A BRIEF STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT YOUNG STUDENTS LEVEL IN THE WORLD

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Abstract

Usage of the English language as Lingua Franca has caused an increasing demand on the English Language Teaching (ELT) in early childhood and according to Braj Kachru's Three Circles Model of World Englishes as the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle the approaches to the Young Learners dramatically differs. Besides the features of English as a global language and the nature of early language learning, this paper also focuses on the comparison of the three different examples from the Three Circles Model of World Englishes. They are compared in terms of techniques that are used and the approaches to the Young Learners. The examples taken are from the official websites of the three countries from the Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle; respectively, New Zealand's Ministry of Education, Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, and the Turkish Board of Education and Instruction.

Keywords: *Young students Learners, The World Englishes, Lingua Franca, Braj Kachru, English Language Teaching (ELT).*

INTRODUCTION

As a consequence of Globalization, many different needs occurred in our lives and among all one of these was a common language (Lingua Franca) to communicate with the people who speak various different languages. Since we need to communicate around the world more frequently than before many people naturally decide to learn Lingua Franca instead of learning every single language that is needed. The English language is used in many areas and consequently many serious issues like trade, diplomacy, and education are dependent on the English language. Learning an international language is the best choice in a globalized world instead of learning every single language to communicate with foreign people. Since the dependence on the English language as Lingua Franca is increased, more and more people not only demand to learn English but they also want their children to learn it. With this demand, a different study field developed in the last years. The needs of Young Learners and the required techniques for those learners are quite different than the adult learners' needs. Teaching Young learners requires a serious preparation and research around the world. While teaching Young learners one should carefully consider what s/he teaches and in what way s/he can teach it to the Young learners. This paper focuses on the features of English as a global language, the nature of early language learning, and the different kinds of programs and approaches used around the world.

THE THREE CIRCLE MODEL BY BRAJ KACHRU

We need to have a better understanding of the ideas of Braj Kachru, an Indian linguist, on the English language. Why is English used as Lingua Franca but not French or Turkish? This question leads to the very essence of the subject. Braj Kachru (1986) explains the spread of the English language with two reasons. The first one is migration and the second one is colonization. He creates The Three Circle Model to group the types of "World Englishes" according to the spread of the English language. First one is the Inner Circle which consists of the countries in which the English language is the mother tongue. In this circle, there are countries like USA, Australia, and New Zealand. Most of the citizens of these countries are the immigrants of United Kingdom. Since the English language is the mother tongue of this circle, they do not need any extra effort to learn another language to communicate in an international conversation.

Before going into the details about the reasons behind the English language as a Lingua Franca, we should define the Outer Circle which consists of the England's former colonies. Unfortunately, during the exploitation of the prosperities of these countries, the culture and the language are imposed upon the people. We can exemplify these countries as Pakistan, South Africa, Kenya, India, and so on. As an inevitable consequence of the

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imposition of the English language, local English varieties emerged. Kachru stated the difference between the Inner Circle and the Outer Circle as "the Inner Circle refers to the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English. The Outer Circle represents the institutionalized non-native varieties." (as cited in Mullany 28) For this circle, Quirk coined the term "Standard English" which is a monocentric concept to forcibly unify the varieties of English in this circle into a single standard language (Radtke, 2012). Quirk (1990) wants the Outer and the Expanding Circle to use native-like language and obliterate their cultures' traces from the language. He perceives all the cultural reflections on the language as errors rather than celebrating the cultural richness. These errors can be fossilized in the usage of language. On the other hand, Kachru defends that "such norms as speech acts and registers were irrelevant to the sociolinguistic reality in which members of the Outer Circle use English" (Kılıçkaya, 2009). Therefore we should take sociocultural effect into consideration.

The third circle is the Expanding Circle which consists of Turkey, Japan, China, and so on. These countries use the English language in many significant areas such as business, science, and education and the English language is mostly learned as the second language in the Expanding Circle. Since the aim is to communicate, functionalist approach can be used. The form can only be the vehicle to achieve communicative skill. The use of varieties of English does not make the language deficient as long as it does not cause misunderstandings. The varieties of English do not block the communication and they reflect the richness of cultures. Instead of claiming custody over the English language the Inner Circle should embrace the diversity of cultures.

In each circle, English Language Teaching (ELT) methods differ as a natural consequence of sociocultural situations of the countries. When we take Young Learners into consideration we see the serious differences in terms of ELT. We will compare the three different approaches for Young Learners according to the three different circles of "World Englishes". One is from the Expanding Circle; a course syllabus taken from the Turkish Board of Education and Instruction, and the other is from the Inner Circle; a course program taken from the official website of New Zealand's Ministry of Education, and lastly an example from the Outer Circle; India's National Curriculum Framework.

YOUNG LEARNERS

The term Young Learners should be defined and their characteristics should be specified around the World. Since the term Young Learners is quite broad, the teachers can face some difficulties about choosing the appropriate technique and analyzing the needs of the learners. Gail Ellis states the importance of clarifying the term accurately in order to reflect and meet the specific needs of the age groups during the different stages of their language learning experience. (Ellis 78) As a consequence of this need, the Young Learners are grouped into three as Very Young Learners, Young Learners, and Late Young Learners. Even one year makes a great difference among Young Learners' age, so these learners' motivations and learning capacities dramatically differ according to those three groups.

To begin with Very Young Learners, we should start with analyzing the 3-6 years old learners in terms of ELT. The Very Young Learners are usually in pre-literate stage and the important skills for those groups are listening and speaking. The purpose should be to teach the concrete concepts which are familiar with them. In Very Young Learners, it is stated that "anything the children learn is a gain" (Reilly 7). The simple songs and repetition games can be useful because "they learn slowly and forget easily as they have a short memory" (Er, 2014). The attention span of this group is quite short. To keep their concentration alive, the teacher should use several activities and these activities should be repetition based.

Young Learners' age group is between 7-9 years old. Since they can read and write at the basic level, some basic writing activities can be done. Pictured word cards can be used. Even if they can read and write, the main aim is to develop reading and speaking skills for those learners. Just like Very Young Learners, their attention span is also short. They are usually enthusiastic but they are easily distracted by external causes and they affect each other very easily. The activities should attract all of the learners in order to avoid any distraction. Teachers should make different activities to keep their attention on the subject. Although they do not forget as much as Very Young Learners, they need revisions frequently. The frequent usage of some simple phrases such as good morning and thank you help Young Learners to learn them.

Lastly, Late Young Learners are the learners between 10-12 years old. In this group, reading and writing skills are as important as listening and speaking skills. Unlike the former groups, abstract vocabulary items can be used. The teacher can give homework to Late Young Learners. Although they are still children, it is easy to work with them. For instance, they do not have trouble with their concentration span, so the teachers do not need to make many different activities in one lesson. The repetition based activities are not as necessary as it is for Very Young Learners and Young Learners.

SAMPLE 1: TURKISH BOARD OF EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION

In the first example, taken from the Turkish Board of Education and Instruction, there are three detailed programs for each age group; the Very Young Learners, Young Learners, and Late Young Learners. The

program was prepared according to the learners' features and the needs. Since Turkey is in the Expanding Circle, English language has a crucial position in the future development of the country and the language learning program has been prepared in detail. Listening, speaking, visual reading are the aimed competencies for the Very Young Learners and Young Learners. The methods recommended were audio-lingual, audio-visual, and communicative language learning methods which all are convenient for the Young Learners.

SAMPLE 2: NEW ZEALAND

In the second example from New Zealand, the situation is quite different from the Outer Circle countries. As a former colony of England, New Zealand has two official languages; English and Màori. Young Learners are grouped as infants, toddlers, and young children. The importance of the body language is stated in the program very clearly for all the groups. The program includes action games, finger plays, and songs for infants. Usage of the body language as a means of communication is used for toddlers. Action games, listening games, and dancing are also recommended for the toddlers and the teacher should help toddlers to express their feelings in the target language. Unlike Turkey, New Zealand recommends visual reading just for young children. Most of the activities in this program emphasize watching and imitating.

SAMPLE 3: INDIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM

In India's National Curriculum Framework, the word "language" is usually used in the plural form because of the linguistic diversity in the country. This fact redounds on the language education. It is stated in the curriculum that the linguistic diversity poses a range of opportunities besides the complex challenges. They have five different languages from the five different language families as follows; Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman, and Andamanese. Being a multilingual country brings some questions about the medium of instruction. The mother tongue(s) or home language(s) of the children including the tribal languages should be the medium of instruction. In the "Early Childhood Education" section, the benefits of an introduction to a second language is emphasized but in the conclusion, it is also emphasized that English needs to find its place along with other Indian languages. The essential learning components in the early childhood education are playing, rhyming, music, art, and other activities consisting local materials. Activity-based learning, listening and speaking activities are the means of second language education. There is no age grouping among the Young Learners in this curriculum.

RESULTS

As a consequence of globalization, the dependence on the English language as Lingua Franca has increased. The dependence on the English language inevitably caused the occurrences of the varieties of English. These variations are not less communicative than the standard English. Instead of labeling the cultural differences as errors we should take sociocultural aspects into consideration. The Inner Circle should concede that the variation of the English language does exist and they are not deficient but as sufficient as standard English. It is obvious that the earlier you learn a foreign language, the more native-like you become. Bilingualism becomes a serious advantage in the globalized World and as a consequence the number of Young Learners has increased with a high demand. In this respect, the teachers working with young learners should take it very serious and should know the features of young learners since they all got different needs. The teachers should use different techniques to attract these three kinds of learners otherwise children can develop apathy to the English language. Different circles show different approaches to the techniques and the needs of the Young Learners. The reflection of the sociocultural aspects of the countries can be seen in the Young Learners' syllabuses and programs. Since the English language plays a vital role in the fields of education, trade, and diplomacy for the Expanding Circle, the syllabus for the Young Learners is prepared very selectively. On the other hand, the Outer Circle example from the India shows a venerable emphasis on the native culture of the learners, what it needs to be done for this program is to make a detailed grouping for the Young Learners and to specify their needs in order to achieve better results. Lastly, usage of English language in New Zealand as an official language bring ELT for Young Learners to the front. The varieties of the activities for each age group reflect the importance they gave to the ELT for Young Learners. The selective preparation of the Expanding Circle's example, combining the language learning process with the native culture of the learners as Indians do, and to diversify the activities for each group as it is done in New Zealand's example are all very inspiring ideas for the syllabus makers for Young Learners. By combining the merits of the each example syllabuses, we can come up with a new syllabus to satisfy the needs of the young learners.

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