# 1

# The scope of English and English language teaching

## Overview

This chapter includes the following key issues:

- What characterizes the global spread of English?
  - Factors promoting the use of English around the world.
- What do we mean by English as an international language?
  - Learners' views of English.
  - Varieties of English.
  - Using English as a lingua franca.
- What are the implications for English language teaching curriculums?
  - The status of English in the school curriculum.
  - English language teaching in English-speaking countries.
  - The role of the private sector in English instruction.
  - The impact of technology.

# 1.1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a dramatic change in the scope of English language teaching worldwide and an increasing demand for competent English language teachers, as well as for language programmes that can deliver the English language skills and competencies needed by today's global citizens. The teaching of English consumes a considerable portion of available educational resources in many countries, and English is not necessarily a neutral commodity offering equal opportunities for all. English teachers, therefore, need to appreciate the special status English has in modern life, what its costs and benefits are to those who seek to learn it, the different motivations learners may have for learning English and the different circumstances in which they learn it. This chapter seeks to clarify some of these issues and to describe how English language teaching is realized in different parts of the world.

# 1.2 The global spread of English

The English language has a complex status in today's world. For some people, it is acquired as a first language. For some, it may be learned at school, and be essential for academic and professional success. For others, it may represent a subject that they are required to study in school, but for which they have no immediate need. And English means different things to people in different parts of the world. For some, it may arouse positive feelings – as the language of pop culture, the media and social networking. For others, it may have associations with colonialism, elitism or social and economic inequality.

English today has a unique status, as a consequence of the role it plays around the world and its function as an 'international' or 'world language'. It has been described as the world's *lingua franca*. Although some 380 million people are said to speak it as a first language in countries like Australia, Canada, the United States and Great Britain, a further 600 million people use it, alongside other languages, as a 'second language' – in countries like Nigeria, India and the Philippines. And another one billion people are said to be studying it, at any one time, as a 'foreign language', in countries like China, South Korea, France, Germany, Russia and Spain.

English is learned for many different reasons. It may be an essential tool for education and business for some learners; it may be the language of travel and related activities of sightseeing for others; and it may be needed for social survival and employment for new immigrants in English-speaking countries. For some, it may be a popular language for the media, entertainment, the internet and other forms of electronic communication. For many, however, it may merely be a language that they are obliged to study, but which they may never really have any obvious need for.

Despite the emphasis on learning English in many parts of the world, it is worth remembering that many people can survive perfectly well in their own countries without ever having to use English (Seargeant, 2009), and that fluency in English does not

necessarily offer learners any social or economic advantages. And as some have pointed out (e.g. Pennycook, 1994: Lin, 2001), the spread of English does not necessarily promote social equality. Lin (2001) argued that ability in English and access to adequate opportunities to learn it has a considerable impact on the lives of many learners worldwide, including both children and adult learners. She suggests that the classroom is a site in which learners experience a power asymmetry due to the social identities that all learners and teachers adopt. As a consequence, learners may develop a 'want-hate' relationship with English, one in which they struggle to acquire a language that may eventually put them at a disadvantage within the classroom context.

**?** **To what extent do you think mastery of English affects your learners' social mobility? What other benefits do you think your learners perceive in learning English?**

# Factors promoting the use of English around the world

The status of English in the world today has nothing to do with its intrinsic characteristics as a language. It did not become the world's second language because it has some special features that gave it that status or because it is superior in some way to other languages that might have assumed this role. Rather, the spread of English is the result of a number of historical and pragmatic factors (McCrum, 2010).

## *Historical factors*

Primary among the factors that account for the spread of English is the fact that it was the language of the British Empire, and later, that of American expansion. One of the legacies of the British Empire was the use of English as the primary language needed for government, communication, commerce and education in those parts of the world under British colonial administration. And the countries in the Empire were located in many different parts of the world, from Africa to Asia and the Pacific. When colonial administrations were replaced by national ones, through independence, English remained as a major working language, facilitating communication among peoples speaking different languages (i.e. functioning as a link language or *lingua franca*) and providing a primary language for administration, education and the media. The English that became established in these vast territories took on local characteristics, giving rise to the 'new Englishes' that we recognize today, such as Indian English, Malaysian English or Nigerian English.

## *Globalization*

The spread of English is often linked to globalization, since it provides for high levels of interconnectedness among nation states and local economies and cultures. The fact that English has become the primary language for communication within international

organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union is an example of such globalization. However, as Seargeant observes (2009: 63), globalization has contributed as much to the 'idea' of English as it has to its actual role in communication. In other words, in many parts of the world, English represents an image in popular imagination, established through the media, advertising and so on, rather than a practical necessity or reality for many people.

Scholars and educationists differ in their attitudes towards the global spread of English. Some (e.g. Graddol, 2006) think this spread is natural, inevitable, neutral and beneficial, and have been accused of 'English triumphalism'. Crystal (1997: 32) suggests that English 'fosters cultural opportunity and promotes a climate of international intelligibility'. Others see the spread of English as threatening local cultures, languages and identities. Phillipson (1992) used the phrase 'linguistic imperialism' to explain how English has come to play a leading role in maintaining the economic and political dominance of some societies over others. Because of the role of English as the dominant international language, the theory of linguistic imperialism asserts that other languages have been prevented from going through processes of development and expansion, and have been allocated a secondary status, along with the cultures they represent. Proponents of the theory of linguistic imperialism view the English language teaching industry as contributing to the propagation of the economic, cultural or religious values of dominant world powers.

## *Economic development*

Many countries see English as important to their economic development. A recent report suggested that countries with poor English-language skills also have lower levels of trade, innovation and income. The report ranked 54 countries where English is not a first language and claimed that English is key to innovation and competitiveness. The top five were Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Norway. The lowest were Colombia, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Libya. The report also suggested that Italy, Spain and Portugal were held back as a result of poor English-language skills (*New York Times*, 28 October 2012).

## *Communication*

Since English is widely taught and used around the world, it is a convenient language for communication across national boundaries and in a wide range of professions. In many cases, the speakers (or writers) involved both may be using English as a foreign or second language (see section 1.3 below). Nerrier (2006), reporting as observer of communication in situations like these, noted that non-native English speakers are often better able to communicate with business clients in Korea and Japan than native speakers of English, due to the fact that their English is not likely to contain the kind of unfamiliar idioms and colloquial expressions used by native speakers of English.

## *Business and entrepreneurship*

As the United States emerged as a global economic power after World War II, international trade and commerce became increasingly dependent on the use of English. Today, large business organizations are increasingly multinational in their operations, and English is increasingly the most frequent language used for both written and spoken communication within such organizations. Many of the world's English language learners require knowledge of English in order to enter the workforce in their countries and in order to advance professionally. Similarly, for many young IT graduates in countries like India, China, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, knowledge of English provides a chance to market their expertise outside of their countries. Their fluency in English, together with their creative and innovative thinking, is part of the driving force of thousands of successful businesses and companies worldwide.

## *Education*

In many parts of the world where English has traditionally had the status of a school subject, it is now becoming the medium of instruction, particularly at university level. For example, since 2014 the Politecnico di Milano – a premium university in Italy – has been teaching its graduate courses in English (www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-17958520). The motivation for teaching subjects through English is partially to improve the English language skills of graduates (as with universities in Turkey, where many courses are taught in English). This trend also reflects the growing need for European universities to offer programmes in English to attract an international body of students and raise their international profiles – an aspect of the internationalization of higher education through English. There are now more than 2,000 such programmes in European universities. It is often assumed that these courses will be taught by younger lecturers who have themselves spent part of their education abroad. However, the kind of teaching observed in these situations is reported to be similar to what is observed at international academic conferences where few people are native speakers of English: discussion tends to settle around what is described as the 'lowest common denominator'. In subjects like mathematics, this may not be a major problem, but in disciplines where language is more central to intellectual debate, there is a risk that meaningful scholarly discourse could be compromised. (Aisha Labi, 2011: Europe's Push to Teach in English Creates Barriers in the Classroom (http://chronicle.com/article/article-content/126326/).

Another factor likely to further consolidate the spread of English is the growing popularity of content-based teaching, or CLIL, as it is referred to in Europe – that is, the use of English to teach some school subjects (see Chapter 3). (This is referred to as bilingual education in Central and South America.) The teaching of school subjects in English may start at secondary school and continue at university. And just as English-medium education was crucial in establishing local varieties of English in countries like India, Nigeria and Singapore (see section 1.3 below), we can assume that the teaching of content subjects through English is likely to produce students who speak English fluently, but with marked local features.

## *Travel*

Today's citizens are often mobile, either moving to a new location for tourism or to seek employment. The development of tourism within a country is often dependent upon providing resources in English for visitors, and international travellers generally find that they need some knowledge of English in order to travel abroad. This provides a reason for many people to acquire some mastery of the language.

## *Popular culture*

English today is an important language for the expression of western popular culture, as seen in movies, television and music. It is visible everywhere in sport, in advertising and in packaging and labelling of consumer items, particularly those aimed at younger buyers. In some parts of Europe (e.g. Finland), English-language movies and television programmes are broadcast in English (usually with subtitles), rather than in dubbed versions, providing young learners with increased opportunities to learn English.

## *The media*

English is the language used in newspapers intended for an international readership, such as the *Bangkok Post* or *China Daily,* and in international magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek*. Similarly, it is used by international television networks, such as CNN and Al-Jazeera, and for television channels, such as RT, an English-language news channel which presents the Russian view on global news for an international audience, or CCTV, which presents the Chinese view of China and the world through English.

## *A global English language teaching industry*

The spread of English is also supported by a global industry that involves publishers, private and public language-teaching institutions, and testing organizations, such as those offering international examinations. Two examples from the private language school industry are illustrative. The Swedish language-teaching company EF (Education First) is the world's largest private educator, with over 25,000 teachers and 15 million students worldwide, with headquarters in Lucerne, Switzerland. In China, supplementary English classes for preschool and primary school age learners is a multibillion-dollar industry that is expected to grow by 30% per year. The Walt Disney Company has schools in major cities there, and China's biggest private-education organization – New Oriental Education and Technology Group – has some 500 schools and earns over US$60 million a year from children's English classes.

## *Symbolism*

Although mastery of English is a practical goal for many learners, as noted earlier, in many parts of the world English has also accrued a value and status that transcends its role as a communicative resource. It is seen as a symbol of globalization, modernization,

technical innovation and progress. Therefore, educational planners believe that English should have a significant role in a national curriculum, because not to do so would be to opt out of contemporary views of progressivism. As one writer puts it, English is sometimes 'ensnared by an ideology that positions English as a language which everyone must know' (Cozy, 2010: 738), a language that everyone must study for the sake of the few. In an interesting study, Sayer (2010) examined the social meanings of English in the Mexican city of Oaxaca, as reflected in the use of English in street signs, shop names and product brands. He identified six themes or 'ideas' that English represents in that context:

- English is advanced and sophisticated.
- English is fashion.
- English is being cool.
- English is sex(y).
- English is for expressions of love.
- English is for expressing subversive identities.

Some describe the attraction of English as representing imagined communities of English speakers that the learner may wish to join (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). This was the focus of an interesting study by Lamb (2004), who explored the idea of what English represents in the minds of a group of Indonesian learners of English. For them, it was not linked to any particular geographical area (such as the United States, Australia or Great Britain) nor with any particular cultural community (e.g. such as Canadians, New Zealanders or Singaporeans) but rather was linked in their minds to international culture. This included international business, the spread of technology, consumerism and materialism, democracy, tourism and world travel as well as the worlds of fashion, sport and popular music.

The status of English also impacts negatively on people's views of their own language in some countries. An observer of the impact of English in Indonesia (Lindsay, 2011: xi) comments:

> A quick glance at Indonesian newspapers, advertisements or television shows the extent to which English is infiltrating and even replacing Indonesian, but more significantly, the extent to which pride in speaking and writing Indonesian is declining. There was a time when speaking Indonesian was a sign of modernity, a symbol of the adoption of a broad identity beyond one's regional self expressed in one's regional language. Even twenty years ago, characters in Indonesian films and advertisements speaking regional languages or heavily regional language inflected-Indonesian were inevitably portrayed as 'traditional' (i.e. of the past), or as lower class, country hicks. By now, this same image is shifting to Indonesian. To be trendy is to speak English, or more commonly, heavily English-inflected Indonesian. There seems to be no longer any pride in speaking or writing Indonesian well.

? **Among the factors in this chapter that have promoted the spread of English, can you suggest the five which you think are most important in establishing the role of English in the country where you teach (or a country where English is a second or foreign language)?**

# 1.3 English as an international language

## Learners' views of English

Learners study English for many different reasons, and many have no choice in doing so. Their reasons for studying English relate to how English impacts on their present or future lives, and how they understand and perceive the nature and role of English. The 'idea' of English – what it means in the minds of teachers and students – is shaped by the efforts of applied linguists, educational planners and policy makers, as well as by the culture of a particular country. The English language teaching profession, as well as government policy makers, normally articulate the idea of English through reference to communicative needs, authentic language use and the functional or instrumental value of English for learners, as opposed to a language that the learner has an emotional and personal identification with. For many learners, whether they like it or not, English is a language they must learn. It can be regarded as a form of linguistic and economic capital. In the twenty-first century, for many people, competence in English adds greatly to an individual's capital, a fact that justifies the large amounts of money spent on teaching and learning it. Learners' motivations for learning English often reflect this instrumental perspective (Canagarajah, 2001). Critical educators have also drawn attention to learners' often ambivalent attitudes towards learning English (Lin, 1999; Canagarajah, 2001). Many learners need English, but they don't necessarily want it (Lin, 1999: 394). For some learners, it is an obstacle that they may resent. Teachers, therefore, need to be sensitive to their learners' perceptions of English and not simply assume that they share the teacher's views of the value of English.

? **What are the main reasons your students are studying English? Do your students *want* to learn English, or *need* to learn it?**

The situation in Japan, as described by Seargeant (2009), is perhaps unique. Seargeant suggests that many people in Japan have an intense fascination with English, as is seen in acts of cultural display like advertising, and thousands of people devote huge amounts of time to studying it; yet, the English language has no official status in Japan, nor do most of the citizens have any real need for it in their everyday lives. Instrumental ambition for learning English in Japan is much less important than the 'idea' of English, that is, its symbolic meaning. Some observers have suggested that the continued use of grammar-translation in Japan, the use of 'decorative English' in advertisements and popular culture, and the notion that English is too difficult for Japanese students to master reflect a particular 'idea' of the nature of English in Japan. Seargeant (2009: 56) suggests that one consequence of relating the concept of Japanese ethnocentrism to foreign-language learning is that it prioritizes the role of culture in English language teaching, rather than mastery of spoken English:

> The language becomes not so much a tool for international communication, but a living artifact belonging to a foreign culture. Likewise, native-speaker teachers become specimens of that

foreign culture, their role as instructors of specialized knowledge overshadowed by their status as foreign nationals, so it is the emblematic presence of a foreign culture in the classroom that is the defining factor of their appointment in schools, their status as language informants being overshadowed by their status as foreign nationals.

## Varieties of English

But when we talk about teaching English, what exactly do we mean by 'English'? Whose English are we talking about, and what kind of English? The concept of 'English' is really an abstraction since it refers to a whole range of speech varieties and speech styles, used differently by people in many parts of the world. In a sense, there is no such thing as 'English': there are only 'Englishes' – or different ways of using English. Different ways of using English reflect the different identities people express through their use of English. Identity may be shaped by many factors, including personal biography, nationality, culture, working conditions, age and gender.

Due to the complex and diverse functions of English around the world, as well as the changing status of English in today's world, finding a convenient way to describe the different roles English plays is difficult. In some countries, English is the majority language and the mother tongue, or first language, of the majority of its population, such as in Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. The applied linguist Kachru refers to these countries as 'the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English' (1992: 356) or the 'inner circle'. The terms *English as a native language (ENL)* or *English as a mother tongue* have been used to refer to the status of English in these countries. In countries where English is the dominant first language for most of the population, it is the main language used in government, education, the media, business, etc. The way English is spoken in these countries has traditionally been a reference point in teaching English to speakers of other languages, and these are the countries where the major approaches to teaching English have also been developed.

However, there are many other parts of the world where English has a different status. These are multilingual countries where widespread use of English – particularly in education, government, commerce and the media – is a legacy of colonialism. This refers to the status of English in many parts of Africa, in Pakistan and India, in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Fiji and elsewhere, as noted earlier in this chapter. Kachru referred to these countries as the 'outer circle' and worldwide there are greater numbers of English speakers in outer circle than inner circle countries. A feature of outer circle countries is that local varieties of English have emerged there, reflecting the need for English to accommodate to the cultures of the contexts where it is used. People speak these newer varieties of English (just as people do when speaking other varieties of English, such as Australian or South African English) because they express their cultural and national identity. Older varieties of English, such as American or British English, are not considered targets for learning in countries where new Englishes have become established (Foley, 1988). The status of English in these countries has traditionally been referred to as a *second language,* and the countries where English has this status as *ESL countries*.

Many educators, including myself, object to the use of these terms since they suggest a secondary status for users of English in these contexts, but a satisfactory alternative term has not yet emerged. The varieties of English that have developed in these contexts (largely as a result of English-medium education) have been called *new Englishes* (Platt et al., 1984). And since many learners may encounter these new varieties of English, they need to be represented in materials for teaching listening comprehension. There is one group of new Englishes in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, sometimes referred to as South Asian Englishes. There is another group in the former British colonies in East and West Africa. Another group is found in the Caribbean, and there is the group found in South-East Asia – Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Then there is a Pacific group, such as Fiji.

**?** **To what extent do you think learners should be exposed to many different varieties of pronunciation – including examples of the new Englishes referred to above?**

In contexts where English is used alongside local languages, but for high domains – such as education – there is a tendency for speakers of the local language to incorporate English lexical items into their use of the local language as a sign of social status or to mark their identity in other ways. For example, in Chennai, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, and where Tamil is the local language, anglicized Tamil – sometimes referred to as Tanglish – is fashionable among young people, particularly the English educated. Some advocates of Tamil complain that the language is being threatened by the influx of English words. Young people in Hong Kong, similarly, find it natural to mix English words into their everyday Cantonese. The mixed code, it has been suggested, plays an important role in marking out the Hong Kong identity, serving as a distinctive linguistic and cultural marker of 'Hong Kongness'. In post-apartheid South Africa, many black South Africans have adopted a local variety of English, laced with words from local languages, as a sign of freedom – in contrast to Afrikaans, which they may view as the language of oppression (http://medienportal.univie.ac.at/uniview/detail/artikel/the-image-of-afrikaans-in-south-africa-part-2/).

**?** **Language is an important way in which our identity is expressed. What are some ways in which personal identity can be expressed through language?**

In many other parts of the world, English is taught as a subject in school, and that may be necessary for certain practical purposes, but it is not widely used within the country. Kachru referred to these countries as the 'expanding circle'. English in expanding circle countries like China, Japan, Spain and Russia has usually been described as a *foreign language*, another term which it is difficult to find a convenient replacement for. In contexts

where English is a foreign language, local varieties of English are less likely to emerge, and the target for learning has traditionally been an external variety of English, such as British or North American English. However, there is evidence that, for many learners in these contexts in recent years, speaking English with an accent that reflects features of the learner's mother tongue (e.g. a French accent, a Dutch accent, a Korean accent) is no longer considered a sign of inadequate language mastery, but is instead a valid expression of cultural identity (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Nevertheless, a teacher educator notes that learners often have an unsophisticated understanding of accents:

### Learners' views of accents

New teachers are often confused when interrogated by their students about accents. My first teaching job was in France where my classes divided themselves into two groups. Group A decided that they only wanted to learn an 'American accent'; Group B only wanted to acquire a 'British accent'. Both were actually more anti- the other than pro- their own choice. I come from New Zealand so it was easy for me to placate Group A by telling them that the New Zealand accent is nearly the same as the 'American' accent and Group B by telling them that the New Zealand accent was nearly the same as the 'British' accent. The nonsense of the whole thing was which American or which British accent did they mean, and could or should they even be bothering? It seems that, for all but a very few people, the accent you end up with, no matter how high your proficiency level, will be that of your L1, and why should it be any different? Learners do have a strange perception of the importance of accents. One low-intermediate Korean learner once told me that I couldn't understand him because he had an American accent. Actually, it was because he had a very strong Korean accent, and his knowledge of vocabulary and grammar was only that of a low-intermediate learner.

*Peter Nicoll, teacher and teacher educator, Auckland, New Zealand*

? **Do your students have a preference for a particular accent in English, such as British or North American? What do you think are the reasons for their preference?**

## Using English as a lingua franca

One of the major functions English fulfils in today's world is as a 'link language' or 'lingua franca', that is, as a means of communication between people who have no other shared language. This, of course, is the case for Germans using English to communicate with Russians or Japanese speakers, or for Italians learning English to communicate mainly

with people who speak another European language, such as Polish or Dutch. Increasingly, around the world, English is used for communicating in circumstances like these, where it functions as a 'common language' between people who do not share a language. The terms *English as an international language (EIL)* and *English as a lingua franca (ELF)* have been used to describe the use of English in these situations. ELF has been defined as follows (Firth, 1996: 240):

> [ELF] is a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen *foreign language* of communication.

Another definition offers the following (House, 1999: 74):

> ELF interactions are defined as interactions between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue.

The concept of English as an international language (or lingua franca) has a number of important implications for English teaching.

## *Learning English as an international language*

As mentioned previously, in the past, English was often regarded as the property of 'native speakers of English' and of countries where it has the status of a mother tongue, or first language, for the majority of the population. It was these varieties of English (and particularly the standard accents within these varieties) that were considered legitimate models to teach to second or foreign language learners. And it was also assumed that English had to be taught in relation to the culture(s) of English-speaking countries. This picture has changed somewhat today. Now that English is the language of globalization, international communication, commerce, the media and pop culture, different motivations for learning it come into play. English is no longer viewed as the property of the English-speaking world, but is an international commodity. New goals for the learning of English have emerged, which include 'interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to study or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners . . . and a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures' (Yashima, 2002: 57), as well as other goals, such as friendship, travel and knowledge orientations (Clement and Kruidenier, 1983). The cultural values of the United Kingdom and the United States are often seen as irrelevant to language teaching, except in situations where the learner has a pragmatic need for such information. The language teacher no longer needs to be an expert on British and American culture, or a literature specialist either.

Therefore, new varieties of English reflect the pragmatic needs of using English as a lingua franca. For example, Bisong (1995) says that in Nigeria, English is simply one of a number of languages that form the speech repertoire of Nigerians, a language which they learn 'for pragmatic reasons to do with maximizing their chances of success in a multilingual and multicultural society'. English is still promoted as a tool that will assist with educational and economic advancement, but is viewed in many parts of the world as one that can be

acquired without any of the cultural trappings that go with it. Proficiency in English is needed for employees to advance in international companies and improve their technical knowledge and skills. It provides a foundation for what has been called 'process skills' – those problem-solving and critical-thinking skills that are needed to cope with the rapidly changing environment of the workplace, one where English plays an increasingly important role.

When it was taken for granted that the variety of English which learners needed to master was a native-speaker one, the choice was often determined by proximity. In Europe, due to its proximity to the United Kingdom, British English was usually the model presented in teaching materials. In many other parts of the world, North American English was normally the target. In some places (e.g. Indonesia), learners are more likely to encounter Australian English, and this may be the variety of English they feel most comfortable learning. However, in recent years, there has been a growing demand for North American English in places where British English was the traditional model, particularly among young people for whom American English is 'cool'. It seems, perhaps, that it more closely resembles their 'idea' of English.

The two schools of thought concerning how closely learners should try to approximate native-speaker usage can be summarized as follows: The traditional view is that mastery of English means mastering a native-speaker variety of English. The presence of a foreign accent, influenced by the learner's mother tongue, was considered a sign of incomplete learning. Teaching materials presented exclusively native-speaker models – usually spoken with a standard or prestige accent – as learning targets. The second school of thought is that when English is regarded as an international language, speakers may wish to preserve markers of their cultural identity through the way they speak English. In such cases, learners may regard a French, Italian, Russian or Spanish accent in their English as something valid – something they do not want to lose. This is a question of personal choice for learners, and teachers, therefore, should not assume that learners always want to master a native-speaker accent when they learn English. As one learner puts it, 'I am Korean, so why should I try to sound like an American?' This issue has important implications for the design of textbooks and is discussed in Chapter 18.



**To what extent do your learners want to master a native-like pronunciation? How do you think they would respond if it was suggested to them that this wasn't necessary?**

## *Cosmopolitan English*

Another concept that can be used to account for the way English is used in some newly-established contexts is *cosmopolitan English*, which can also be regarded as a European manifestation of English as an international language (Seidlhofer, 2004). Increasingly, in many European cities English serves as a lingua franca in the workplace, in particular within multicultural organizations. Many younger people in large cosmopolitan cities these

days are comfortable and confident using English and speak it with reasonable fluency. The English these young people learn to speak, however, often is not clearly British, nor American, though it frequently has more characteristics of American English, perhaps due to the influence of American pop culture, than the type of English they learned in school Their accent may reflect their mother tongue, and they may not make a strong effort to lose it. The people with whom they interact could have five or six different mother tongues. There may be native speakers of English among them, but not always. Their vocabulary may have its limitations, and their sentence grammar, likewise, may not always conform to standard English. They speak *cosmopolitan English* – a variety of English that has not yet stabilized and whose characteristics have not yet been fully described. A teacher comments on cosmopolitan English in practice:

## Cosmopolitan English

The concept of cosmopolitan English is a good characterization of the way many young Europeans use English. Take the case of the children of a family I know who moved to Finland from Brazil. They were raised by a Finnish mother and a Brazilian father, speaking Portuguese as their principal language, but also developed reasonable fluency in spoken English, prior to moving back to Finland. The two young-adult sons speak minimal Finnish and are more comfortable speaking English. Their peer group are mainly Finnish, but they use English almost exclusively among themselves. Their Finnish friends have no objection to using English – they regard it as 'cool' and see it as giving them an edge. Their English is cosmopolitan English.

I think cosmopolitan English is a phenomenon more common in certain parts of Europe than in other parts of the world. It explains why young people in the northern European countries, such as Sweden and Finland, speak English so well when they leave school, and why students in countries like Spain, Italy, Korea and Japan, of the same age, have such difficulties with English. It isn't because the teaching is much better in some parts of Europe. Talk to young people from Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Holland, and they typically tell you that they learned most of their English from the media, from watching TV programmes and movies in English. Some 80% of the films shown in Western Europe are imported either from Britain or the US. But the important fact about the media in these countries is that foreign movies are not usually dubbed: subtitles in the mother tongue are provided, giving students a bilingual mode of developing their comprehension and, to some extent, their oral skills, something which doesn't happen in those countries like Spain, Italy and Japan, where English learning is much less successful. Movies and other English-language based visual media there are almost always dubbed, and students go through the educational system rarely encountering a word of English outside of their English lessons.

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Some European linguists, such as Seidlhofer (2004), believe that the increased use of English in Europe as a lingua franca will lead to a variety of cosmopolitan Englishes, or 'Euro Englishes', and that there are already clear signs of the emergence of European English. Other new Englishes, such as Japanese English, are also the focus of description (e.g. Hino, 2012). Seidlhofer believes it will be possible to provide descriptions of these varieties of English as they stabilize, and that eventually these descriptions will be codified in grammars and dictionaries. Others, such as Jenkins (2007), believe a core of Euro English will emerge, but there will be different varieties of Euro English, each with its own distinctive features, depending on the learner's mother tongue (Kirkpatrick, 2007). So as English becomes one of the primary languages of the European Union, British English may eventually become merely one sub-variety of it, along with French English, Dutch English, Danish English and so on. Widdowson (in Howatt and Widdowson, 2004: 361) commented on this situation and suggested that by acknowledging the different types of lingua-francas used, there was no intention to propose a reduced form of English. Rather it was simply to recognize that the modified varieties of English which are being used should be accepted as legitimate varieties that develop through the use of English as an international language. He argued that the functional capacity of the language is not in fact being restricted, but it is actually being enhanced, giving its users the opportunity to express their own identities through English rather than the socio-cultural identity of others.

**Is the notion of cosmopolitan English relevant to your teaching context? Why, or why not?**

## *Impact on native speakers of English*

In the past, native speakers of English tended to assume that when they spoke English to non-native speakers, it was the responsibility of the other person to do their best to understand native-speaker English. Today, this might be regarded as a sign of what has been termed 'cultural imperialism' and that it is in fact the responsibility of native speakers to make themselves understood when they use English with non-native speakers. Native speakers of English who use English daily as an international language, and particularly English language teachers and teacher educators, need to develop the ability to use a type of English that makes use of high-frequency vocabulary and that avoids colloquialisms, vague language, obscure syntax or a marked regional accent or dialect – particularly when teaching students with limited proficiency in English. Some have termed this variety of English *Globish* (Nerrier, 2006). In Europe, meetings of the European Union are increasingly carried out in English, since it is argued that English is the language that excludes the fewest people present. However, this comes at a cost, since many native speakers of English are notoriously hard for colleagues in Brussels to understand, and it is often observed that they talk too quickly and use obscure idioms.

When dealing with global business, native speakers are often at a disadvantage when it comes to brokering deals in their mother tongue. In 2005, Korean Airlines chose a

French supplier for its flight simulators, rather than a simulator made by a British manufacturer, because the 'offshore' international English of the French manufacturer was more comprehensible and clearer than the English spoken by the manufacturer from the United Kingdom.

Consequently, some language schools are now offering courses in *offshore English* to help CEOs develop a more comprehensible way of using English when working abroad. Offshore English is said to consist of 1,500 or so of the most common English words and a syntax that is stripped of unnecessary complexity and vagueness. In classes in offshore English, native speakers are taught to speak *core English*, to avoid idioms (e.g. to say *make every effort* instead of *pull out all the stops*), to use Latin-based words like *obtain* instead of those with Germanic roots such as *get,* to avoid colloquial usage and strong regional accents, and to use a slower rate of speaking.

? **Can you suggest ways in which teachers who are native speakers of English often modify their English when teaching to make it more comprehensible to learners?**

# 1.4 Implications for English language teaching

The growing demand for English worldwide and the changing nature of English itself as it assumes the role of the world's second language have had an important impact on policies and practices in English language teaching.

## The status of English in the school curriculum

In view of the role of English worldwide, it is not surprising that, in most countries, English language teaching is a major educational priority and financial commitment.

Due to the importance governments attribute to the learning of English, in most countries today, learners in state as well as private schools are required to take English courses at some stage in their school careers. The form in which English instruction is provided, however, may differ considerably. For example, it may be a required or optional subject at grade school / elementary school and a required subject at middle school / junior high or high school / senior high. If English is taught at grade school, a gradual introduction to English is normally provided, the nature of the course sometimes depending on whether the children's mother tongue uses a Roman alphabet or a different writing system, such as Chinese or Arabic. English may be taught as a subject in its own right, or it may be used as a medium of instruction for some or most school subjects. The intensity with which English instruction is provided may range from a few hours per week, at grade school, to one or more hours per day, at middle school and high school. In many parts of Asia and

Latin America, English is generally a required subject in state schools. However, the time devoted to it is very limited, large class sizes make teaching difficult and the curriculum often fosters an exam-oriented or grammar-based approach to teaching. In China, more than 100 million people are currently studying English. In France, 96% of school children are studying English as an elective subject at school.

**?** **What is the official status of English in the country where you teach (or a country you are familiar with), and what is its status in the national curriculum?**

Countries regularly evaluate their curriculums, as shown by this information provided by a teacher in Japan:

> In Japan, English language policy is determined by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, [known as] MEXT (2008), and disseminated to local school administrators and teachers. The focus of the policy for foreign-language education is on 'communicative English', but content coverage and entrance-exam preparation are in reality the main focus of practising teachers. However, the 2013 curriculum aims to improve the content and delivery of English education, with an emphasis on language across the curriculum. Central to the 2013 curriculum guidelines is the concept of *gengo ryoku* (language ability), implying a coordinated focus on expression in Japanese across the curriculum. It is assumed that skills learned in the first language will transfer more easily to foreign-language instruction. For example, for senior-high-school English, more emphasis will be placed on speaking and listening, in an integrated-skills approach, and less of a focus on the grammar-translation approach of previous years.

In many countries, courses at secondary level typically focus on grammar, vocabulary and the four skills, but also reflect teaching trends in local contexts, where in some places, approaches such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL) may be used (see Chapter 3). Doubtless, the styles of teaching that occur around the world vary considerably; however, for many students, the following approach, observed in English classes in Indonesia (Lamb, 2009: 240), would be familiar:

> My observation notes report teacher-dominated lessons based on a standard textbook with a grammatico-lexical syllabus and offering a set of traditional activities, including teacher explanations of language, reading-comprehension tasks, reading texts aloud, grammar and vocabulary exercises, and feedback sessions involving pupils writing their answers up on the blackboard. Oral work consisted mainly of teacher questions, plus some choral chanting.

Many students may have to take a local or national examination in English, as part of their school studies. The students' English teacher may be someone from their own country, or the teacher may be someone from another country. In the former case, the teacher's English proficiency may vary from minimal to advanced. In some countries (e.g. Japan,

South Korea, China), young graduates from English-speaking countries ('native speakers') are often employed to work, sometimes alongside local teachers, as conversation teachers. In many countries, English is a required subject for entry into university and is also a required subject for freshman/first-year university students. In some contexts (e.g. China), a pass in an English examination may be a requirement for university graduation. The kinds of English courses offered at university level may vary considerably. They may be general-English courses, based on the assumption that the students did not master enough basic communication skills during their school English programme, or, in some cases, they may be courses that prepare students for English-medium instruction (if some of their university courses will be taught in English). The use of English to teach graduate, and even undergraduate, courses is now a growing trend in many parts of the world. When this occurs, students entering university may be required to take an intensive English course to prepare them to follow courses taught in English, particularly if they are majoring in science or technology. These are called Foundation or Pre-sessional courses in the United Kingdom, and are sometimes referred to as Preparatory courses or simply Prep courses in other countries (e.g. Turkey).

## English language teaching in English-speaking countries

While English language teaching is a major educational enterprise in countries where English has the status of a foreign language, it also plays an important role in 'English-speaking' countries such as Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. In 2010, there were 40 million foreign-born residents in the United States, some 17% of whom arrived between 2005 and 2010, and many of whom would be described as having *limited English proficiency (LEP)*. The growth in numbers of LEP students in recent years has major implications for state/public schools in the United States.

English-teaching programmes in countries like these serve a variety of different kinds of learners, including refugees and immigrants as well as students from different parts of the world seeking to improve their English. Such programmes involve both the public and private sector. For example, in Australia, the Adult Migrant Education Programme (AMEP) is a nationally administered language programme and one of the largest programmes of its kind in the world (www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/amep/facts-figures/amep-overview.htm).

> The programme reflects the government's commitment to long-term sustainable settlement outcomes for newly arrived migrants, through integrated, targeted and well-designed programmes that support clients in their transition to life in Australia. Gaining English language proficiency is key to successfully settling in Australia . . . The number of hours of free English courses offered depends on the individual client's circumstances. All AMEP clients have access to up to 510 hours of English courses for five years from their visa commencement date or the number of hours it takes to reach functional English (whichever comes first).

Similarly, in Canada, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programme provides English (and French) language courses for adult permanent residents. Immigrants who wish to take a course contact the nearest LINC assessment centre, or

immigrant-services organization, for an assessment of their language needs and are referred to LINC course providers in their community. The content of these courses follows the standardized descriptions of an individual's language proficiency at 12 benchmark levels (www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/linc.shtml).

In the United States, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) curriculums are developed by education departments in individual states, based on the specific needs of each state, and are often framed around descriptions of competencies linked to state standards for English as a second language instruction.

The kinds of English courses offered in these contexts depend on the learners' individual needs. For example, 'mainstreaming' courses seek to prepare school-age learners to study in primary and secondary schools and to participate in the mainstream curriculum, and are often content-based (see Chapter 3). Some schools have procedures in place to recruit international students at high school or college level, since they can be an important source of revenue for the school. If students have limited English-language skills on arrival, they are often given intensive English-language support prior to entering regular classes (or sometimes parallel with them), to assist them with the language skills needed to master content and tasks in English, i.e. to enter the mainstream. Outside of school-related courses, social-survival courses prepare learners to participate in the communities in which they live. These courses aim to meet students' basic daily communicative needs and are generally competency based (see Chapter 3). Occupational or work-related courses seek to develop the English language skills or competencies needed in different fields of employment.

Tertiary institutions provide English language support for students in a variety of ways. Students may be tested on entry to determine if they need support for academic courses (such as support offered through courses in academic reading, writing, listening or speaking), and courses will typically be provided through a language centre or ESL department. Drop-in centres may also be available, where students can get individual assistance in essay writing, etc. Approaches used in such courses are often skill-based (i.e. based on a set of common skills that can be applied across many different disciplines) or text-based (see Chapters 3 and 16). General English may be delivered as a short, intensive course and, in some countries, may be linked to Cambridge English Language Assessment exams (described below).

**?** **What is your teaching context? What kinds of students do you teach or plan to teach? What are their goals in learning English?**

## The role of the private sector in English instruction

In many countries where the state school system provides limited English instruction (e.g. Central and South America, Japan, Korea and China), parents may send their children to private institutes for extra English instruction after school – sometimes for up to ten hours a week. Many teachers from English-speaking countries find employment in private

institutes when they work overseas. Whereas in the state school system local textbooks are generally used, sometimes prepared by the ministry of education, private institutes generally use commercial materials published by the major international publishers.

Private language schools often represent a response to a recurring problem in many countries – the 'false-beginner syndrome'. Children may commence studying English at state primary schools, but receive only one or two hours of instruction a week. By the time they enter secondary school they have retained very little of the language they had learned, so instruction starts again at beginner level. But due to the limited exposure to English they often receive at secondary school, and the grammar and exam-based focus of teaching, when they leave secondary school their English is still rudimentary. If they enter college or university, they then recommence learning English, often again at beginner level. Learning English can be a source of frustration for such learners who find that despite several years of attempting to learn English, they have to keep starting again. As a response to the limited opportunities for learning English in state/public schools in many countries, a parallel system of private language schools exists to cater for those students who can afford to take additional English-language courses. The provision of English courses to fee-paying private students is a major industry worldwide. Students in such courses may simply want to improve their general English communication skills, since these may not have been emphasized in their school English programme. Some may have specific needs, such as English for business or travel, and some may want to enter local or overseas colleges and universities for tertiary studies.

**?** **How significant is the private language school industry in your country? What kinds of students do the schools cater for?**

In addition to offering general English, private language schools often prepare students for international examinations, such as TOEFL, IELTS or TOEIC[1]. In some countries, schools may offer courses linked to the 'Cambridge Exams' – a set of examinations developed by Cambridge English Language Assessment which place students according to five levels of proficiency, from basic (1) to advanced (5):

1. Cambridge English: Key (KET)
2. Cambridge English: Preliminary (PET)
3. Cambridge English: First (FCE)
4. Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE)
5. Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE)

Private institutes may use their own school-based teaching materials, commercial textbooks or a mixture of both. Teachers may be native speakers or trained local teachers.

[1] TOEFL and TOEIC are registered trademarks of Educational Testing Service (ETS). This product is not endorsed or approved by ETS.

In recent years, too, there has been a rapid expansion in private-language institute courses directed at young learners and teens.

A teacher educator comments on teachers who teach at both state and private institutions:

### Teachers' roles

Pre-service teacher training is usually geared towards employment in a particular sector: primary schools, middle schools, secondary schools or universities. The curriculum and teaching methods presented point to this goal. Overseas 'experts' running in-service courses in Southeast Asia are usually asked to work with teachers from the state system, although, in my experience, many teachers actually have two roles. By day, they teach at the state institution from which they have been sent on the course, but in the evenings, they teach at private language schools.

One can only admire people who move between the state textbook, with its culturally appropriate content, to one of the commercial textbooks with scenarios about flying overseas and booking into international hotels. (The popular preparation classes for international examinations are another story.) Teachers are remarkably adaptable. They will take ideas that they think are realistic and apply them, as well as they can, to both their classrooms. But international trainers need to keep in mind that spare time is one thing missing. An activity taking hours of preparation is unlikely to be acted on. After all, like teachers everywhere, they do have responsibilities beyond the classroom.

*Marilyn Lewis, teacher and teacher educator, Auckland, New Zealand*

## The impact of technology

In recent years, there has been a substantial change in where and how learning takes place. 40 or 50 years ago, teaching mainly took place in the classroom and in the language laboratory. The teacher used 'chalk and talk' and the textbook. Technology amounted to the tape recorder and overhead projector. However, with the emergence of communicative language teaching in the 1970s and, more recently, with the emergence of the internet, learning began to move away from the teacher's direct control and into the hands of learners, through the use of individualized learning, group work and project work, as well as online learning. The physical contexts for learning have also seen many changes. Learning is not confined to the classroom: it can take place at home, or in other places, as well as at school, using the computer and other forms of technology. Today's teachers and learners live in a technology-enhanced learning environment. Videos, computers, interactive whiteboards and the internet are accessible to almost all teachers and learners, and the language laboratory has been turned into a multimedia centre that supports online learning. Technology has facilitated the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred learning, advocated by proponents of communicative language teaching. The role of technology is discussed in Chapter 19.

# 1.5 Conclusion

The status of English in today's world raises many issues for teachers and learners of English. The themes we have covered in this chapter, including the contexts where English is spoken, perceptions of English as a lingua franca and implications for English language teaching curriculums, can perhaps best be summarized through a set of principles, or considerations, that teachers need to keep in mind.

## *1. English means different things to different people*

Learners associate English with a variety of values and roles, and these may influence their attitudes towards learning English and the kinds of learning experiences they prefer. Some may associate English with things they enjoy, such as pop culture, entertainment or the internet. For some, English may be viewed as something that will have economic value for them in the future, but this may not be the case for others. And not all learners may be seeking to acquire an overall general communicative ability in English, nor be aiming to acquire a native-like mastery of a particular variety of English. Teachers will need to realize that many learners may be satisfied with making themselves intelligible in English and speaking English in a way that reflects their cultural identity. All learners are different, as a Taiwanese learner cited by Holliday (2009b: 22) comments:

> Although I did feel comfortable to be told that I did not have to be native-speaker like, I would definitely feel upset if I could not reach my own expectation in pronunciation…I just wanted to draw attention to the psychological part, the feeling, how people feel about themselves in terms of speaking…If we take Jenkins' view and tell them to stay where they are – you don't need to twist your tongue this way and that, and it's perfectly all right to keep your accent – at some point, we would terribly upset the learners because they might want to…I prefer to speak for myself.

The complex roles that English plays in different situations suggests that a 'balanced approach' to teaching English is appropriate (Farrell & Martin, 2009). This requires teachers 'to be culturally sensitive to the diversity of contexts in which English is taught and used' (McKay, 2002: 128). Thus, the variety of English emphasized should be based on the teaching context, the teacher's abilities and style, as well as their learners' needs and goals, both educationally and culturally. In such an approach, there is no single correct choice for all contexts (Christenson, 1992). Thus, choosing to teach standard British English in Doha can be just as appropriate as choosing to teach 'Chinese English' in Beijing.

## *2. Language teaching is a localized activity*

Despite the global nature of English language teaching, each language-teaching situation is unique, and global solutions to local conditions are seldom effective. Language-teaching programmes need to reflect the individual contexts in which they operate. As Clark (1987: 11) comments:

> A language curriculum is a function of the interrelationships that hold between subject-specific concerns and other broader factors embracing socio-political and philosophical matters,

> educational value systems, theory and practice in curriculum design, teacher experiential wisdom and learner motivation. In order to understand the foreign language curriculum in any particular context, it is, therefore, necessary to attempt to understand how all the various influences interrelate to give a particular shape to the planning and execution of the teacher/learning process.

Seidlhofer (2004: 227–8) reflects a similar perspective, when she comments on the implications of English as a lingua franca (ELF):

> Rather than just being trained in a restricted set of pre-formulated techniques for specific teaching contexts, teachers will need a more comprehensive education which enables them to judge the implications of the ELF phenomenon for their own teaching contexts, and to adapt their teaching to the particular requirements of their learners. Such teacher education would foster an understanding of the processes of language variation and change, the relationship between language and identity, the importance of social-psychological factors in intercultural communication and the suspect nature of any supposedly universal solutions to pedagogical problems.

## 3. *Learners need to appreciate the diversity of English and the varieties of English that exist in the world*

Learners should have the opportunity to hear different varieties of English, including 'new Englishes', as well as more familiar varieties of English (and perhaps to appreciate that English is not 'owned' by users of English in English-dominant countries, such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom). The internet provides a rich resource for illustrating how English is used around the world. A teacher comments on the use of Singapore English, or Singlish:

### Learners' views of varieties of English

> Outside the ESL classroom, our foreign students are exposed to a colloquial form of English, broadly known as Singlish. What might be a more constructive way of helping our students think through issues concerning Singlish in our linguistic environment so that they do not simply see themselves in an adverse situation, where they must swim against the tide of 'deviant' language? I was pleasantly surprised by a group of Vietnamese students I was interviewing. As they were aware of the different regional varieties of Vietnamese spoken in their own country, they told me it was acceptable that Singaporeans spoke English the way they did, even though it was not the variety they would want to acquire themselves. These students were also able to identify salient features of Singlish. As teachers who are ourselves users of non-native forms of English, we need to be proficient, informed and confident enough to discuss these issues with our students, be aware of how they view our local variety and also encourage them to build a realistic set of expectations as regards their own accents.

> How do we set the stage for learning so that they can ultimately understand that in the reality of English language learning today, what truly exist [as stated by Kachru] are 'nativized webs of language structure and functional appropriateness'?
>
> *Chee Soo Lian, teacher and teacher educator, Singapore*

## 4. Interlocutors may not be native speakers of English

Traditional views of English teaching often seek to prepare students to be able to manage interactions with native speakers of English. This may still be a relevant aim for learners who are studying English in an English-speaking environment. However, for many learners, their uses of English may mainly be with other speakers of English as an 'international language'. With globalization, English language learners need to be prepared for future encounters with speakers of varieties of English that differ from their own. One way to prepare learners is to expose them to different varieties of English (Matsuda, 2003). There are many examples of English varieties available on the internet, radio and television, and in different newspapers from around the world (Cook, 1999). For example, on the internet, teachers and learners can access the International Corpus of English (ICE) (www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice), which provides samples of many national and regional varieties of English, and they can also access World Newspapers and Magazines (www.world-newspapers.com), which provides links to English newspapers from around the world. On the internet, it is also possible to view English television channels from around the world, such as New Delhi television (www.ndtv.com) from India, in which the broadcasters use Indian English.

## 5. Learners' English should be valued

Regardless of the English variety that teachers may choose to teach, learners should be reminded that the chosen model is an example of just one type of English, and that the learners' own English is valuable, even though it may differ significantly from the model presented in class. Some educators argue that teachers can encourage learners to 'refer to idiomatic expressions of their own language and enrich the communicative dialect of English with exotic and poetic elements' (El-Sayed, 1991: 166). For example, Dutch speakers of English might say, 'If you need help, just pull on the bell', which is a word-for-word translation of a Dutch expression. Although this expression is not one that a native speaker of English would use, the message is clear, so there is perhaps no need to 'correct' the speakers or to provide an alternative English expression. Thus, rather than being thought of as unsuccessful speakers of standard English, learners will be considered successful English-language users who make contributions to their speech community. This change in perspective, it is suggested, can increase learners' confidence and willingness to communicate in English (Cook, 1999). Hence, Kramsch (1993: 28) argues that learners can start using the foreign language 'not merely as imperfect native speakers, but as speakers in their own right'.

### 6. *Native speakers need to use English in ways that facilitate communication*

Native-speaker teachers of English need to recognize that the way they use English with other native speakers, and with people from their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds, is not necessarily helpful in contexts where English is an international language. They should learn how to monitor their speech to avoid the use of obscure idioms and expressions and endeavour to use English in a way that facilitates cross-cultural communication.

### 7. *Learners need to develop intercultural communicative competence*

From the viewpoint of English as an international language, the goal of English teaching is not merely to develop communicative skills in English. Byram (1988: 15) argues that language learning provides 'the opportunity for emancipation from the confines of learners' native habits and culture, with the development of new perceptions into foreign and native cultures alike'. Learning English thus becomes an opportunity to compare cultures, and for learners to validate their own cultural and linguistic heritages.

In sum, no monolithic standard of English exists as a target for English learning worldwide. Learners in different parts of the world have very different motivations for learning English, for the kind of English they seek to acquire and for the level of proficiency they need – and language-teaching policies and practices in different parts of the world reflect these differences. The expanding role of English in many countries prompts regular review of curriculum policies and associated teaching practices. The need for citizens with better English skills feeds the demand by national educational authorities for new language-teaching policies, for greater central control over teaching and teacher education, for new and more effective approaches to teaching English, and for standards and other forms of accountability. Yet despite the resources expended on English language teaching worldwide, in almost every country results normally do not match expectations – hence, the constant pressure to adopt ever-changing curriculums, teaching methods, materials and forms of assessment. As a consequence, the language-teaching profession is obliged to continually review its knowledge base and instructional practices through the efforts of applied linguists, researchers, teachers and teacher educators. Throughout this book, we will focus on the process of reflection and review of issues, approaches and practices in English language teaching.

## Discussion questions

**1** Technology (particularly the internet) has had a major impact on the role of English in the world. How has the ubiquity of the internet impacted English language education in your country?

**2** Listen to an English language news broadcast available in your country. To what extent would the voices heard in this material expose students to different varieties of English? Consider both the programme announcers and those interviewed.

**3** What examples of English being used as a lingua franca have you encountered – that is, as a means of communication between people who have no other shared language?

**4** Consider this quote (Bruthiaux, 2010: 367): 'In developing, resource-poor EFL settings especially, the top priority for students must be to acquire some English (for whatever purpose), with little time available and minimal resources from teachers who often lack proficiency and may have little awareness of the outside world. As a general principle, given the difficulties inherent in learning any L2 beyond early adolescence, models should be kept constant, with variation minimized or even artificially excluded.' Do you agree? Why, or why not?

**5** Do you think the 'core English' which is currently featured in 'offshore-English' courses should provide the model for all users of English as an international language – native speakers/writers and non-native speakers/writers of English alike?

**6** Employing young native-speaker graduates to work as English conversation teachers, in public schools in places such as Japan, China and South Korea and in private institutes worldwide, suggests that the ideal teacher of a foreign language is a native speaker of that language. What advantages do a) native speakers, and b) non-native speakers, bring to language teaching?

**7** Look at principles/considerations 1–7 presented in the Conclusion part of this chapter. Can you think of ways you could implement these principles/considerations in your teaching?

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