The Lingua Franca Core and Englishes in East and Southeast Asia

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Abstract
It has been argued, especially by Jenkins (2000, 2007), that it should not be the goal of learners to imitate speakers from the UK or USA. Instead, they should aim to achieve mutual intelligibility with other speakers of English as a Lingua Franca from around the world. This led her to propose the Lingua Franca Core, an inventory of pronunciation features that she suggests are necessary for maintaining intelligibility in international communication, while features outside the core are unimportant. However, the Lingua Franca Core remains controversial. This paper presents an overview of the pronunciation features of four varieties of English in the Outer Circle (using the Three Circles model of Kachru, 1985), Brunei English, Hong Kong English, Malaysian English and Singapore English, and one variety in the Expanding Circle, Chinese English, to assess the implications of the Lingua Franca Core for these varieties that have developed their own styles of pronunciation that increasingly distinguish them from Inner Circle styles of pronunciation.

Keywords
World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Intelligibility, Lingua Franca Core (LFC), Asian Englishes, Pronunciation features

Introduction

With the worldwide spread of English during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a range of varieties of English evolved in places such as the USA, Australia and New Zealand, countries which are in the Inner Circle according to the Three Circles model of Kachru (1985, 2005). Then, in the twentieth century, there was a huge increase in the number of speakers of English in the Outer Circle, countries such as India, Nigeria and Malaysia where the language has a

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colonial history and often has some kind of official status, with the result that competent speakers of English in the Outer Circle now outnumber those in the Inner Circle (Crystal, 2003). The third circle of Kachru's model, the Expanding Circle, consists of speakers from places such as China, Germany and Brazil where English may be used extensively for international communication but where it has no official status. The number of proficient speakers of English in the Expanding Circle now outnumbers those in both the other two circles combined (Crystal, *English as a Global Language* 61).

One of the predominant current uses of English is as a Lingua Franca (ELF), specifically as a medium of communication for those who do not share a common first language (Seidlhofer, *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca* 7). According to Jenkins, ELF reflects the increasing trend for people in countries where English is not the L1, such as Brazil and China, to use the language as an international contact language, and they may rarely interact with native speakers of English (*World Englishes* 4). In contrast with the world Englishes paradigm, which considers nativised Englishes in various countries, research on ELF largely focuses on interactions between people from different backgrounds.

Though Kachru's Three Circles model has been influential, it has been criticised as it is unable to reflect the multitude of different ways that English is used in the globalised world (Cogo and Dewey, 2012). Furthermore, it characterises the English of speakers in the Expanding Circle as dependent on norms provided by the Inner Circle, but Seidlhofer (2011) argues that this is no longer appropriate, as native speakers should not have a privileged status with regard to the ownership of the language, and proficient speakers in the Expanding Circle should also have a say in the ways that patterns of usage of the language are evolving. For example, even though Japan has traditionally closely followed native-speaker norms, Hino notes that speakers of English in Japan nowadays often feel frustrated with the imposition of exonormative native-speaker standards supported by Kachru's model ("English for Japan" 14). In fact, the concept of "native speaker" is hard to define (Davies, 2003), as many people in the Outer Circle and some in the Expanding Circle grow up speaking English as their first language, so presumably they should be classified as native speakers even though they do not live in the Inner Circle.

So we can ask: is there a need for speakers of world Englishes to follow Inner Circle standards? It can be argued that it is not important for people to adhere to Inner Circle norms if they can communicate successfully and understand each other. Furthermore, with the global increase in the number of ELF speakers, there seems little need for them always to imitate native-speaker styles of speech (Seidlhofer, 2011). Indeed, it has been noted that some people in the Inner Circle have unfavourable reactions when learners try too hard to sound like native speakers (Brown, *Pronunciation Models* 33).

This reflects the arguments put forward by Jenkins (2000) that learners of English should be aiming to achieve mutual intelligibility with other speakers in international contexts. To maintain intelligibility, Jenkins proposed a Lingua Franca Core (LFC), which is a set of pronunciation features that enable ELF speakers to communicate successfully with other ELF speakers. She categorised features such as distinctions between most consonants, initial consonant clusters, and vowel length as core features that are important in maintaining mutual intelligibility and minimising communication breakdown, and she claimed that other features of speech, such as the dental fricatives, small shifts in vowel quality, lexical stress and the selection of intonational tones, have little impact on intelligibility, so speakers should be free to realise them however they like. Indeed, varying realisation of these features enables speakers of English around the world to proclaim their own identity while still being highly intelligible (Jenkins, 2007).

Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006) analysed the patterns of pronunciation of twenty speakers, two from each of the countries in ASEAN, when interacting in small groups of three and four people from different backgrounds, and they reported that most of the misunderstandings that occurred in their data arose because of features of pronunciation that are in the LFC; and the analysis by Deterding (2013) of 183 tokens of misunderstanding between ELF speakers confirmed that most instances of loss of intelligibility involved core features of pronunciation, such as confusion between /n/ and /l/, omission of /h/, and simplification of initial consonant clusters. In other words, both of these studies by and large supported the claims of Jenkins (2000) that the core features are essential, and variation in non-core features rarely causes a problem.

The Dynamic Model of Postcolonial English proposed by Schneider (2007) describes the development of New Englishes in five phases: Foundation, Exonormative Stabilisation, Nativisation, Endonormative Stabilisation and Differentiation. However, Schneider (2014) has himself more recently noted that the model may not be suitable for describing developments in the Expanding Circle, for example in China, where there is a burgeoning use of English today but there is no historical link with English settlers, as the model was only intended to represent the development of postcolonial Englishes (in the Inner and Outer Circles).

Terminology from both Kachru's Three Circles model and Schneider's Dynamic Model of Postcolonial English are used in this paper to contextualise the pronunciation of English in Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. We will provide an overview of the pronunciation features of these Asian Englishes, and we will consider which of the features are inside and which are outside the LFC. In addition, we will assess the pedagogical implications of the emergence of indigenous norms in these regional varieties of English.

The representation of sounds in this paper follows the suggestions of Wells (1982), so the consonants at the start of words such as *thin* and *this* are referred to as the TH sounds, and the vowels in words such as *pet* and *pat* are referred to as the DRESS and TRAP vowels respectively. In this way, we can talk about variations in pronunciation while avoiding prescriptive statements about how words "should" be pronounced. We might note that most speakers in Britain merge the PALM and START vowels without anyone suggesting that their speech is in some way deficient.

The Role of English in Asia

Jenkins categorises Asian English varieties into three main groups: South Asian varieties, such as those of Bangladesh, India and Nepal; Southeast Asian varieties, for example those of Brunei, Singapore and Thailand; and East Asian varieties, including those of China, Hong Kong and Japan (*World Englishes* 45). Three of the varieties analysed here, those of Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore, are Southeast Asian varieties, while the other two, those of China and Hong Kong, are East Asian varieties. All of them are in the Outer Circle, except for that of China which is in the Expanding Circle.

According to Crystal (2003), the number of second language (L2) speakers of English in Asia ranges from 200 million in India, to 40 million in the Philippines and 2 million in Hong Kong. However, there remain doubts about how accurately these figures reflect the language situation in Asia, particularly as it is hard to decide how competent someone should be in order to be counted as a speaker of English. In some small countries such as Brunei and Singapore, a large percentage of the population speak English quite well, whereas less than a fifth of Indians speak English as a second language with reasonable competence (Jenkins, *World Englishes* 46).

Jenkins also explains that Asian Englishes are evolving in various bilingual and multilingual contexts, and this can affect the ways in which English is used and how it is taught and tested (*World Englishes* 44). There is still a widespread belief that nativised English varieties are non-standard and also deficient, though Jenkins notes that this attitude is declining. Moreover, the labelling of pronunciation features such as simplification of consonant clusters as "errors" is problematic (Kirkpatrick, *English as a Lingua Franca in ASEAN* 5-6) when these features are understood and accepted by many of their users (McKay, 2002; Jenkins, 2000).

The Lingua Franca Core (LFC)

The Lingua Franca Core (LFC) which Jenkins (2000) has proposed as essential for maintaining intelligibility in international settings includes the following core features:

- All consonants, except /θ/, /ð/ and [ɬ]
- Vowel length distinctions
- Initial consonant clusters
- The mid-central NURSE vowel
- Nuclear stress

The non-core features, or features which Jenkins (2000) claims do not affect intelligibility in ELF settings because they do not generally lead to communication breakdown, are:

- The consonants /θ/, /ð/ and [ɬ]
- Final consonant clusters
- Individual vowel quality (apart from NURSE)
- Reduced vowels or weak forms
- Lexical stress
- Intonational tones
- Stress-based rhythm

If these non-core features of pronunciation are irrelevant for achieving mutual understanding in ELF interactions, Jenkins (2000) contends that they do not need to be taught to language learners. However, this list is controversial, and many teachers are surprised at the exclusion of features such as vowel quality and lexical stress from the inventory of sounds that they are expected to teach. For example, Pendey suggests that shifts in word stress in Indian English have a crucial impact on intelligibility, giving examples such as *'solicit* and *si'nister* as words that have unexpected stress placement and consequently may not be understood ("Indian English Prosody" 59) . However, the evidence for this appears to be based on listeners from Britain, and it is not clear if lexical stress is so important in an ELF setting, especially among users of English who predominantly use syllable-based rhythm and so have relatively few weak syllables with reduced vowels.

Although the findings of Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006) and Deterding (2013) on the whole support the LFC proposals of Jenkins (2000), substantially more research is needed, focusing on speakers from many different backgrounds interacting in a wide range of contexts, in order to determine which features of pronunciation really are important and which do not impact on intelligibility.

Below we will consider the suggestions of the LFC for the pronunciation of Englishes found in various countries in East and Southeast Asia. In the discussion of the features of pronunciation reported for each place, we should acknowledge that they represent tendencies and not a fixed representation of each English

variety. For example, we might say that there is a tendency in some places for voiceless TH to be realised as [t], but that does not mean that all speakers adopt this pronunciation, and indeed it is common for individuals in places such as Brunei and Singapore to vary, sometimes having [t] and sometimes [θ] at the start of words such as *three* and *think*.

The Lingua Franca Core and East Asian and Southeast Asian Englishes

In this section, we will provide a brief overview of the pronunciation of English in Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, and in each case we will consider which features of pronunciation are core features and which are not.

Brunei English

Currently, Brunei has a population of about 429,000. The majority are Malays while about one quarter belong to other indigenous groups and about 10% are Chinese. The official language of Brunei is Standard Malay (Clynes and Deterding, 2012) though Brunei Malay is the most widely spoken lingua franca (Clynes, 2014). Other languages that are spoken include the languages of the minority indigenous groups such as Kedayan, Tutong and Dusun, Mandarin, Hokkien and Hakka by the Chinese, and English (McLellan, Noor Azam and Deterding, 2016).

Crystal reported that there were 134,000 English L2 speakers in Brunei (*English as a Global Language* 62). This number has undoubtedly increased since then, as all young people in Brunei now have a basic knowledge of English because it is the medium of instruction for most subjects in upper primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Deterding and Salbrina, *Brunei English* 6). The implementation of the bilingual education system in 1984 was due to a pressing need to learn English to communicate with a wide range of people (Jones, "Language Planning" 178). Furthermore, the new education system was intended to provide equal opportunities for all school children and to allow these students to follow both Malay and English medium tertiary education (Jones, "Language Planning" 247).

Using Kachru's Three Circles model, Brunei is in the Outer Circle as it has a colonial history with Britain and English is widely spoken and used as a second language. Furthermore, it is the medium of instruction for most of primary school and throughout secondary school (Jones, 2012). Recent research has shown that the English of Brunei is an emergent variety as it is developing its own norms, particularly an increasing occurrence of r-colouring in the speech of local undergraduates and secondary students which distinguishes it from its historical link with British English (Nur Raihan, 2016). This rhoticity could be influenced by the first language of most people, Brunei Malay, which is a strongly rhotic variety of Malay (Clynes, 2014), but it could also arise from the influences of two rhotic varieties of English: American English through films, television shows and

music; and also Philippine English, as there are many Filipino teachers and domestic helpers in the country (Deterding and Salbrina, 2013; Deterding, 2015). We suggest that Brunei English may be shifting from Phase 3 (Nativisation) to Phase 4 (Endonormative Stabilisation) of Schneider's Dynamic Model (2007).

Analysis of recordings of undergraduates at Universiti Brunei Darussalam has been conducted by Mossop (1996), Salbrina (2006, 2010), Deterding and Salbrina (2013) and Nur Raihan (2016). Their findings suggest the following features of Brunei English:

- Use of [t] for initial voiceless TH
- Use of [d] for initial voiced TH
- Omission of final plosives [t] and [d] from the end of consonant clusters
- Merging of DRESS and TRAP
- Avoidance of vowel reduction
- Lack of a distinction between long and short vowels
- Increasing realisation of [r] in non-prevocalic positions such as *car* and *herd*
- Syllable-based rhythm

According to the proposals of the LFC, the majority of these features of Brunei English seem to be non-core, so they are excluded from the LFC. For example, the realisation of voiceless and voiced TH as [t] and [d] respectively, the simplification of final consonant clusters, the merging of the DRESS and TRAP vowels, the use of full vowels instead of reduced vowels, and syllable-based rhythm are claimed to be unimportant in achieving mutual intelligibility in international communication (Jenkins, 2000). Only the lack of a distinction between long and short vowels is a core feature, but Deterding and Salbrina report that only about one quarter of the university undergraduates they studied failed to make distinction between FLEECE and KIT (38). The status of rhoticity in the LFC is uncertain, though Jenkins (2000, pp. 139-40) suggests that r-colouring might be encouraged as a core feature as it matches the spelling and it also simplifies the diphthong system.

Chinese English

The current population of China is approximately 1.38 billion (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2016). The official language is Standard Mandarin, though there are also many speakers of regional dialects such as Cantonese, Hokkien and Hakka.

Considered as an Expanding Circle variety, English in China has been used between locals and foreign traders from around the seventeenth century (Bolton, 2003) and it is now adopted extensively in international communication (Fang, 2016). In 2009, it was reported that China had 200 million English speakers (Jenkins, *World Englishes* 158) and this number may have almost doubled in just three years (Wei and Su, 2012). Jenkins predicts that there will soon be more speakers of English in China than any other English variety (*World Englishes* 158). Fang states that English is still considered a foreign language in China, but a huge number of people have learned to speak it proficiently as they appreciate that English will help them gain access to scientific and other kinds of knowledge and it will benefit them as they engage in international trade ("World Englishes" 6).

On the other hand, the rapid increase of the English-speaking population in China has also raised concerns. A few of these concerns include whether English in China should be regarded as a variety of English (Kirkpatrick and Xu, 2002; Hu, 2005) and whether the emergence of "Chinese English" might impact on intelligibility internationally. Xu (2010) makes a strong claim that Chinese English has distinct features that set it apart from other varieties of English, and it deserves to be treated with respect and be investigated in the same ways as other newly-emergent varieties of English.

The main pronunciation features of English in China, derived from an analysis of recordings of ten male and three female university students from a range of provinces aged between 18 and 21 (Deterding, 2006, 2010), are:

- Addition of a final vowel such as *first* [fɜːstə]
- Use of [s] for voiceless TH
- Use of [d] or [z] for voiced TH
- Substantial nasalisation of a vowel before a final [n], often accompanied by omission of the [n], as in *sun* [sʌ̃]
- Omission of final [z] in words such as *was* and *because*
- Realisation of the fricative in *usually* as [ɹ]
- L-vocalisation and sometimes L-deletion, for example *small* [smɔː]
- Absence of vowel reduction in function words
- Stress on the last word of a sentence, even on pronouns
- Syllable-based rhythm

The features that are considered important based on the LFC proposals are the omission of [n] and [z] at the end of words, use of [ɹ] in *usually*, and nuclear stress on a final pronoun. The insertion of a vowel at the end of a word may also be problematic, as *fast* may be heard as *faster* and *mist* as *mister*. L-vocalisation is not a problem, but L-deletion may be, as *tool* may be heard as *two*, and *wolf* may

be heard as *woof*. The other features, such as the realisation of voiceless and voiced TH and absence of vowel reduction, are non-core features, so they are not considered important for maintaining international intelligibility according to the LFC proposals.

Hong Kong English

It was reported that the population of Hong Kong has reached 7.3 million (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). Most speak Cantonese, though many recent immigrants from China prefer to speak Mandarin.

Hong Kong was annexed from China in 1842 by Britain and it remained a British colony for 155 years until July 1997 (Hung, "Hong Kong English" 113). After the end of the British colonial administration, English has continued to have official status as the predominant language of the government, legal system, commerce, science and technology, and some areas of education. Hong Kong aspires to be a trilingual (Cantonese, Mandarin, English) and biliterate (Chinese and English) society (Hung, "Hong Kong English" 114), though the medium of instruction in most schools is Cantonese (Setter, Wong and Chan, *Hong Kong English* 5).

English is considered an important lingua franca for Hong Kong to enable the people to communicate internationally, conduct business and promote tourism. Hong Kong English is in the Outer Circle of Kachru's model, and Setter, Wong and Chan propose that it has shifted into Schneider's Phase 4 (Endonormative Stabilisation) (*Hong Kong English* 116).

Hung (2002, 2012) investigated the speech of undergraduates at Hong Kong Baptist University; Deterding, Wong and Kirkpatrick (2008) studied the speech of 15 female English majors at Hong Kong Institute of Education; and Setter, Wong and Chan (2010) based their research on five speakers from Hong Kong who were in the UK. Their findings suggest the following as the main features of the pronunciation of Hong Kong English:

- Use of [f] for voiceless TH
- Conflation of initial [n] and [l]: *noisy* [lɔɪzɪ]
- Conflation of [l] and [r] in a consonant cluster: *crew* [klu:]
- L-vocalisation, and sometimes L-deletion: *ball* [bɔ:]
- A similar vowel for DRESS and TRAP
- Fronting of GOOSE: *zoo* [zʉ:]
- Absence of vowel reduction
- Syllable based-rhythm

The LFC proposals suggest that the conflation of [n] and [l] in onset positions and [l] and [r] in consonant clusters may be problematic as it can cause misunderstandings. Indeed, Deterding (2013) has shown that these features of pronunciation by a speaker from Hong Kong caused lots of misunderstandings when he was talking to people from Malaysia and Taiwan. L-deletion may also be problematic, though L-vocalisation is not. However, realisation of voiceless TH, merging of DRESS and TRAP, fronting of GOOSE, vowel reduction and rhythm are non-core features, so their pronunciation in Hong Kong English should not have too much impact on international intelligibility.

Two of the features, use of [f] for voiceless TH and fronting of GOOSE, match patterns common among young people in the UK (Cruttenden, *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* 90; Hawkins and Midgley, 2005), so in this respect Hong Kong English may still be subject to influence from the UK. It is also noticeable that use of [f] for voiceless TH makes Hong Kong English distinct from the Englishes in Southeast Asia in which [t] for initial voiceless TH is common.

Malaysian English

The current population of Malaysia is 31.8 million (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). Most Malaysians are multilinguals due to the education policies and the rich multicultural history of the country. The official language of the country is *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malay) while other languages spoken, besides English, include a range of varieties of Chinese and also Tamil in West Malaysia, and Iban, Bidayuh and Dusun in East Malaysia (Yamaguchi and Deterding, 2016).

Asmah Haji Omar states that, although the first British settlers arrived in 1786, the use of English was implemented among the Malaysians during the second decade of the nineteenth century ("Pragmatics of Maintaining English in Malaysia's Education System" 156). Crystal suggests that only about a third of Malaysia's population use English as a second language (*English as a Global Language* 63). However, the colonial background and widespread usage of English by the elite clearly place Malaysian English in Kachru's Outer Circle. Tan and Low (2010) argue that there might not be a difference between Schneider's Nativisation (Phase 3) and Endonormative Stabilisation (Phase 4) in the case of Malaysian English, and they report little difference in the acoustic analysis of Malaysian English and Singapore English monophthongs.

In recent years there have been a number of shifts in government policy in specifying the medium of instruction (English or Malay) for education (Kirkpatrick, *English as a Lingua Franca in ASEAN* 25). Nonetheless, English is still widely used in Malaysia, for example in non-government matters, social interactions and in private and tertiary education. Asmah Haji Omar suggests that Malay and English share the same domains, except for official ceremonies involving the royal family and the government, where only Malay is used ("Pragmatics of Maintaining English in Malaysia's Education System" 159).

Baskaran (2004) and Azirah and Tan (2012) both give an overview of the features of Malaysian English without providing details of the data their analyses are based on. Pillai (2015) based her research on the data of 34 speakers from the three main ethnic groups (Malays, Chinese, Indians). A summary of the features they report is:

- Use of [t] and [d] for voiceless and voiced TH
- Reduction of final consonant clusters
- Possible merger of DRESS and TRAP
- No rhoticity
- Vowel length differences are not distinct
- Absence of reduced vowels
- Syllable-based rhythm

Of these features, only the absence of vowel length differences is a core feature, so the LFC proposals predict that none of the other features of pronunciation should cause misunderstandings to occur in international settings, though, as has been noted for Brunei English, Jenkins suggests that rhoticity might be encouraged to enhance intelligibility (*World Englishes* 139-40).

Yamaguchi and Pétursson (2016) suggest that a new [t] sound is emerging in Malaysian English for both voiceless and voiced TH. It is not clear if Malaysian English is in this respect developing a style of English pronunciation that makes it distinct from that of its nearest neighbours, Brunei and Singapore.

Singapore English

The current population of Singapore is 5.6 million (Department of Statistics, 2016). Of these, about 75% are ethnically Chinese, 14% are Malay, 9% are Indian and 2% are "others."

Singapore gained independence from Britain in 1963. Initially, it became part of Malaysia, but in 1965 it left the federation and become an independent republic. Since then, two varieties of English have emerged in Singapore: a standard formal variety, often termed Singapore Standard English (SSE), and a colloquial informal variety that can be termed Singapore Colloquial English (SCE, Singlish) (Low, "Singapore English" 36). English was implemented as the main medium of instruction for all schools in 1987, and this reinforced the importance and dominance of English in Singapore. As English has an official status, alongside Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, and as it is used in administrative matters, education, law and the media (Low, "Singapore English" 35), it belongs in Kachru's Outer Circle and can be considered in Schneider's Phase 4 (Endonormative stabilisation).

Deterding (2003) investigated the speech of five male and five female undergraduates; Deterding (2007) provided an in-depth summary of the speech patterns of one ethnically Chinese female undergraduate; and Leimgruber (2011) investigated the speech of 12 Chinese, 12 Malay and 12 Indians from post-secondary institutions in Singapore. A summary of the features of speech described in these studies includes:

- Use of [t] and [d] for the initial TH sounds
- Simplification of final consonant clusters
- L-vocalisation
- Conflation of long and short vowels such as FLEECE and KIT
- Merging of DRESS and TRAP
- Use of a long monophthong for FACE and GOAT
- Rhoticity is rare
- Syllable-based rhythm

On the basis of analysis of the speech of 24 ethnically Chinese female speakers who were aged 18 to 25 at the time of the recording, Tan (2012) suggested that rhoticity may be increasing in Singapore English, though it is still a minority feature.

Of the features listed above, only the merging of long and short vowels is a core feature, so it is predicted that none of the other features will have much impact on intelligibility in an international setting. In fact, we might note that merging of the long and short vowels is very common in the Englishes spoken in Southeast Asia, so it seems unlikely to cause misunderstandings regionally. Indeed, Deterding (2013) found little evidence that vowel length distinctions cause misunderstandings to occur in ELF recordings of speakers from a range of countries made in Brunei, though it is possible that they may be important for listeners whose first languages have a vowel length distinction. More research for a wide range of speakers and listeners is needed to evaluate how important vowel length is for ELF communication.

English Pronunciation in East and Southeast Asia: A Summary

In conclusion, these Asian varieties of English share features that are non-core, such as avoidance of vowel reduction and use of syllable-based rhythm. Furthermore, use of sounds other than the dental fricatives for the TH sounds is widespread, though the realisation of these sounds varies.

As a guide to help decide which features should be taught to language learners, the status of some of these features in the LFC proposals, especially rhoticity, is uncertain. Finally, not all will agree with the LFC and the features that Jenkins (2000) claims are important. Language learners and teachers especially

might feel that vowel quality is just as important as vowel length, few agree that word stress is irrelevant, and many insist on the realisation of TH as [θ] and [ð].

Pedagogical Implications

The suggestions of the LFC remain controversial among teachers and learners of English, and Jenkins (2007) herself notes that there has been limited acceptance of her proposals. However, shifting the focus of English language teaching from native-speaker norms, and exposing learners to different varieties of English, seems gradually to be becoming more accepted worldwide. Hino (2016) notes that speakers of English in Japan are often inhibited from contributing in international forums by their concern about making a mistake, and if they could be liberated from this fear, they might contribute more widely; and Kondo (2016) notes the need for speakers of English in Japan to emerge from their "Galapagos Syndrome" of glorious isolation so that they can interact more widely with speakers around the world. The main issue is to eliminate the belief that features that do not follow the norms of Inner-Circle Englishes should be considered as "errors" when these non-standard features are acceptable and intelligible in ELF settings.

This in turn questions the role and relevance of "native speakers." Of course, most analysts agree that speakers from the Inner Circle are still important (Trudgill, 2005; Scheuer, 2005), and this is likely to continue for some time to come. For example, the Brunei education system still depends on British usage as a guide, though American spelling, pronunciation and lexical usage seem to be substantially influencing Brunei English (Nur Raihan, 2016); and in China, "Chinese English" has yet to be accepted as a classroom model (Kirkpatrick and Xu, 2002), so the English spoken in China continues to depend on the linguistic norms of the Inner Circle.

However, though Deterding and Salbrina argue that it is important for L2 English users to speak English confidently and clearly, there is no need for them to imitate the speech of those from Britain or the USA too closely (*Brunei English* 123). In fact, they suggest that many Bruneian patterns of speech enhance intelligibility in an international setting, so these features should be maintained. Finally, exposure of learners to speakers from a wide range of different backgrounds is exceptionally valuable in enabling them to communicate in international settings, and familiarity only with standard Inner-Circle patterns of pronunciation is of limited use when most speakers of English do not originate from the Inner Circle.

Future of World Englishes

Jenkins discusses various issues regarding the prospects for World Englishes in the future, including "English language rights" for users of English outside the

Inner Circle (*World Englishes* 49-54). In fact, it is possible that, one day, English might lose its international role or at least share the role with other languages, such as Spanish or Mandarin Chinese, which are becoming more prevalent today (Graddol, 2006).

Finally, we may also see a change in the language of the Internet as other languages are increasingly being used online. Crystal states that due to globalisation, the Internet will eventually be predominantly non-English, and Chinese may become the major language of Internet users, though problems with its character-based script will probably continue to inhibit its widespread use by non-Chinese people (*English as a Global Language* 229-31).

Conclusion

With the increasing number of English speakers and English varieties outside Kachru's Inner Circle, Asian speakers of English in the Outer and Expanding Circles increasingly realise that they do not have to follow the pronunciation patterns of those in the UK or the USA. The Lingua Franca Core proposed by Jenkins (2000) offers suggestions for maintaining and enhancing mutual intelligibility in conversations between ELF speakers without the need to mimic speakers in the UK or USA. It also supports the belief that patterns of speech which are different from standard British or American usage should not be labelled as "errors". In fact, it seems likely that one day there will be a shift, so some of these "non-standard" features will be regarded as acceptable and even prestigious.

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