REVISITING ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE

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Abstract. As English has become a powerful tool to 'conquer' the world, the needs to consider the issues arise English as an International language has become paramount. The arguments of who 'own' English sparks other related matters, such as the native speaker and non native speakers as well as native speakerism. In addition, it also standard and non standard English, that come up as the varieties of English blooming is unstopable. On Norton's statement of the issues of English in a global world provoke debate on whether the aforementioned is for better or for worse. This essay analyze the perspective of experts in the dichotomy globally, meanwhile seeking the enlightenment of the situation in Indonesia locally. The discussion lead to awareness that English and the learner's agency. As the needs of English in the global era is indispensable, English would be for better than for worse.

Keywords: English, ownership of English, varieties.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication that play an important role in shaping the world today. Looking at the history of language, it evolved from time to time, from Greek to Latin in the ancient time, from French to English today. Anderman,G & Rogers,M (2005) describe chronologically the development of languages in Europe. They stated that for over a millennium, Greek was widely spoken. It was the language that carried knowledge and culture, thereby Alexander the Great gave a special position as an official language in the Macedonian Empire. It continued until the Roman Empire established in 753 BC in which Latin became the lingua franca. Much later in 17th century, as France gained power in politic and culture, French was used as a medium of communication in French Colony and European countries in general. Starting from the early 20th century, English serves as a

lingua franca, since it gains special acknowledgement in many countries, and even an official one.

From the journey of language, we can draw a red line as to why and how a language becomes an international one. According to Chrystal (2003, p.7),' it is simply because of power'. In the ancient time, it was the spears and swords which established the Macedonian andthe Roman Empires to enlarge their territory and spread the language at the same time. Meanwhile, during the colonial era, it was canon of the British colonist which impose English to its colonies. Whereas, throughout the 20th century, the spread of English is even more extensive since America, as a super power country in politic, economy, media as well as military force, became very influential. Chrystal asserts, 'without a strong power-base, of whatever kind, no language can make progress as an international medium of communication'.(ibid :p.7)

The changes of language as an international language over the timewere influenced by many factors. In this era, English as the linguistic vehicle of America has dispersed around the world through technology and culture, which caused the speakers in non-English speaking countries, outnumbered those in the countries where the language is originally from (Graddol, 2000, p.10). It has been a phenomenon, which later tied with the term 'Globalization'.

English and globalization are two words which closely attached. With its development as a lingua franca, English has become indispensible. The spread of English as a global language, however not as smooth as it is may seen. Debates over issues related to English amongst experts are still carrying on until now, such as: to what extent does Phillipson's proposition onthe spread of English as part of linguistic imperialism can be justified and disregarding the agency of leaner?. Does the term native speaker and non-native speakerstill effective to show the 'ownership' of English?. Does issueon identity and intelligibility in ESL/EFL context relevant?, Does standardized English necessary after all?.

Referring to Norton's (1997) statement ' If English belongs to the people who speak it, whether native or non-native, whether ESL or EFL, whether standard or non-standard, then the expansion of English in this era of rapid globalization may possibly be for the better than the worse' (p.427), the discussion in this paper will mainly affirm that the spread of English in the world is assuredly be better than worse by looking at the several issues mentioned.

ISSUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE GLOBALLY

Linguistic imperialism versus the agency of learner Phillipson (1992b) introduced the term Linguistic Imperialism in his influential book under the same title 'Linguistic Imperialism', in which triggered various responsesaround the world. It was hotly debated which led to different reaction from receptive (Pennycook 1994, Mufwene 2010) toaversive (Canagarajah 1999).Phillipson argues, that during the colonial time, English was 'imposed' to the colonies of British Empire, whereas in post-colonial era, it was America which spread the hegemony of English through technology and culture to the world. Nonetheless, question that arises, will that subsequently neglect the agency of learner to pursue and reject to learn the language?

In his book, Phillipson contends,it is linguistic imperialism/linguicims if the English language is imposed (by stick, carrots, or ideas), conscious or unconscious, overt or covert. It may be of an abstract kind (regulation for the use of particular languages) or more concrete (resource allocation to one language but not others) (p.55). From the exposition, however, Phillipson appears to be neglecting the agency of learner who opts to learn and oppose. While in the contrary,the statistic shows the number of people pursuing to learn the English language is escalating (see Graddol, 2000 p.10 and 60). In fact, there are several case studies proposed by Canagarajah (1999), Chew (1999) and Bisong (1995) to show the role of English in their countries, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Nigeria respectively.

During the British occupancy, according to Canagarajah (1999) Sri Lankanwas exposed to English since the British uphold

English as the official language. However, through the time, the reason to gain prosperity through the language acquisition, which then motivate them to learn. He also convincingly elaborates the standpoint of learners by mentioning that it was social and cultural conditionwhich later on shaping the community to take part in the hegemony of English (p.62).In the meantime, Chew (1999) as an example of Singapore, asserts that the spread of English in postcolonial era is predominantly the result of globalization instead of linguistic or cultural imperialism. It was more by choice rather than by force when Singaporean opt English as their official language among other languages spoken in Singapore. She mentions the force is more a 'bottom-up' as opposed to 'top-down (p.40).In the case of Nigerian, as Bisong (1995) claims, they decided to improve their language repertoire by attending English classes and go to English medium of instruction school in order to enable them to interact in multilingual and multicultural society, in hoping for future success.From several instances above, we can conclude that it is a matter of consciousness to learn or to leave the language. Thereby, this is to verify that learning English is for better than for worse, for any reason which might entail.

Native versus Non–Native

The concept of native speaker and non-native speaker is multi interpretative. As the term itself tiesclosely with identity and how one perceived themselves in a group of society. Debates emerge on whether the term is to some extent useful after all. Especially, when the discussion touches the issue of English language teaching. Who would be more effective in teaching?. Is it native speaker or non-native speaker?. Who might the students' prefer to have as their teacher?.

To understand better, we should define what native speaker (NS) is and what it is not. Davies (2003),in his book about Native Speaker: Myth or Realityargues that 'everyone is a native speaker of his/her own unique code'(p.208).Thus, the label native speaker and non-native speaker are still helpful as it links to 'membership'. It is similar to a native term in relation to region in which a person was born,

whether subsequently resident or not. He, further,classifies NS into several categories: by birth,by virtue of being a native user,by being an exceptional learner, through education andthrough long residence in the adopted country. (p.214). By following the schemes, we can conclude that corresponding to Davies' concept,NS is not fictional at all. Therefore, it is undisputable that there are differences between NS and NNSin respect of linguistic, discourse and cultural repertoire.

In regards to the first related questions, Phillipson (1992b, pp.193-9) challenges the second principle in Makarere conference in 1961 thatNS would be a better teacher, by calling it 'native speaker fallacy'. While he acknowledges that native speaker has better intuition in grammar, he contests their aptness onexplaining the theory behind the use of forms and patterns. Second, based on the research by Benke & Medgyes (2005, pp.195-216) over student's perceptions on nonnative speaker English teacher, they found out that NNSETs are desirable for their competency in explaining grammar rules and pedagogical strategies, whereas, NSETs are preferable on giving the model of imitation and cultural immersion.Regarding who might be more effective, Phillipson (1992a, p. 14) contends that 'teachers are made rather than born'. In other words, teachers, either NSET or NNSET, should undergo an extensive and rigorous training to be an effective English teacher. As English belong to people who speak it, the most effective English teacher would be those who master a high linguistic proficiency and pedagogical competence, regardless the status of native speaker or non-native speaker.

ESL versus EFL

Following the three concentric circles by Kachru (1985, p. 12), the terms associated to the role of English in those countries respectively are ENL, ESL and EFL. In the same chapter as well, he indicates the type of which associate with speech fellowship among this circles. He mentions that ENL is the norm-providing, while ESL is the norm-developing, and EFL as the norm-dependant. The last two mentionedwill be further discussed in relation to the varieties which are

blossoming, in regards to 'the ownership' of English and how do they cope with the identity and intelligibility?.

Phillipson (1992b) pinpoints the fuzziness of the distinction between EFL and ESL learnersby deriving from his interview with Strevens, regarding the situation of EFL/ESL in England. He argues that adult immigrants learner who took classes in Britain should be called ESL instead EFL since they are in the ESL situation (p.242). Moreover, Bruff-Giffler supports Phillipson's conceptions by emphasizing two different situations which ESL would probably be, in outer circle countries such as, people in Malaysia and in inner circle countries, like immigrants in Australia (2002,p.134).Therefore, in the following the discussion on ESL will be mainly focuses on learners in outer circle country and the EFL in general.

In a research by Georgieva (2010, p.131) aboutIdentity and Intelligibility to Bulgarian students as EFL learners, the result shows that they perceive themselves as one who adhere to the norm and standard as prescribe in the codified grammar book and dictionaries, not merely following inner circle norms or any varieties which exist. In addition, related to intelligibility they are more focus on getting the message across, instead of working on native-like competence. Meanwhile, if we pay attention closely to ESL learners in general such as in India and Singapore, their views about native-like competence is even less. They also do not attach themselves to follow any standard, of whatever it is. Furthermore, they develop varieties of English which nowadays gain acknowledgement as some of them are now codified and institutionalized. Those two illustrations are to show that English belongs to the people who speak it, regardless the dichotomy of ENL, ESL and EFL.

Standard versus Non-Standard

It is widely known that majority recognizes three most famous kind of dialects from inner circle country, namely; American, British and Australian English. In addition, there are also varieties which come from outer circle countries which recently under research too, such as;

Singlish and Indian English. Acknowledging these varieties exist, we will get an impression that there must be a Standard English. If there is any, would that be any of those mentioned?. And, if one model were employed, would that be automatically eradicating the breakdown of intelligibility?

The discussion over Standard English has heated for over a decade. Undeniably, it is a complex issue with many aspects to be considered. We can witness the battle between two prominent figures in linguistic world, Quirk and Kachru, as it is well documented in ' English in the World, teaching and learning the language and Literature' -a compilation of papers of an International Conference in 1984– on whether or not it is necessary to uphold standard in English. Before accepting the false conception about Standard English (SE), we had better to understand the context related.Furthermore, Strevens (1983 p.87) in an attempt to clarify what SE is,draws several points of what SE is NOT:

1. It cannot be defined towards any specific reference for instance; BBC or Oxford English.

2. It is not specify to any particular group of English-users

3. It does not refer to the most commonly used English

4. It is not establish by a particular group which put forward to another group.

In other words, based on his explanation, if English remains following any particular group norms, or be seen as the dialect which mostly spoken or heard, then it could not be categorized as SE.

In correspond with varieties and innovation emerges in OCC and ECC, which is famous for World Englishes, concern about intelligibility becomes apparent. We recognize for instance 'Indian English' and 'Singlish' which is based on the idiosyncrasies of lexis, syntax and style(Strevens, 1982, p.24).What comes next in our mind, who actually judge what is intelligible and what is not?. What are the parameters then?. In regards to the ownership of English globally, is it relevantstill to uphold SE ?.

With English language disparity due to 'nativization' or 'glocalization', there is a great possibility for breakdown in intelligibility. As Mckay (2002, p.52) emphasizes that among three components of intelligibility, it is the interpretability aspect which play an important role for a successful communication. In agreement with Norton's proposition,interpretability or understanding of sociocultural context thatunderlie pragmatic between interlocutors is the key issue. It depends on the users attitude to establish empathy towards varieties of language. As long as one can raise their bars of tolerance, the breakdown of intelligibility could possibly be avoided. As Kachru'shighlights(1982)' the acceptance of model depends on its users: the users must demonstrate a solidarity, identity, and loyalty towards a language variety'. (p.50)

English Language Teaching and Learning in Indonesia

After gaining independence in 1945, America had substantial authority towards Indonesian economy. They provided services that were hard to decline for a new-born country, from advisory and consultancy to assigning Indonesian intellectual abroad to study in American universities and colleges (Sneddon, 2003). These students who then returned upon completion of their study, involuntary became the agent of spreading the language by confirming that it is important to master English in order to join the global community. English, subsequently, obtain a special status in society, which is associated with modern, sophisticated and successful.

In 1994, English has even reached a larger scope. It has been taught as compulsory subject in secondary school since 1984 curriculum, and furthermore become one that serve as a local content in primary school. It is confirmed by the decree no.1702/104/M/1994, that English is taught as a local content starting from the third year of primary school (GBPP,1994 as cited in Silfia, 2002). Along with the emergence of globalization, English,further,part of curriculum starting from the first year of primary school.Now, abiding the Education Policy Act 2003, English has become one major

component in the teaching of Science and Math in several schools assigned by local authority as a consequence for running a dual program of national curriculum and international acknowledge standardized test such as such as TOEFL and CIE.

This effort was made to meet the demand of global competitiveness. The schools which are labeled as International Standard School, operate dual programs by creating classes which use English as medium of instructionand regular Indonesian based. However, fundamental debates over the effectiveness of this model were immense among many parties: the Indonesian linguist, education observer, teacher and the student's parents. They were questioning on the rationale of using English as a medium of instruction for Math and Science. In their perspective, if at the same time students are in quandary about terms used in the language, how can critical analysis be promoted?. Alongside the complex situation, another issue becomes visible on a poor quality of teachers who delivered the lesson in English. In general, it raises skepticism about the government's goal and its implementation in Indonesian education. All in all, English has been playing in a ' love' and 'hate' role in Indonesian education, notwithstanding the enthusiasm to pursue English language education remains high.

CONCLUSION

When you visit Brussell or Dar res Salaam's urban area, it is not necessary to learn the local language since English is widely spoken as lingua franca. Speech from the Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmad Dinejad,or welcoming remarks from the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, will be delivered in English. As Sharifan (2009) says, 'for better or worse, by choice or force, English has 'traveled' to many parts of the world and has been used to serve various purposes' (p.1). Thus, the line becomes very thin on whether it is by choice of by force towards the spread of English globally.

Native speaker may feel 'owning' the language. However,'it will be those who speak English as a second or foreign language who

will determine its world future' (Graddol, 2000, p.10). This prediction has come into reality since the 'nativation' and 'glocalization' is unstoppable. Therefore, standard and non-standard is in question whether it is still a useful concept after all.

As in Indonesian case, English played an important role in the society, not deliberately because of the government policy only, but also the urge of people to embrace the future as if it is occurring naturally.There is evidence of a small percentage of Indonesian especially who live in the capital city andcategorize as economically powerful, prefer to send their kids to school which use English only. Even if the consequenceswill be struggling to learn their own national language, in the name of globalization.

The whole discussion about English in global world can be concluded as for better than for worse. It serves the need of people across boundaries and culture. Moreover, it plays as the connecting device from east to west, young to old to meet at one point. As language evolves, and so does English, differences that people may found about each other's English, will up to the individual to overcome it.

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