" (i.e., integrating globalization with localization, or incorporating the English teaching with local cultures and values) is recommended as future writing communities become more diverse and multiple norms need to interplay with one another across various cultures. The paper concludes with "worldliness of English" and advocates the renovation of English by adjusting the English teaching to local cultures in a more inclusive, ethical, and democratic way.

1. Introduction

Writing, as an integral part of one's identity, has to be taught [1]. Then, what English is to be learned and taught? Do writing instructors apply the standardized norm (codified British or American English) stemming from "the homogeneous inner-circle speech communities" with the native-speaker norm, or localized "exogenous norms" of World Englishes founded in "meaningful social and institutional functions in multilingual communities" [6, p. 230]?

2. Literature Review

Kachru [10] defines the "norm" in terms of its "acceptability, generally by the native speakers of a language" and "fulfilling codified prerequisites according to a given 'standard' or 'norm' at various linguistic levels" (p. 48). Kachru [10] extends the "norm" to its outcome — "proficiency scale," pertaining to "prescriptivism" and "conformity" (p. 48). Kachru [12] applies two labels to these norms: "endo-normative" and "exo-normative" models (p. 7), or "monomodality" and "multimodality" [10, p. 66]. Kachru [10] terms "monomodality" as an assumed "homogeneous English L2 speech community" based on the premises of the same functions of English across all geographical regions, and similarities in various settings and in people's motivations for learning English (p. 66). In contrast,

"multimodality" is labeled by Kachru [10] as the norm opposite to the monolingual model, founded in "pragmatism" and "functional realism," stressing three categories of "variability": variability related to acquisition, variability related to function, and variability related to the context of situation" (p. 66).

Mackenzie [16] makes the point that to score political points, scholars are neglecting the ample data from research studies that show irrefutably what international students at the college and university level would find most helpful is instruction assistance grounded in native-speaker writing norms. However, Lowenberg [18] protests that the presupposition of such a yardstick is "no longer universally valid" (p. 108). Kachru [10] establishes that the issue of the "norm" (p. 48) is closely associated with the issue of language expansion. Given the linguistic and cultural pluralism and complexities of English, diversified historical and sociopolitical contexts, and dissenting language policies in different nations, Kachru [11] contests that native-speaker norm as a "fallacy" (p. 358) owing to "the internationalization of the language," the sociolinguistic, functional, and pragmatic implications of non-native varieties (p. 355). Seidlhofer [14] concurs that non-native speakers have hugely outnumbered naive speakers and have reversed the construct as "majority"; hence, it will soon be inappropriate to address this huge, "majority" population as non-natives (p. 45). In the contemporary world, native speakers of English may find their status will become disadvantageous as non-native speakers of English can more effectively and properly use English as a lingua franca [14]. Further, Seidlhofer [14] sets forth that the codified writing norms in the Anglo culture shows the interpretations of writing from one single cultural perspective which seems far apart from the objective of higher education that diversity is encouraged. Kachru [10] ascertains that the non-native norm can be a "competitive model" in second language teaching on the grounds that it "fulfills certain conditions" (p. 55). He illustrates "the truth is that the non-native Englishes— institutionalized or non-institutionalized — are linguistic orphans in search of their parents" (p. 66); therefore, the stereotypical "deficient Englishes" and people's

attitudinal rejection to these varieties hurt non-native speakers (p. 66).

3.Approach

Canagarajah [8] debunks the native-speaker myth and proposes a "mulitimodal, multisensory, multilateral" and "multidimensional" approach in order to be "more socially embedded, ecologically sensitive, and interactionally open" (p. 923). He considers that globalization and multiculturalism have propelled the reconfiguration of the norm of language acquisition since the world is getting more multilingual now as a growing number of people travel across national borders. Canagarajah [8] argues that multilingual individuals are not approaching the target language, but are using their "interlanguage" with their own norms in their "unique context" (p. 927). In addition, non-native speakers do not observe the standardized conventions to interact with one another in outer- and expanding-communities when English is used as a lingua franca [6]. Canagarajah [8] uses these data to assert that the native-speaker norm is no longer pertinent. Now that "communication is multimodal" and "one's competence is based on the repertoire that grows as the contexts of interaction increase" (p. 933), context-specific "acquisition aims towards versatility and agility, not mastery and control" (p. 932). Moreover, the native-speaker norm "fails to give importance to attitudinal, psychological, and perceptual factors that mold the intersubjective processes of communication" (p. 934). Kachru [12] explains that approaches to realizing communicative objectives are culture specific and the "speech fellowship" is subject to standards, varying across cultures (p.10). Kachru [10] further argues that "before claiming universality for a model, one must understand that what is linguistic medicine for one geographic area may prove linguistic poison for another area" (p. 57). He stresses "functional uses" (p. 64), or "language pragmatics" [12, p. 8] and addresses the link between "context of situation" and English norms to refute the two tenets upheld by the monomodel of English: "intelligibility" and "applicability" [10, p. 64]. Kachru [10] concludes that intelligibility is context bound. Canagarajah and Said [9] suggest that the user of English must follow the mainstream code in "extremely formal institutional contexts" (e.g., in the academia), while utilizing diverse models in communication in outer and expanding circles (p. 160), such as "intranational varieties" of World Englishes and "transnational" varieties as a "lingua franca" [5, p. 198].

4. Contribution to Knowledge

Seidlhofer [14] asserts that the "conceptual gap" needs to be filled and the role of English as a lingua franca needs to be reappraised from its "subordinate" position inferior to the native-speaker cannon to an "autonomous concept" and independent status with its own codifications (p. 38). Kachru and Nelson [13] call for the deconstruction of the "monolithic English" (p. 76) as "a convenient working fiction" (p. 77) and advocate for "the pluralism of English" (p. 77). Seidlhofer [14] reasons that akin to native variety, non-native varieties have their "regularities" and "mutual accommodation." More importantly, non-native speakers are not only passive receptors of English, but also actively adjust English (p. 48) during their "macroacquisition" [14, p. 49], referring to the employment of English and nourishment of "endonormative" competence [8, p. 930]. This means that microacquisition needs to be in line with the "macroacquisition" [14, p. 49]. On the one hand, one's acquisition of language needs to correspond with the local codification; on the other hand, one can show variations to resist the prescriptive standard for "voice and individuality" [8, p. 930]. Zamel [20] foresees the future tendency to various writing communities with multinorms. As globalization thrives, future readership will not only consist of ESL (English as a Second Language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language), but also ESOL (English for Speakers as other languages).

Canagarajah [6] contests that it is time to shift from "either-or" to "both and more," meaning "the ability to negotiate the varieties in other outer- and expanding-circle communities as well" construct (p. 233). He envisions that a linguistic focus needs to be redirected from "grammar to pragmatics, from competence to performance" (p. 234). Given that "norms are relative, variable, heterogeneous, and changing, posing the options as either 'native English norms,' or 'new Englishes norms,' is misleading" (p. 234). Canagarajah [6] demonstrates that multiple norms interplay with one another and any user of English needs to be capable of switching between divergent models and varieties in the "family of languages" (p. 232). Canagarajah [6] announces that "To be really proficient in English today, one has to be multidialectal" (p. 233). There are continually new English models emerging as multilingual users interact with one another in the lingua franca. When "intelligibility" is stressed and "accuracy in grammar" is less focused, people will invent more new English conventions apart from "both the local and metropolitan varieties" (p. 234).

Canagarajah [7] outlines that there are three existent norms in writing pedagogy and research: "inference model," the initial form of "contrastive rhetoric" (by tracing multilingual students'

deviations in writing to their first languages), "correlationist model" (by researching into "the texts in L1 descriptively" and failing to link this information to interpret students' variations in their second language - English) (p. 589), and "Negotiation Model" (p. 590) (by focusing on the "shuttling" between languages and communities, "process of composing in multiple languages," writers' "versatility," and "changing contexts of communication" (p. 591). Canagarajah [7] explicitly identifies the restrictions of the first two paradigms and affirms the third one by acknowledging the strengths of multilingual writers in their "creativity" and "double vision" (p. 602). He comments that "Writing is rhetorical negotiation for achieving social meanings and functions. In other words, writing is not just constitutive, it is also performative" (p. 602). Canagarajah [7] articulates that "…we are interested in developing not only competent writers, but also critical writers" (p. 603). Canagarajah [7] suggests that students apply "strategies of communication" to "demystify the dominant conventions" and "to find a strategic entry point into English" (p. 602).

5. Conclusion

"Glocalization" [19, p. 25] is a coined term by mingling two words: "global" and "local" [19, p. 32], denoting "the interaction of both global and local forces in specific sociocultural contexts where local social actors are confronted with (often, albeit not always, imposed) the task of learning and using English, and where local social actors engage in different creative practices, exercising their creative discursive agency and strategies of appropriation" [2, p. 217]. Lin et al. [2] recommend a conceptual reorientation from TESOL to TEGCOM (Teaching English for Glocalized Communication), with the approaches of "sociocultural situatedness, postcolonial performativity, and glocalization" to deconstruct hegemony and reconstruct ideology (p. 216). Pennycook [3] concludes that there could be a possible intersection between "homogeneity position" and "heterogeny position." "Homogeneity position" implies that language is part of homogenizing globalization, while "heterogeny position" emphasizes bilinguals' creativity and diversity of English varieties (p.7-8). Seidlhofer [14] believes that the deleterious effects of "stable homogeneity of English" (p. 33) is that it disapproves of any form of transformation and exploitation of English for local objectives and does not tolerate or affirm the value of any deviance from the standard. As a result, minority people are perpetual losers and are "in an inescapable double bind" (p. 34) because they can neither gain the supremacy of native speakers, nor can they revive the language for their own use. They are "told that

they got it wrong because they have the misfortune not to be native speakers" (p. 34). However, Kachru [12] terms non-native speakers' renovation of English as a "double-edged sword" (p. 8). Pennycook [3] argues that minority people can change politics and rebuild languages and identities to adapt to their own cultures and ethnicities.

Therefore, globalization may be integrated with localization. Kramsch [15] contends that the attention needs to be shifted from the homogeneity or heterogeny paradigm. In a similar vein, Canagarajah [4] proposes "worldliness of English" in the sense of adjusting English language teaching to local cultures and values. He visualizes "worldliness" as a "resistance perspective" and articulates that "the intention is not to reject English, but to reconstitute it in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic terms" (p. 2). Pennycook [3] propose an "appropriation" (p. 15) paradigm where English is used for local purposes, hence, remodeling, renovating, reincarnating, and reviving the language. English has expanded and flourished because it suits "social and communicative needs and purposes of communities of users" outside the inner and the outer circles [14, p. 91]. This alternative perspective of thinking rather than continuing accepting "the traditional way of prescribing the English of the subject" [14, p. 208] enables the identity change in the countries where English is a societal language. "This identity, while challenging a monolithic, monolingual view of culture, will also create a new form of globalism, which values and upholds diversity" [17, p. 197].

6. References

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