Critical Issues for 21st Century ELT:

What English?
Whose methods?
Which culture?

Richard Smith
University of Warwick, UK
Background I: English as an International Language (EIL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother tongue speakers</th>
<th>Official language populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chinese (1,000m)</td>
<td>1. English (1,400m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. English (350m)</td>
<td>2. Chinese (1,000m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spanish (250m)</td>
<td>3. Hindi (700m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hindi (200m)</td>
<td>4. Spanish (280m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Arabic (150m)</td>
<td>5. Russian (270m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expanding circle

Outer circle

Inner circle
eg USA, UK

eg India, Nigeria

eg China, Russia, Brazil
Why is English the main international language?

Because of widespread ‘official’ and international use (not because of mother tongue use) –

Intranationally as a lingua franca, and internationally - as the major language of business, media, technology, diplomacy, etc. etc.
How did English become an international language?

- Migration by English speakers
- Colonialism by the British
- The international role and influence of the USA
- Commerce, international communications, media, films, etc.
- The spread of new technology

(Crystal 2003)
What will happen in the future?

• Growth in English learning at primary level
• Changes to English learning at secondary and tertiary level

Graddol (2006)
Age & English Proficiency Level

Level needed for academic study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 (IELTS 2.)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 (KET/ IELTS 3.0)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 (PET/ IELTS 4.0)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 (FCE/ IELTS 5.5)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 (CAE/ IELTS 6.5)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 (CPE/ IELTS 7.0)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level needed for academic study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A1 (IELTS 2.): 6 years old
- A2 (KET/ IELTS 3.0): 8 years old
- B1 (PET/ IELTS 4.0): 10 years old
- B2 (FCE/ IELTS 5.5): 12 years old
- C1 (CAE/ IELTS 6.5): 14 years old
- C2 (CPE/ IELTS 7.0): 16 years old
Why is the spread of English controversial?

Association with:

- political issues
- linguistic human rights
- cultural imperialism / cultural change / cultural threat
- linguistic change
- educational issues / patterns of provision
Background II: A ‘critical turn’ in ELT discourse in the 1990s

Phillipson (1992) – *Linguistic Imperialism*


Holliday (1994) – *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*

As reflected in subsequent articles in *ELT Journal*
Three critical issues / areas related to the spread of English:

- What English? (World Englishes / ELF)
- Whose methods? (Appropriate Methodology)
- Which culture? (Intercultural Competence)
To be discussed today in relation to three aspects:

1. What English? --- Implications of research into ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ (ELF)
2. Whose methods? --- The usefulness of a historical perspective
3. Which culture? -- Critiquing cultural contents of textbooks
1. What English?
Assumptions:

• English is more used among non-native speakers, as a language of contact than it is between non-native speakers and native speakers

• English is not the ‘possession’ of those who happen to speak it as a native language

• But ‘inner circle English’ (British or American varieties) still dominates ELT
Should we incorporate ‘World Englishes’ and/or English as a Lingua Franca into ELT? If so, how?
English as a Lingua Franca

• [see handout]
Possible implications of ‘World Englishes’ and ELF research:

• Increase interaction with EIL users (e.g. ALTs)

• Teaching and assessment focusing on communicative effectiveness (vs. NS pronunciation, grammar, pragmatics)?
• Teaching materials representing EIL users positively

• Teacher education needs

• Educating the general public
• Influence on materials – reduction of focus on idioms?

• Consciousness-raising -> reduced anxiety about achieving a NS model

• ‘Receptive’ and ‘cognitive’ exposure to World English varieties and ELF?
2. Whose methods?
Early 1990s:

Criticisms of export of methods from the US/UK increased – Phillipson, Pennycook, Holliday

Holliday (1994) talks of ‘tissue rejection’ in curriculum reform projects, explains it by difference in context: ‘TESEP’ vs. ‘BANA’
‘TESEP’ characteristics
• ______________________
• ______________________
• ______________________
• ______________________
• ______________________

‘BANA’ characteristics
• ______________________
• ______________________
• ______________________
• ______________________
• ______________________
How can ‘contextually appropriate’ methodology be developed for TESEP contexts?
1. By moving away from ‘Direct Method’?
Qualities of non-native speaker teachers (NNSTs)

• ________________
• ________________
• ________________
• ________________
• ________________

Qualities of native speaker teachers (NSTs)

• ________________
• ________________
• ________________
• ________________
• ________________
Advantages of using students’ L1

• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________

Advantages of ‘Direct Method’

• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________
• ______________________________________
DER
SPRACHUNTERRICHT
MÜSSE UMKEHREN!

EIN BEITRAG
ZUR
ÜBERBÜRDMINGSFRAGE
VON
QUOUSQUE TANDEM
(WILHELM VICTOR),

DRITTE, DURCH ANMERKUNGEN ERWEITERTE
AUFLAGE.

LEIPZIG.
O. R. REISLAND.
1905.
2. By building on persistent tradition, e.g. yakudokuhou?

(Smith with Imura 2004)
3. By seeing what kinds of reform *did* ‘work’ in the past?
THE BULLETIN
OF
THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN
ENGLISH TEACHING
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TOKYO, JAPAN

Vol. I, No. 1

June 1, 1923

English Phonetician Recommends American Pronunciation for Japan;
Whereas, American Phonetician Recommends "Southern English."

Professors Daniel Jones and C. H. bindActionCreators differ as to a standard

On Tuesday, May 1, the special committee of the Department of
Education, consisting of Messrs. C. Matsunaga, T. Komatsu, S. Ichikawa,
Y. Ohkura, J. Nagaya, S. Mikami, K. Fujikawa appointed to
advise in matters pertaining to the work of Mr. Palmer in Japan, met
at the Mombashi to hear from Dr. Sawayanagi the plans of the Institute
for Research in English Teaching.

The committee approved the Institute, and as individuals they
concentrated to become members of the Advisory Council of the Institute.

It was also resolved to entrust the details of administration and research to a committee which shall be
nominated by Dr. Sawayanagi.

Dr. Sawayanagi has therefore with Mr. Palmer appointed the following as the Administrative Committee of the Institute: Dr. M. Sawayanagi, President of the Imperial Education Association; Mr. T. Komatsu, Inspector of the Department of Education; Prof. Shigeharu Kimura of the Tokyo University of Commerce; Prof. Rinko Ishikawa of the Higher Normal School, Tokyo; Prof. Tsutsumi Chiba of the School of Foreign Languages, Tokyo; Prof. Shigeru Araki of the Foreign School, Tokyo; Miss Akira Yoshino of the Tsuda College, Tokyo; Prof. Eiji Horii of Keio University, Tokyo; Prof. J. Victor Martin of Aoyama Gakuin, Tokyo; and Mr. W. E. Laxon, Sweet, the head of the News Agency.

Kaitakusha appointed distributors of Institute Publications.

The Japanese Y. M. C. A. Press (Kaitakusha) of 10 Omote Sarayaku-cho, Kanda, Tokyo have been appointed distributing agents and business brokers of the Institute. Mr. Kobayashi, the manager of the Press, acts as a secretary of the Institution, and voluntarily tends to all the business of the Institute. This relieves the other secretaries for the technical work of research which is so important for the Institute to concentrate its efforts on.

Arrangements are also underway with Mr. Palmer's British publishers to make Kaitakusha their stock depository for Japan so that there will always be an adequate supply of Mr. Palmer's books in Japan.
ENGLISH THROUGH ACTIONS

(THIS FORMING PART OF THE "ORAL OSTENSIVE LINE OF APPROACH" OF THE STANDARD ENGLISH COURSE IN PREPARATION BY THE INSTITUTE.)

BY

HAROLD E. PALMER
Linguistic Adviser to the Department of Education, Director of the Institute for Research in English Teaching
AND

DOROTHÉE PALMER
Editorial Secretary of the Institute for Research in English Teaching.

TOKYO
THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN ENGLISH TEACHING
1925
4. Via ‘experimentation’ by teachers themselves, in their own context, in collaboration with one another

- cf. ‘Fukushima plan’
- cf. Communicative Teaching Association
- cf. today’s demonstration lesson
5. By engaging with learner autonomy

- We nowadays need to engage with learners’ methods.
- Students have increased access to / exposure to English
- Engage with students’ interests – they can make learning plans
3. Which culture?
If English is an international language, then which culture(s) should we focus on? Learning English isn’t learning to assimilate to British or American culture.
Focus here on:

• Changes in emphasis on source, target and international culture in textbooks.

• Both global coursebooks and locally produced books (cf. Kiryu et al. -> Tanaka)
• Needs to look beneath the surface - Studies showing that move to valuing the local isn’t necessarily what’s really happened, even if it is desirable.

• Developing critical approaches to analysing and to teaching textbooks
• Need also for greater focus on developing general intercultural competence, e.g. moving beyond textbook contents

• But how to do it? Again, the internet has changed everything. Value of project work.
There are increased opportunities to move beyond the textbook. Choices about ‘what culture?’ can be more in students’ hands – e.g. via group project work.
Final reflections

English in the world ->

English in the world in the classroom

Some say there are very strong and necessary applications to ELT from research showing the variety of uses and norms of English in the world
Treat the suggestions that are being made (often in a top-down, centre to periphery way) with scepticism - think of implications not applications.

There seem to be needs for teachers to develop new knowledge (about other Englishes, cultures) – but it’s impossible to know everything!
We need to get learners to take more responsibility and focus on developing underlying competences (including learning to learn), not think we must provide them with all the information.
- What English? Increasing learners’ confidence in their own English, and enabling them to understand others’ Englishes
- Whose methods? Ones that are appropriate for you as a teacher / for your learners, in your context.
- Which culture(s) – intercultural competence, not particular ‘target cultures’? Encourage critical reflection. Engage with student interests.