

GLOBAL ENGLISHES AND PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION

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Antonello, Monica. 2022. „Global Englishes and Primary Teacher Education.“
Philologia 32 (2): 167 – 177.

Abstrakt: Vzhľadom na globálne a komplexné používanie angličtiny v súčasnosti je nevyhnutné prijať pedagogiku orientovanú na globálnu angličtinu, ktorá by mala podporovať znalosti a povedomie o svetovej angličtine (WE), angličtine ako lingua franca (ELF) a medzikultúrnem povedomí (ICA). Vzdelávanie učiteľov jazykov preto musí zahŕňať (viac) komplexný pohľad na jazyk a kultúru, zvyšovať povedomie budúcich učiteľov o tom, ako osoby hovoriace anglicky vykonávajú rôzne jazykové a kultúrne praktiky, o tom, ako vyjednávajú o vzájomnom porozumení a o tom, ako tieto aspekty/prvky a medzikultúrne povedomie môže byť začlenené do praktík ELT. So zameraním na vzdelávanie učiteľov základných škôl budú navrhnuté niektoré princípy a usmernenia, ako prijať inkluzívnejšiu perspektívu vo vyučovaní anglického jazyka pre mladých študentov, pričom sa ukáže aplikácia vo vysokoškolskom vzdelávaní v tom, ako zvýšiť interkultúrne povedomie a ako zahrnúť globálnu angličtinu do aktivít v triede.

Kľúčové slová: globálna angličtina, vzdelávanie učiteľov jazykov, svetová angličtina, angličtina ako lingua franca, interkultúrne povedomie

Abstract: In light of the global and complex use of English today, it is essential to adopt a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy, which should promote knowledge and awareness of World Englishes (WE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and Intercultural Awareness (ICA). Accordingly, Language Teacher Education needs to embrace a (more) complex perspective on language and culture, raising prospective teachers' awareness of how speakers of English perform variable linguistic and cultural practices, on how they negotiate mutual understanding, and on how these aspects/elements and intercultural awareness can be incorporated in ELT practices. Focusing on Primary Teacher Education, some principles and guidelines on how to adopt a more inclusive perspective in English

Language Teaching for Young Learners will be suggested, showing an application in higher education of how to raise intercultural awareness and how to include Global Englishes in classroom activities.

Keywords: Global Englishes, Language Teacher Education, World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, Intercultural Awareness

GLOBAL ENGLISHES AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

With globalisation, English has spread as a global language and is now commonly used as a lingua franca, serving as a bridge between people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Baker 2020; Rose, McKinley and Galloway 2021; Sadeghpour and D'Angelo 2022; Seidlhofer 2011). Aiming at a more comprehensive view of the English language today, Global Englishes (GE) is defined as “an inclusive paradigm looking at the linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and English users in a globalised world” (Rose and Galloway 2019, 3-8). Accordingly, this perspective includes World Englishes (WE) research and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) practices, that is, the varieties of English that have developed in post-colonial countries and uses of English among speakers who do not share the same linguistic and cultural background (Sadeghpour and D'Angelo 2022; Seidlhofer 2011). Global Englishes research thus not only takes into account the use of English for intranational communication, in countries where it is used as a co-/official and national language, but it also analyses its use in intercultural communication, in contexts where speakers cannot take for granted that they share the same communicative practices. In order to be able to effectively and appropriately manage interactions in such complex settings, speakers need to develop (their) Intercultural Awareness (ICA – Baker 2015), that is, “a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in communication” (Baker 2015, 163). ICA is useful in managing complex and dynamic interactions, where speakers need to be aware of possible different communicative practices and to be able to respond effectively and appropriately according to the context and the participants involved.

Since English is more and more linked to a wider range of different linguistic manifestations and it has established itself as a lingua franca, these issues need to be included in Teacher Education; it is indeed fundamental that prospective teachers adopt a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy and thus develop the professional skills and tools necessary to prepare their students to the variable and complex use of English nowadays.

A GLOBAL ENGLISHES-ORIENTED PEDAGOGY

Research on Global Englishes has called into questions some cornerstones of traditional approaches in English Language Teaching, first of all the need to reconsider Standard English and the ‘native speaker’ model as points of reference in terms of linguistic knowledge and performance (Rose and Galloway 2019). Conventionally, Standard English refers to a fixed lexico-grammatical system, where the ‘native speaker’ serves as the pinnacle of competence, as the model of how language has to be used (Widdowson 2003, 2012, 2015). However, such reference is related to a single variety of English and to nationally-based norms that do not correspond to the communicative needs in intercultural contexts (Baker 2015, 2020). Research on Global Englishes has shown the need to include in ELT the variability and diversity of practices in Englishes, not only in terms of the legitimacy of World Englishes varieties, but also in the inclusion of ELF practices (Rose and Galloway, 2019). This entails the importance to raise awareness and to foster knowledge of the different manifestations of English in World Englishes varieties and in ELF in Teacher Education and ELT in order to prepare speakers to deal with diversity and flexibility of forms and communicative norms (Rose and Galloway 2019; Vettorel 2017, 2018, 2021). Indeed, English is not only the language of inner circle countries (using Kachru’s model – 1985, 1992), but it is a common means of communication that is used to interact with people coming from all over the world who have different linguistic and cultural practices. To adopt a model of reference that is based on a single Anglophone standard to respond to *all* contexts of use in different countries would mean to disregard the endonormative authority of independent varieties and to signal that Inner Circle varieties represent the only appropriate way to communicate intranationally; likewise, if this model were to be used also in intercultural communication, this would entail that the ‘native speaker’ would be a model of competence also internationally for *all* cultures and countries. However, it has been acknowledged that it is not possible to group the different manifestations of English under a single model and it is necessary to adopt a more complex and flexible understanding of what ‘competent speaker’ means in order to be able to appropriately respond to communicative needs in different contexts (Antonello 2022; Baker 2015; Rose and Galloway 2019; Seidlhofer 2011; Seidlhofer and Widdowson 2017; Widdowson 2015).

Therefore, definitions of what a ‘competent speaker’ is have to be called into question, especially when considering the contexts in which English is used: the ‘native speaker’ with knowledge of one variety of English and an Anglophone-centred conception of appropriateness cannot be suitable for the diverse settings, often intercultural, in which English is used today, and the

notion of appropriateness needs to be re-thought according to the participants to the communicative act, not depending on exonormative norms established a priori. ‘Competence’ needs to include a set of skills that allows the speaker to be able to manage and deal with different and varying practices, with variable notions of appropriateness and with linguistic norms that need to be negotiated among speakers in situ (Antonello 2022; Baker 2015; Kohn 2016). From a pedagogical point of view, then, Communicative Competence (as designed by Canale and Swain 1980) is no longer enough and alternative models – for example, Widdowson’s (2015) communicative capability or Kohn’s (2016) ELF competence – should be introduced as more complex frameworks of the skills necessary to be ‘competent speakers’ of English, including the use of communication strategies and rapport-building strategies (see Antonello 2022 for a more comprehensive overview).

Following these considerations, a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy calls for the inclusion of a more complex and flexible understanding of English and an intercultural perspective. In Teacher Education it is essential to raise awareness of the processes underlying the use of English in intercultural communication and on the different cultural practices that emerge in these contexts, together with a parallel exploration of local cultures as well as cultural representations in the didactic materials used in the English classroom (Baker 2015; Rose and Galloway 2019; Vettorel 2018, 2021). Adopting this perspective would help providing ways to enable learners to communicate their ideas and culture(s) to others and to interact in intercultural contexts, in addition to promoting respect for plurilingualism and different cultures (see also Rose and Galloway 2019). In order to prepare students for actual communication, it is fundamental to allow them to engage in authentic intercultural communication also during their school experience, so that they can learn in a protected and controlled environment how to deal with different customs and traditions, languages and communicative practices. For example, virtual platforms and telecollaboration, through which intercultural projects and schools partnerships can be developed, can be a very useful way to make students engage in such authentic interactions and to learn how to deal with and manage diversity of linguistic and cultural practice (Kohn 2018; Kohn and Hoffstaedter 2017; Vettorel 2017).

LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

In order to adopt a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy, it is fundamental to introduce its principles at all educational levels; of foremost importance, Language Teacher Education should be the first focus to include a more

comprehensive view on English use nowadays and thus Global Englishes-oriented classroom practices (Cavalheiro 2018; Cogo 2015; Vettorel 2017). As Widdowson (2012) states, “the first step is to raise the awareness of teachers that there is an alternative way of thinking about the subject they teach, based on an understanding of English as a lingua franca” (24), which would comprise also World Englishes and more generally Global Englishes. Consequently, teachers would bring these issues into their teaching practices and they would start raising their students’ awareness as well.

In order to practically apply such orientation in class, the first step for teachers trainers is to integrate theory and practice in their practices: they should parallelly raise their students’ awareness of a general knowledge and understanding of what Global Englishes means, and demonstrate how Global Englishes should be included in actual ELT practices (Rose and Galloway 2019; Vettorel 2017). It is essential to build pre-service teachers’ knowledge on how research on Global Englishes, World Englishes, ELF and ICA is developing, in order to make them aware of the complex reality English is used in and to guide them in developing tools and ways to adopt a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy in their ELT practices. In combining theory and practice, ways in which Standard English and traditional ELT practices can be combined within a Global Englishes orientation can be made apparent and examples of GE-oriented pedagogical practices can be shown. Indeed, in addition to the theoretical knowledge that is needed to understand how English has spread and the implications of such phenomenon, it is also important to show practical ways in which these issues could be developed in class, by involving the teachers themselves in designing the materials and activities; as Vettorel (2017) explains, “providing examples of resources and involving teachers in designing WE- and ELF-aware classroom (localized) activities represents a fundamental moment to raise awareness of a WE- and ELF-informed approach, first of all since it can contribute to bridge the gap between theory and practice – that has often been identified as one of the main drawbacks for teachers in implementing a plurilithic pedagogical approach to WE and ELF” (240-241)

The second step to guide above all pre-service teachers in developing a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy is to provide opportunities to reflect both on the complex reality of English nowadays and on the students’ use of English in their everyday life. Critical reflection on these aspects is paramount to understand how issues related to Global Englishes could be localised to the specific contexts in which the teachers are operating and how students’ personal experiences and backgrounds could be included in the discussion. In doing so, the actual use of this language and its diverse and flexible manifestations mentioned in the first part of this paper could become apparent and an increased awareness

of the importance to include them in class would be developed, together with attention to the students' experiences and how they use English in their local context (Dewey 2012).

Finally, it is fundamental to provide opportunities to make informed choices within a GE-informed pedagogical framework by giving future teachers tools to critically analyse the coursebooks and materials they are going to use, to allow them to choose for themselves what is appropriate and effective for their local context and to show them how they can adapt and design materials and activities that are suitable for their classes (Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018; Vettorel 2021). It is indeed essential to work with pre-service teachers on how to develop activities using the resources available and including GE, WE and ELF practices, so that examples and models that combine ELT practices and a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy can be provided.

AN EXAMPLE IN A TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ITALY

English has been a compulsory foreign language in primary education in Italy since 2004 and, as Vettorel (2021) highlights, “from the standpoint of teacher education, English is an integral part of the syllabus in the five- year degree to qualify as a pre- primary and primary teacher, and in primary schools English is now taught by classroom teachers, similarly to other subjects” (120). Since the role of English is significant in the preparation of primary teachers, the study was carried out in a module offered in the Primary Teacher Education Combined Bachelor's and Master's degree at the University of Verona. By the end of the degree, pre-service teachers need to acquire a B2 level (CEFR) of English and to develop some specific pedagogical skills in English Language Teaching for Young Learners. One of the courses offered in relation to ELT is *English Didactics*, that students attend both in their fourth and fifth year, which focuses on how English should be introduced and promoted in primary and pre-primary education. The current study was carried out in the first semester of the academic year 2021/2022 with students in the fourth and fifth year of their degree. Issues related to Global Englishes and the inclusion of WE and ELF in ELT were discussed in a single module of 4 hours, while the whole course lasted 24. One of the main aims was to develop familiarity with topics related to the pedagogic implications of the current sociolinguistic complexity of English. The objective was achieved through a three-step process, each phase complemented by a written task that the students had to complete. The approach chosen aimed at developing the pre-service teachers' knowledge and awareness of issues

related to World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca and at helping them develop the tools to apply a Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy.

The first phase focused on the explicit explanation on how English has spread and its diversified use in the world, also including the discussion of how these issues are linked to ELT and Primary Education, above all in Italy. World Englishes, ELF, Intercultural Awareness, and their importance in ELT were explicitly addressed in a plenary session. Topics related to the spread of English, to World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca, to the variation in linguistic practices and contexts of use that is connected to English, to the notion of 'culture' and its implications, to Intercultural Communicative Competence and Intercultural Awareness (Baker 2015), and to the presence of GE, WE and ELF in coursebooks were discussed. The students were asked to work in groups and to choose five keywords and to explain them; the activity was also designed to give time to the pre-service teachers to ask questions and to clarify possible issues.

After this opening phase, time was given to the students to reflect on these topics and on their own experience. At home, they had to write on an anonymous virtual chat whether they had ever experienced English in one of its World Englishes varieties or in its Lingua Franca role of communication. The answers were collected to understand how the students perceived these issues and further discussion was held in class afterwards. Some examples of the written reflections are the following:

- 1) "I have experienced English varieties during a travel in which I have meet people from different countries. In particular, I noticed their different pronunciation of words"
- 2) "During this travel, I also used english as lingua franca because it was the only option to communicate with people from the other country (for example Spain, Germany, India)"
- 3) "I have experienced English in a lot of varieties during my life. For instance, I had the possibility to talk to an African English speaker at school but also to a girl who was from Texas and a boy who was from New York: I saw that they spoke different varieties of English"
- 4) "I used ELF when I met a pen friend from Germany. We used to chat in English in order to know each other through texts, but when we first met we had to speak English as it was the only mean of communication we had. I found it very challenging as we were motivated to aim mutual understanding"

As the examples show, most students had experience of different varieties of English, and also of English as a Lingua Franca. After explicitly addressing

these aspects in the plenary session, they were made aware of their importance in their everyday life and they had the time to think about how to connect their personal experience with the proposed pedagogical practices. Several students pointed out how they noticed the presence of different pronunciations and 'ways' to speak English and how they did not know about World Englishes before the course module; they also noted the importance of English in tourism and how it is usually used in intercultural communication. Others described how they had different English teachers at school who came from different English-speaking countries or how television and TV series provide practice for different pronunciations and accents. This anonymous and asynchronous activity was very useful in understanding the background experience the students had with English. Starting from these statements, another possibility to discuss and reflect on the topics raised in the virtual chat was given in class, so that the pre-service teachers could again engage with the issues at hand and compare their experiences.

Finally, the students were asked to think and develop classroom activities to include a Global Englishes perspective for their future pedagogical practices. This final phase was subdivided again into two steps: the first one aimed at clarifying and showing which resources could be helpful in designing or adapting materials and activities, the second one provided the possibility to develop an activity for a hypothetical class. Firstly, then, the resources available were enlisted and students could explore how to use them and adapt existing materials and how to take advantage of the Internet (for example through videos and audios available online, or didactic platforms). Afterwards, they were asked to devise one classroom activity aimed at developing awareness of Englishes /ELF, fostering reflection of the presence of English in the children's environment, and/or presenting/dealing with a cultural aspect within an intercultural perspective. The pre-service teachers were divided into groups and they had to decide age, number, and background of the students of their hypothetical classroom for their activity, many of which focused on festivities, events, food and international projects. One example was called 'English among us'. The teacher would ask the children to cut the English words they recognize from newspapers and magazines they have at home to then bring them at school and make a class poster to show how English is present in their everyday life. This activity aimed at raising awareness of the presence of English in the local context of the students and was seen as a starting point to include WE and ELF in ELT classroom practices. The children would reflect on the role of English where they live and how they use it in their lives, but it could also be linked to an international project where two classes from two different countries make the poster and compare it to understand how English is used and where. Another

activity was called 'A mysterious letter' and was aimed at reflecting on the use of English not only in countries where it is an official language, but also as a lingua franca. The teacher would show a letter written in English from a partner school, or from invented an imaginary class. This would be the excuse to start discussing where English is spoken and how it is used nowadays, with a direct experience of its use in intercultural communication; indeed, especially if an international project is carried out, a letter could be the bridging point between the classes involved to get to know each other better and to break the ice. A third activity was centred around a cultural exchange between classes from different countries, where students would share their cultural traditions, their favourite food, and other aspects of their cultures (understood as a wide and extensive notion), and would then compare and discuss them with the partner school class. These kinds of projects would help develop Intercultural Awareness and the ability and sensitivity necessary to deal with diversity in intercultural communication, providing actual and authentic contexts where children could engage in using English. This perspective could also include sharing experiences on food, customs, songs, decorations of different festivities celebrated both on a national level, and especially by the child's family, giving the opportunity to observe and understand different ways to celebrate, eat and live.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude, as discussed above, Teacher Education needs to include a Global Englishes framework to prepare future teachers to adopt a GE-oriented pedagogy in their classroom practices in order to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to help develop their students' intercultural awareness. As shown in the example described in the previous section, this could be achieved through a three-step process. The first phase would aim at raising awareness of the issues related to Global English, World Englishes and ELF, including how research on these areas has developed and how they could be included in ELT classroom practices. The second phase would allow students to reflect on these aspects and on their experience in relation to the use of English. Finally, future teachers would be given the possibility to act upon their conclusions and try to adapt materials, develop new activities or apply what they have become aware of in order to include a Global Englishes perspective in class.

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