English Language Teaching in the Periphery:

A Users' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that teaching English in the expanding circle has assumed a unitary foreign language model (Dewey & Leung, 2010; Shelton 2007). Smitherman (2003) propose that English transactions in the expanding circle are changing the nature of English. Burns (2005) suggested that researchers have focused on the Inner and Outer Circles and that less research is conducted where English is taught as a foreign language. This paper considers the views of the users of English in an expanding circle context to assess whether English as a foreign language is still a valid model for teaching English or whether a new model is emerging.

1. INTRODUCTION

English in the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1985) or the periphery (Canagarajah, 2006) is taught in line with the mainstream view on English as a foreign language (TEFL) (Jenkins, 2009; Glass, 2009; Michieka, 2009). The offered TEFL models are focused on teaching English to people in the Expanding Circle or the periphery with an assumed design based on native speaker proficiency (Dewey, 2007; Kachru *et al,* 2006).

However, the unprecedented spread of English (Graddol, 2003) is projecting the contexts of English language use to situations that may or may not require adherence to the native speakers' standards, as presumed by the TEFL model (Nunan, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2004). Widdowson (2003) argued that the unprecedented internationalization of English means that the language has long ceased to be the sole preserve of its traditional native speakers. Laying claim to authority in terms of correctness and appropriateness of form and use is no longer the exclusive right of speakers from the conventional English countries where it is the native language (ENL) (Dewey & Leung, 2010, p.4). Canagarajah (1999, p. 4) argues: "Many speakers in the Periphery use English as the first or dominant language; others may use it as a language that was simultaneously acquired with one or more local languages, and may display equal or native proficiency in them all. Furthermore, there is the argument that many of the Periphery communities have

developed their own localized forms of English and might consider themselves to be native speakers of these new Englishes". The peripheral context, therefore, has developed functional utility for English that differs from the ones operating in its native context. This aspect, however, has not much featured in TEFL considerations.

The TEFL model assumes that the primary need of learners is to be able to communicate with English native speakers through standard British or standard American varieties (Jenkins, 2006; Kachru, 2004). The TEFL model continues to attract pedagogic interest in Asia and Africa and specifically the Arab world.

Burns (2005) has suggested that researchers have mostly focused on the Inner and Outer Circles and less research is conducted where English is taught as a foreign language. Jenkins (2007) proposed that the use of native speakers' standards and conformity to native speakers' cultural norms is unnecessary for most of the world English speakers. Jenkins contends that native speakers' accent is not necessary, for example, for the success of communication. Seidlhofer (2004) argues that even minor grammar errors like dropping the third person present tense marker or leaving out articles, do not cause communication problems.

However, in the Expanding Circle interest remains focused on a TEFL model. In the Gulf, Middle East, North Africa and South Asia regions, teaching English follows the native speaker model in speaking, comprehension, reading and writing. The United Arab Emirates University in Dubai hosted a workshop on teaching pronunciation skills for TESOL Arabia conference on March 14, 2007. Cairo hosted "the best practice in TEFL", 16-17 November 2007. Prominent GCC universities offer TEFL programmes leading to the award of Bachelor and Master's degrees. The same approach is adopted in Lebanon. The American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU) offer English as a foreign language programme (Bacha & Bahous, 2011). In a more recent embrace, the Arab Open University is liaising with the British Open University to offer MA in TEFL within its English Language and Literature programme and across its regional branches. Non-native speakers studying TEFL programmes are expected to keep up with additions to Standard English from dialects and elsewhere and with the expressions that they may never encounter in their own context.

In the light of the above, there is a need to reconsider the TEFL model from the users' perspective taking into consideration the international spread of the English and the changing needs of its users. Seidlhofer (2004) proposed new dimensions in TEFL where accommodation skills and cultural sensitivity are more important to EFL communication than the 'native standard' of its Inner Circle of origin.

1. CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

1.1. A language in flux

The international status of English and its wide spread brought a change in its role based on its functional utility. Shohamy (2006) argues that English as a language can no longer be regulated by the rules of any one particular set of speakers, "who owns English? is a question frequently asked about the language that has become the World Language, the main means of communication, with no exclusive ownership of anybody. English is a free commodity …it is free to be used , shaped and molded by anybody in different ways, as in the case for its million users, who construct and create endless types of Englishes. English does not belong to anybody specific, not to a nation, not to a group, it belongs to those who want to own it" (p.171).

In the European context, Goethals (1997) reports on initiatives taken to develop awareness of English, "as a means of access to the riches of other cultures" (p.61). A network for English language learning was established in Europe (NELLE) for native and non-native English teachers to stress, "the cultural component of teaching, learning and using English as an international language in Europe" (Goethals, 1997, p.58). In this context, our first argument is that the teaching and learning of an international language has different assumptions and objectives than the teaching and learning of a second or a foreign language.

1.2. Conceptual frames

In post-structural and post-modernist thinking, the perception on language as a structural entity, independent of its social context of communication, continues to focus the pedagogic model of English language teaching on lexical and grammatical competence. Bourdieu (1991, p.107) complains that the influence of Saussure has left us "looking

within words for the power of words", when that power is to be found elsewhere, in the social and institutional contexts within which language is used. The paradox remains in the use of conceptual frames that consider, within rigid structural design, the symbols of communication abstracted from their context of communication. In TEFL, this is translated in the use of rigid native speaker models to account for non-native contexts of application.

Since Hall and Eggington's (2000) debate on the sociopolitics surrounding the conceptualization and norms of contemporary English, interest in the subject has rapidly grown. Considerable empirical and theoretical investigation focused on the linguistic nature, social standing and attitudinal responses towards different forms of English worldwide. Cogo (2012), Burns (2005), Seidlehofer (2004), and Jenkins (2007) demonstrated through research that effective communication has little to do with adherence to native speaker language norms. Therefore perceptions on good and bad Englishes are sociopolitical and ideological constructs that serve other aims than educational purposes. Our second argument is that rethinking goals and approaches for English language and its users in the periphery or the Expanding Circle need to culminate to proposing a new scheme for English within the frames of global perspectives that are customized to the local needs and function for the average person using English in the periphery.

In an attempt to satisfy international users, Cambridge ESOL, the main providers of teaching awards for English language teachers in the UK, are introducing into the existing Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA), a new modular-based syllabus that includes the subject areas of World Englishes, Global English and English as a Lingua Franca. However, Prodromou (1988) criticizes ELT material as being Anglo-centric. He argues that textbooks produced in the Inner Circle "have not gone very far in recognizing English as an international language" (p.76). The main problem with TEFL material is that it still presents British, American and Australian cultures and ways of life as the ultimate goal for international learners and instructs learners on adopting a native model to succeed in encounters with native speakers in native contexts. At the same time, cross cultural encounters undertaken in international contexts remain lacking.

1.3. Kachru's models

In the 1980s, Kachru (1985) proposed a three concentric circles' model that defines English by localizing it within circles of users and functions. The Inner Circle

constituted of native speakers that are estimated at around 380 million. The Outer Circle involves English second language users and are estimated between 150 - 300 million. The Expanding Circle encompasses English Foreign Language (EFL) users and is estimated to include between 100 – 1000 million. The Inner Circle, therefore, identifies users from English-speaking countries where English serves as their native language (ENL), such as the UK and Australia. The Outer Circle refers to countries which have experienced periods of colonization by English-speaking communities, leading to the institutionalization of English as the second language (ESL) in nonnative communities, such as India, Nigeria and Singapore. The Expanding Circle includes countries where English is used as a foreign language (EFL), such as China, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

This division of English language learners into three neat circles has, however, become increasingly problematic. Graddol (2006) proposes that in the globalized world, the provided distinctions between concepts of English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) have become distorted. "The expansion of global English has led to a crisis of terminology. The distribution between native speaker, second language speaker and foreign language user has become blurred" (Graddol, 2006, p. 110).

Smitherman (2003) cites Kachru as proposing that the intense use of English within countries of the Outer Circle that has resulted in the emergence of several standardized varieties such as standard Indian English, standard Sri Lankan English, and so on. The position of English in the Expanding Circle is not flawless and cannot fit neatly within the proposed categories. While English is used for functional purposes, it is not the official language of these countries.

Seidlhofer (2004) challenged the unitary construct of English and argued that English cannot in any meaningful way be regarded as a single entity. Shelton (2007, p. 59) proposes, "because English is used by so many people, it is changing faster than any other language". On the other hand, the prolonged contact and use by non-native speakers in the periphery has resulted in diverse patters of English in use. From this perspective, mainstream ELT research can no longer afford to ignore the massive growth in the use of English in the expanding global and peripheral contexts. Our third argument is that the Expanding Circle or the periphery is bringing contemporary conditions where neither

native speaker's competence nor the norms of the standard varieties are central to using English for communication.

2. PEDAGOGIC REFLECTIONS

2.1. ELF: a native speaker model?

The notion of an idealized native speaker has been deeply integrated in English language teaching, description and theorizing (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 212; Leung, 2005, p. 128). Jenkins (2006) argued that despite the far-reaching changes in the English-speaking world along with serious critiques of the traditional premises of English language teaching research little has changed in the way English is taught to learners. TEFL models continue to be based on native speaker proficiency. However, Widdowson (1994) contends assumptions of a unified native speaker model. Superior native speakers ideals in ELT have been questioned because, "the exhaustive linguistic competence of native speakers is a myth, and native speaker English is thus not less varied than that of nonnative speakers" (Widdowson, 1994, p. 383).

House (2010) argues that the most obvious reason for opposing native speaker authority is the fact that nonnative and nativised speakers clearly outnumber native speakers of English worldwide. Crystal (2003) states that compared with the 380 million ENL speakers, the 500 million ESL speakers and 1000 million EFL speakers in the world cannot be ignored in ELT. Pavlenco (2003, p. 259) expresses dissatisfaction with current TEFL models where the dominant EFL discourse portrays English language learning as "a never-ending elusive quest for native speaker competence". The learner is implicitly viewed as somehow "at fault" when he or she is unable to attain native speaker competence.

2.2. A Trojan model?

English as a global enterprise involves political and financial investment and is, as outlined above, underpinned by a number of ideological and pedagogic assumptions. The ideal native speaker construct and the conception of language as one standard entity promote an implicit and unattainable model. Pennycook (1998) contends, "the example of English language education is, of course, both a continuation of the racist hierarchies of colonial

rule and of the colonial construction of the inherent superiority of the native speaker"
(p.194). Canagarajah (2006) refers to English in the Expanding Circle as the Trojan horse
that can conceal colonialism and dependence.

Dewey and Leung (2010, p. 12) argue that the culture of thinking about language
and communication in which English is "fixed" as a set of norms based on the native
speaker mode remains prominent in TEFL models. The grammar of one standard variety is
regarded as the primary pre-requisite for communication, and intelligibility is seen as norm
dependent on the maxims of a superior culture. This, however, does not take into account
the global status of English in the periphery and the diversified and localized standard
versions. Dewey and Leung (2010, p. 4-5) propose the need for an extensive reformed
model of ELT in the periphery that can establish new socio-cultural relevance to the
experience of its users in the expanding circle.

2.3. A Communicative Model?

The ideas of communicative language teaching, with the goal of communicative
competence have dominated ELT over thirty years. The concept of communicative
competence in ELT has been constructed with the native speaker model in the heart of the
four competencies: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic (Leung, 2005;
Alptekin, 2002). However, in its original application, communicative competence related
to language applications in the life and culture of a society or an ethnic group. Hymes
(2007), a social anthropologist and a linguist, developed the term within the ethnography
of communication paradigm. Leung (2005) suggests that communicative competence, a
concept originally developed for ethnographic research, has tended to be interpreted in
ELT in a very narrow pedagogic manner. This represents a key challenge to the way the
EFL model has been conceptualized.

Canagarajah (2002) argues that it is essential for the teaching profession to become
aware and realize the importance of the concept of World Englishes, and to consider this in
relation to current pedagogic practices. Shelton (2007, p. 60) suggests that the amount of
variation in English in the global context appalls or terrifies advocates who think there is a
purity to be defended. Jenkins (2009) comments that in many contexts that would

conventionally be described as EFL, the role of English is shifting, with the widespread growth in the number of domains in which English is used, and the expansion in its various functions in institutional and national settings.

In a good deal of ELT practice it is still widely assumed that, regardless of social setting, there is no alternative to basing the classroom model on native speakers' standard English. In the light of the expanding World Englishes paradigm, our fourth argument is that we can no longer assume that the linguistic and socio pragmatic norms of Inner Circle speakers will be relevant to learners of English in all settings. As such, we need to rethink of an ELT model that is relevant to the socio-cultural context of English communication in the Expanding Circle; an ELT model that is based on the perceptions and perspectives of its users.

3. **THE CASE STUDY**

   3.1. Context of the study

The case study considers the views of users of English in one context in the Expanding Circle to assess whether English as a foreign language is still a valid model for teaching and learning or whether a new model needs to be considered based on perceptions of English as an international language.

The informants are 546 users of English; 23 tutors and 523 students at the Arab Open University in Lebanon. The students were at the time of study, Fall 2014-2015, doing English for Specific Purposes course (ESP), which ran for 14 weeks. The course, English for Specific Purposes, was developed at the Lebanon branch of the Arab Open University, to meet the needs of the learners in specific contexts. The course focused on the ways in which English is used in real communication, in different situations.

The emphasis of this course is to motivate learners with different needs and interests through relating the themes and topics to particular disciplines and occupations and using the language appropriate to these activities in lexis, syntax, discourse and analysis. The course, therefore, had specific topics that serve academic and occupational purposes. ESP targets the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

3.2. Method

Information was collected through an end of semester structured feedback questionnaire comprising both Likert type questions and multiple choice type questions which was distributed on students and another one of similar type for tutors.

Out of the distributed total, 430 students completed the questionnaire, which is 82% of the total student number and 23 tutors, which is 100% of the total tutor number. Follow up interviews were conducted with 10% of the student informants and 100% of the tutor participants, to validate the results.

Table 1. ESP student questionnaire

1. Do you think ESP is useful for:

Travel	Work	Communication

2. The most important skill that I need from ESP is:

Accent	Grammar	Writing

3. I can attain native-like accent

strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't know	agree	Strongly agree

4. It is very important to attain native-like accent

strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't know	agree	Strongly agree

5. I prefer to study ESP with a native English tutor

strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't know	agree	Strongly agree

6. I will use English in future with

Native British and American speakers	Non-native speakers

7. I think of myself as an

English language user	English language learner

8. English is my

Second language	Third language

9. Which category best describes the English you use

British English	Lebanese English	American English

10. English will continue to be

An international language	A second language	A foreign language

Table 2. Tutors' questionnaire

1. What is the objective of learning English as expressed by your students

Work	Travel	Communication

2. In your estimation, will your students use English later to communicate with

Native speakers	Non-native speakers	Both

3. What aspect of English do you focus on

Writing	Grammar	Accent

4.In your opinion, which form your students use English outside the classroom

Spoken form only	Written form only	Both

5. An English instructor would better be a native English speaker?

strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't know	agree	Strongly agree

6.What English variety do you use in your classroom

British	American	Both/other (specify)

7. Do you introduce your students to more than one variety of English?

Yes	No

8.Do you use English outside work context

Family	Leisure Activities	No

9. English will continue to be an influential world language

strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't know	agree	Strongly agree

10.Which label do you think is best to identify your teaching of English

English as an additional language (EAL)	English as a secondary language (ESL)	English as a foreign language (EFL)	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	English as an international language (EIL)

4. EXISTING VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS ON TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE PERIPHERY

4.1. Students' responses

In response to the first question on the usefulness of the course and its relevance to learners' purposes, 150 students out of 430 respondents rated communication as the most important useful category that was aimed at from studying ESP. 190 respondents selected work as the most important useful category that was aimed at from studying the course, 54 respondents perceived both communication and work as the most important category that

was aimed at from studying the course and 36 selected travel as the most important objective of studying ESP.

Figure 1. Usefulness of the course

In relation to the learners' perceptions on the most important skill needed from the course, 235 respondents perceive writing as the most important skill gained from the course, 101 respondents perceive grammar as the most important acquired skill and 93 respondents perceive both writing and grammar as the most important acquired skills from the course. 1 selected accent as the most important skill aimed at in the course.

Figure 2. Skills aimed at from ESP

As for the third question on whether respondents perceive that they can attain native-like accent, 43 strongly disagreed, 279 disagreed, 56 participants agreed and 52 did not know.
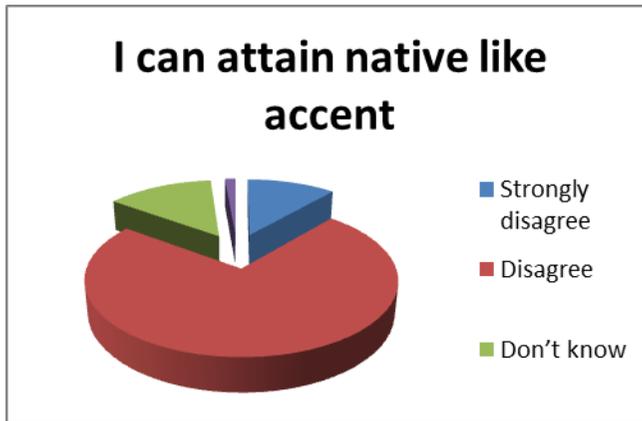
Figure 3. Ability to attain native-like accent

On the fourth question on whether it is important to attain native like accent, 240 respondent disagreed, 170 respondents agreed and 20 did not know.
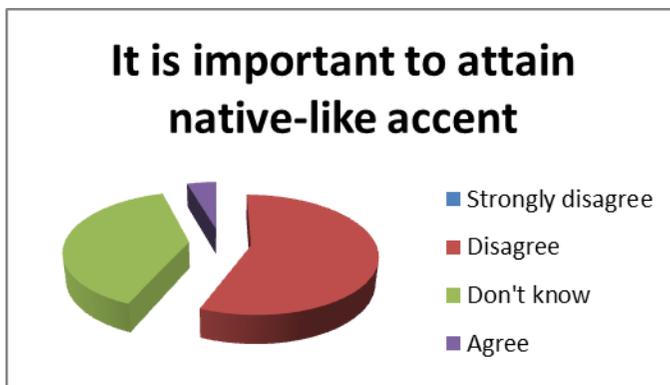

Figure 4. Importance of attaining native-like accent

On the fifth question on learners' preference to study ESP with a native English tutor, 94 students agreed and 336 disagreed. There were no cases of strongly disagreeing or not knowing.
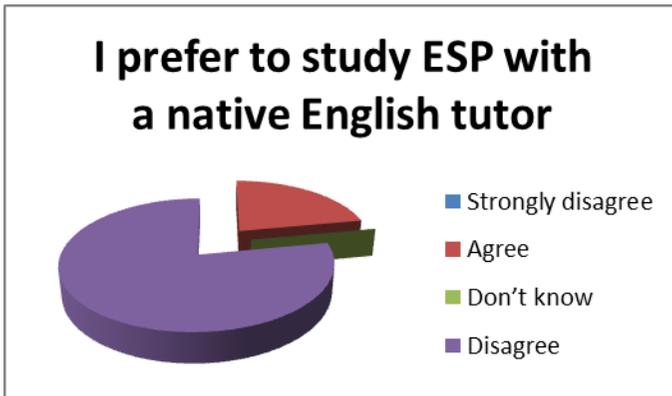
Figure 5. Preference of English tutors

The sixth question asked students whether they will use English in future with native or non-native speakers. 376 respondents out of 430 replied that they will use English in future with non-native speakers and 54 with native speakers.
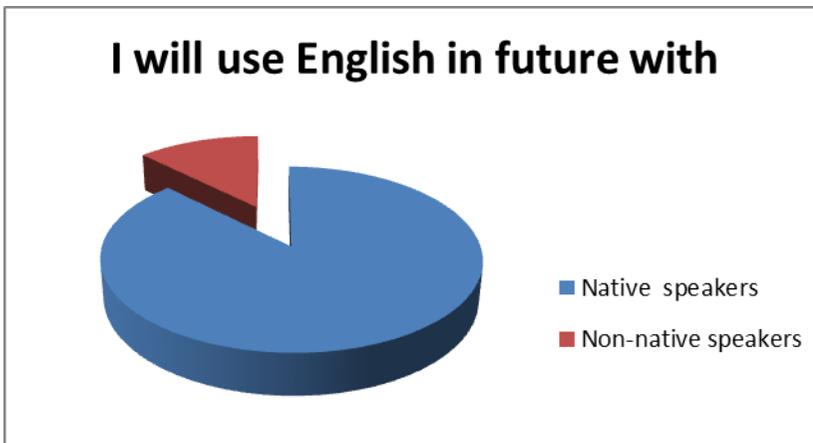

Figure 6. Future use of English

Question seven requested participating students to select whether they perceive themselves as English language users or English language learners. 289 respondents advised that they think of themselves as English language users while 141 respondents selected the category of English language learners.
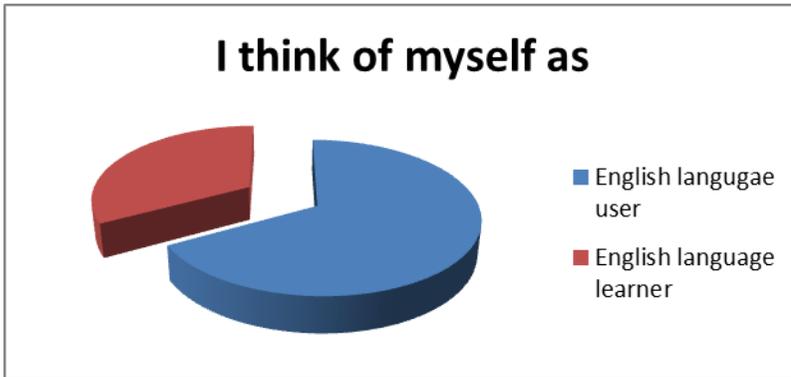

Figure 7. Perceptions of self

In relation to the eighth question English was their second language for 282 participating students and the third language for 148 participating students.
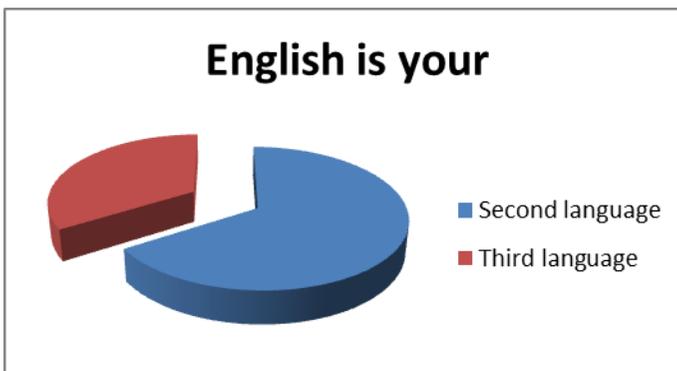

Figure 8. English as second or third language

On question nine, which category best describes the English you use, 425 students selected the category of Lebanese English, 5 selected American English and none selected the British English option.

Figure 9. Perceptions on English

For the last question on the future of English, 376 respondents out of the 430 perceived English as an international language, 54 as a second language and none as a foreign language.
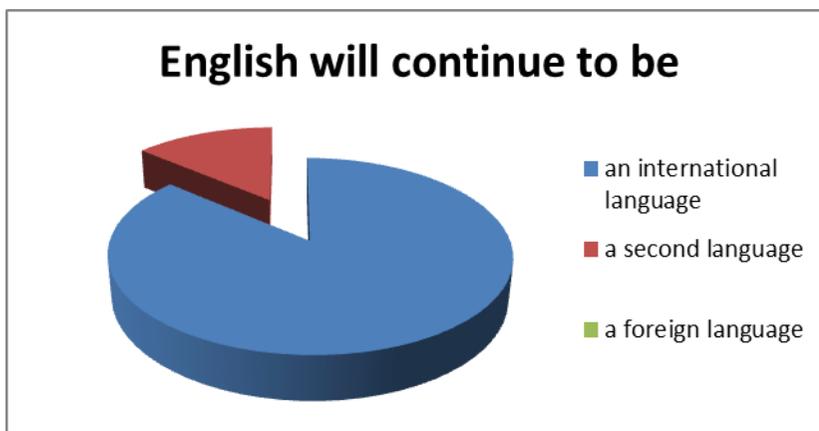

Figure 10. Importance of English

4.2. Tutors' questionnaire

As for tutors' replies, on question one relating to the objectives of learning English as expressed by students, 12 tutors out of 23 replied that their students identified work as the first concern out of studying English, 7 tutors replied that their students identified communication as the primary concern and 4 tutors replied that their students identified travel as their main concern in studying English.
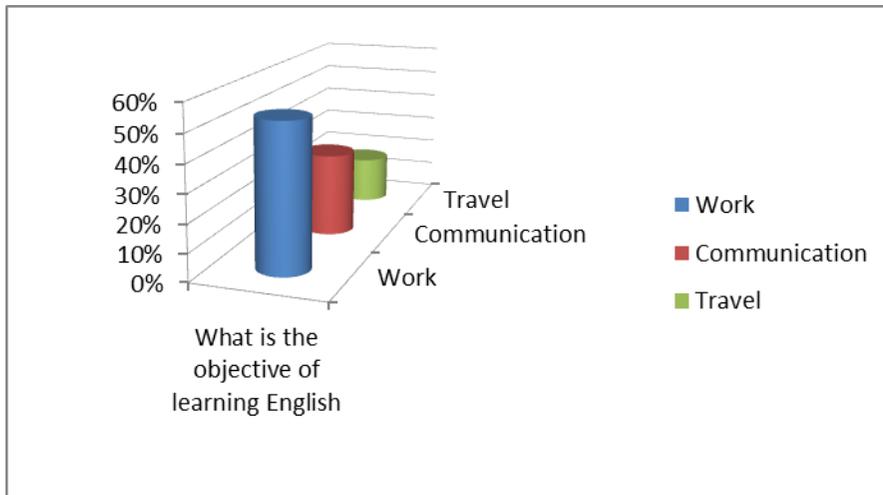

Figure 11.

In replies to question two on whether their students will use English in future to communicate with native or non-native speakers, 21 tutors out of 23 estimated that their students will use English with non-native speakers and 2 chose both native and non-native categories.
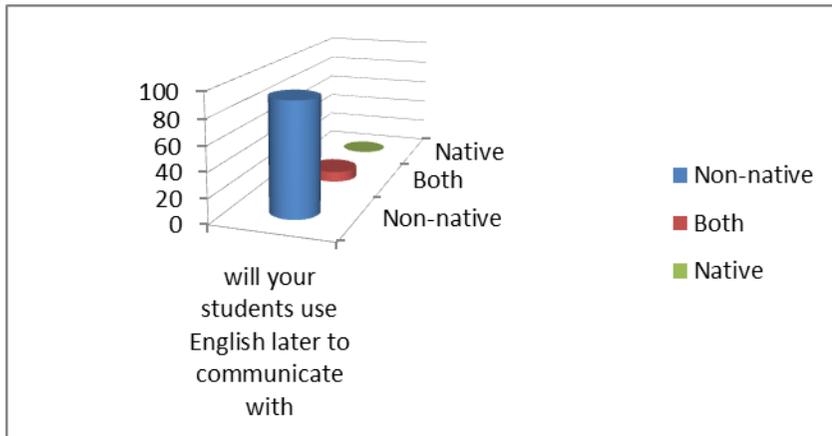
Figure 12.

As for question three on which aspect of English they focus on, 19 tutors replied that writing is their primary concern, 4 advised that grammar is their main concern.
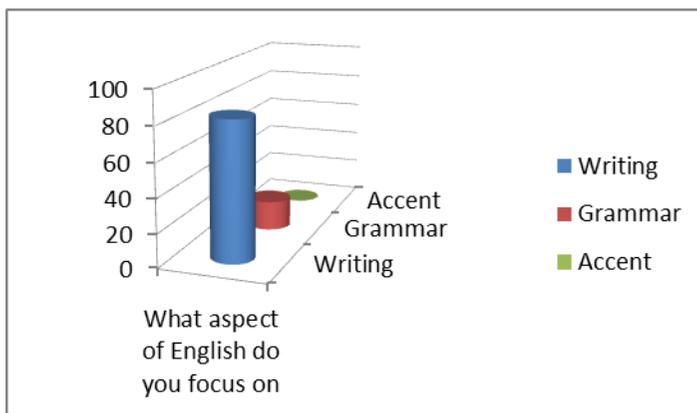

Figure 13.

As for question four on what form of English will students use outside classroom, 21 out of 23 expected their students to use both the written and spoken form and 2 expected their students to use English more in the written form outside classroom.
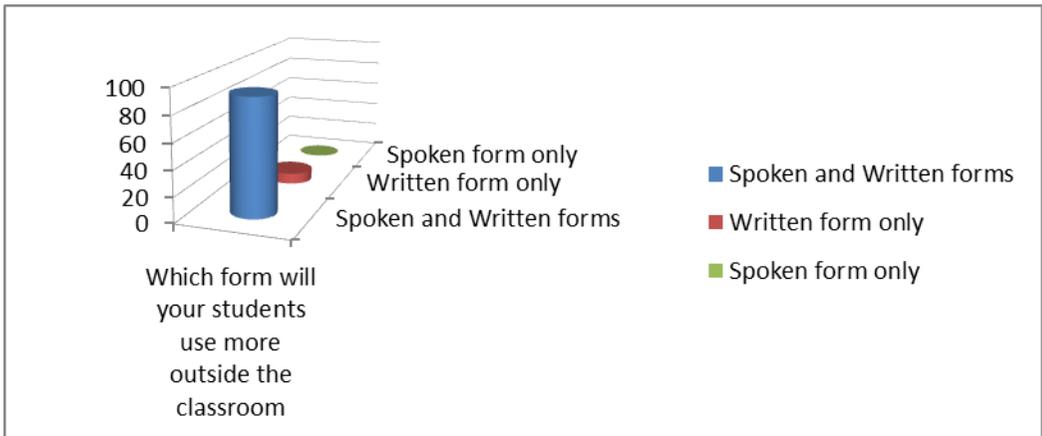
Figure 14.

Replies to question five on whether tutors think a native English instructor would be better than a non-native English instructor attracted a majority of 20 disagreeing replies, 2 agreeing and one strongly disagreeing with a resenting comment of "why?!".

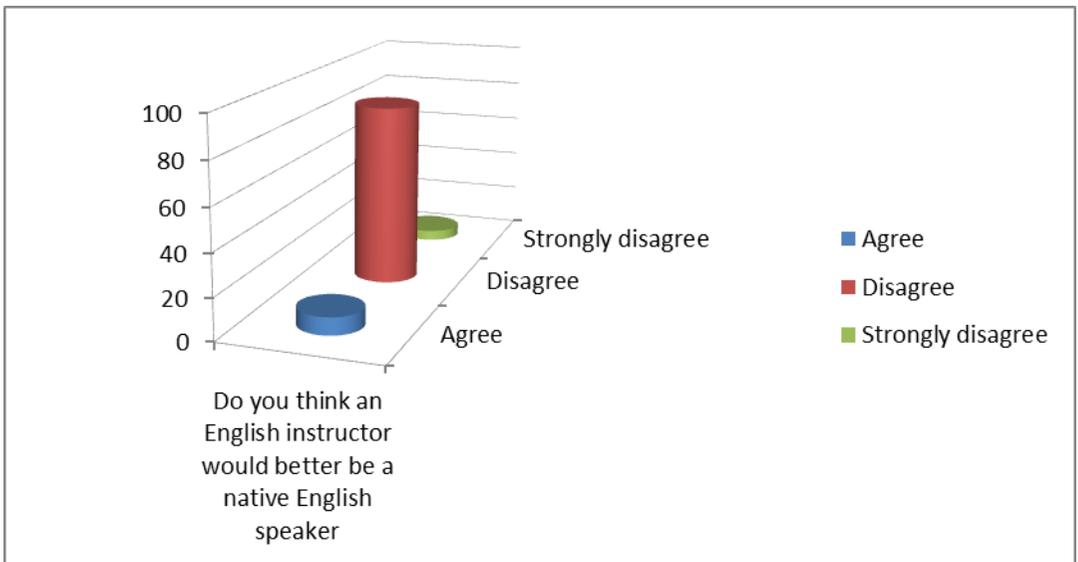Figure 15.

As for question six on what variety tutors use in the classroom, 12 tutors replied they use both British and American varieties; 5 replied they use British English and 6 replied they use American English.
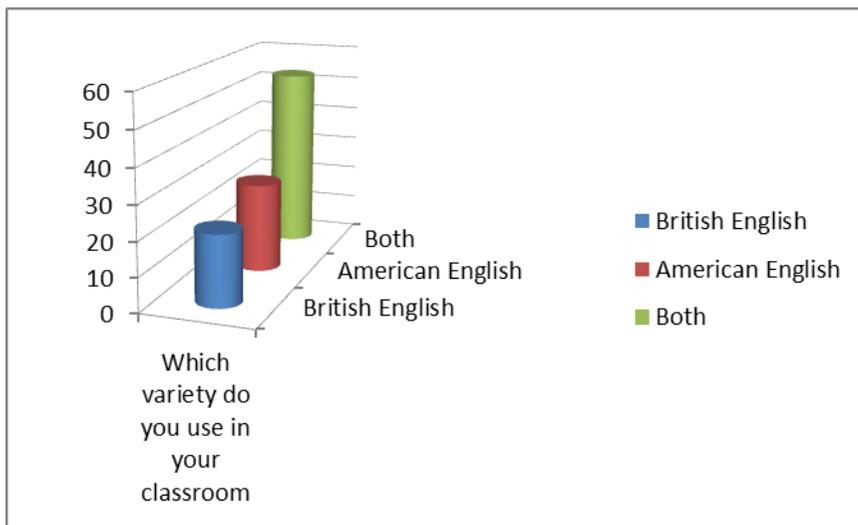
Figure 16.

In reply to question seven on whether they introduce their students to more than one variety of English, 11 said they do not and 12 replied that they do.
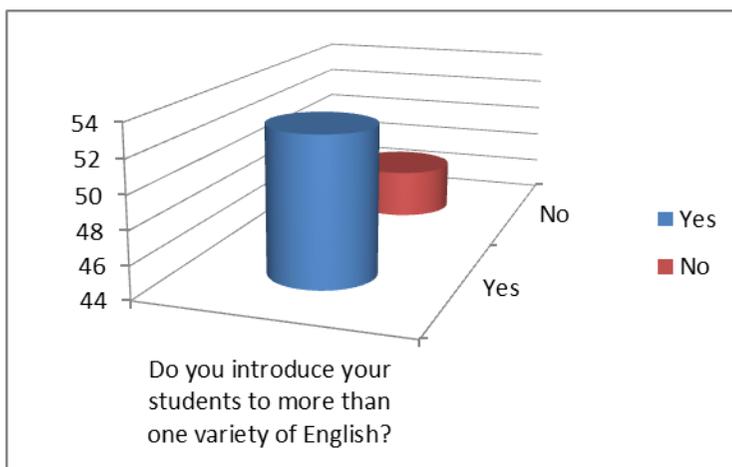
Figure 17.

The eighth question related to contexts of English use outside work. 12 tutors confirmed they use English in leisure activities and 5 said they use English with family and friends while 6 confirmed they use English outside work but did not specify.
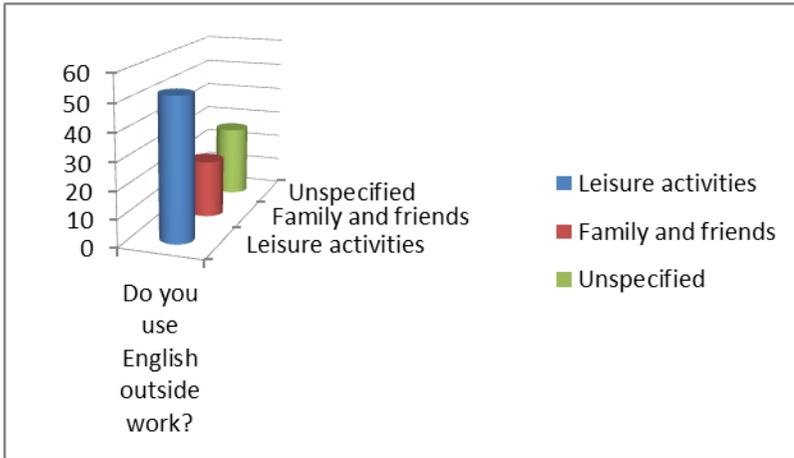
Figure 18.

Question nine related to perception on the future of English. All 23 tutors confirmed that they thought will continue to be an influential world language.
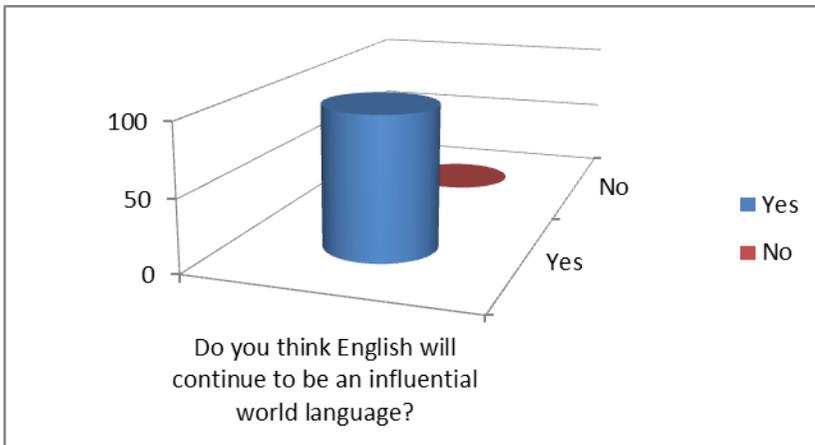
Figure 19.

The final question related to which label tutors think is best to identify their teaching of English. 15 replied that English as an international language is the most suited. 5 chose English as an additional language, 2 selected English as a foreign language and 1 chose English for speakers of other languages category.
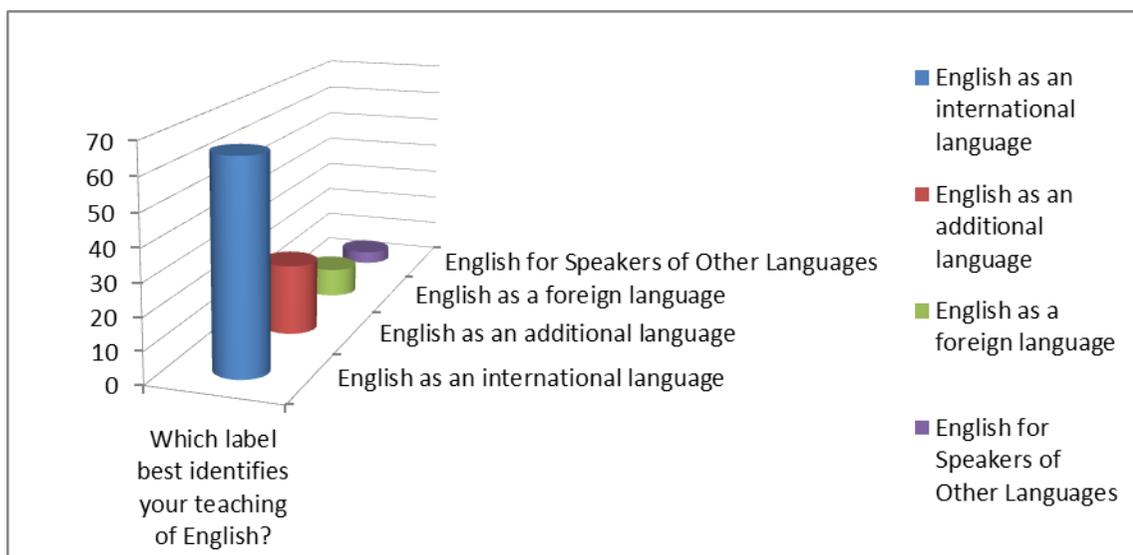
Figure 20.

To follow up on the survey questionnaire, interviews were conducted with a representative sample of students and all participating tutors to expand on the presented views as well as explore some unexpected replies.

4.3. Interviews

Forty-five student respondents were interviewed to follow up on the questionnaire results. Question five on whether learners prefer to study ESP with a native speaker provoked 78% of respondents disagreeing with the statement. When asked about their response, twenty-

eight participants evaluated the non-native tutor as having advantages over the native one, in terms of going through the same process in learning English as the learners, and hence developing expectations on the problems that students may encounter and sharing their experience on difficulties and ways of overcoming them. Seventeen participants justified their response in relation to the psychological comfort associated with tutors of the same cultural and linguistic background.

As for item nine on the questionnaire on which category best describes the English you use, students who responded that they perceive themselves as using American English explained that they chose this category because all of their school education was provided in missionary schools that they joined since kindergarten.

The emerging model from the responses of the participants in this case study maintains that work and communication in the peripheral context are at the heart of studying English. Travel only accounts for 8.5% of the concerns of the learners. Writing is the most important skill to be gained from the course. Attaining native-like accent and perceptions on the importance of attaining native-like accent provoked overwhelming disagreement. Preferences of studying with native speaking tutors were not expressed. Using English in future was largely perceived to be with non-native speakers. Two-thirds of the participants (67%) perceived themselves as English language users as compared with one-third (33%) who perceive themselves as English language learners. Almost the entire responding student (99%) selected the category of Lebanese English as the best category that describes the English they use, as compared with one percent selecting one of the EFL models. Most students (87.5%) perceived English as an international language and 12.5% perceived it as a second language.

As for tutors' interviews, an open discussion was held to follow up on replies to the questionnaire. On question five, the two tutors agreeing that a native English instructor is better than a non-native one explained that native speakers are able to pass on to their students the cultural and phonologic aspects which are 'not available' to non-native speakers.

On a follow up question on replies to item seven in tutors' questionnaire, tutors who advised that they maintain one variety in their classrooms explained that it is better to

maintain one variety 'for consistency' and in order 'not to confuse students'. On the final item in tutors' questionnaire, tutors who selected English as an international language as the most suited category that identified their teaching of English explained that their selection related to the expansion of English and the increase in its functional use in writing and communication, specifically its role in academic success, employment opportunities and professional communication.

Tutors maintained that in Lebanon demand for English is growing in middle class and upper middle class circles of education, employment and leisure, as compared to French. Tutors who selected the label of English as an additional language explained that in the Lebanese context French is the second language for many users and hence, English can be safely labeled as the additional language. Tutors who opted for the category of English as a foreign language explained that this label is used in the educational context, and based on the extent of use, they think that English will remain a foreign language for many learners. The tutor who chose the label English for speakers of other languages defended her choice on the basis of utility and that English is needed by speakers of other languages in random applications, however, in her assessment, when English is used by speakers of other languages, native standards should be applied.

In reply to question three, tutors who advised that grammar is their main concern explained that the national curriculum for upper secondary schools in Lebanon has set specific target levels for the learners' skills that are based on grammar being the backbone of the language. Some of the perceived errors in grammar use included confusion in the use of tag questions and overuse of isn't it in tag constructions. In addition, inserting propositions where they are not needed, overextending certain verbs like do and have and overdoing explicitness, characterize the grammatical errors committed by their students.

Most tutors agreed that a good command of grammar does not imply that the person is able to communicate effectively. Students can recite the grammar by heart but when asked to engage in a basic exchange they would hesitate and pause to recall all the grammar rules in their head before producing an utterance. Other tutors remarked that engaging in communication in class in order to learn from actual conversation is not enough for learners who are in need of building up the foundations of the new language.

However, tutors agreed that 'a tutor should know precisely what they are trying to prepare their students for'.

In relation to accent, tutors perceived that suprasegmental aspects such as rhythm and intonation can help learners produce strings of words with intelligible and comprehensible pronunciation and this can aid meaning and is more useful than isolated sounds of vowel segments and consonants. Moreover, teachers expressed the need to focus on the pronunciation of the sounds, both consonants and vowels, which do not exist in their learners' native language rather than focusing on native speaker accent.

Interviews with both tutors and students provided that since writing is an important concern for users of English in the periphery it can continue to be based on the available English model, however users should be made aware of the various styles and forms that relate to domains of use including international and localized contexts and functions. In reply to a question on what constitutes an international language, tutors perceived that an international language is a language that serves both the global and the local needs for users in wider applications. Participating tutors provided that an international language cannot be the same variety as used in its native context because it has different users and functions in the international contexts.

Overall, in tutors' estimation, the traditional native speaker model still persists in the official regulations in the local context. Learners are evaluated according to an EFL framework. Tutors explained that the requirements from 'outside' strongly affect teaching and learning goals in the classroom. Tutors commented that it is not enough that they acknowledge the changing role of English. Language education planners, material providers and compilers of examination matriculation have to incorporate this too. One tutor proposed that being an English tutor in today's world is not an easy task. It is the problem of applying one's own perceptions on English or adhering to market orientations and external regulations.

As the goal of the existing TEFL programmes is to conform to a near native competence, the Expanding Circle is expected to converge to the Inner Circle norms (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 213). Deviations from that are considered errors (Jenkins, 2006, p.141). In most cases, this assumption goes unchallenged. In meeting the pedagogic needs

of international users in the Expanding Circle or the periphery, it is essential that the native speaker construct be challenged. Challenging this misconception will encourage a more realistic view of how English is utilized in the wider context. English teachers, Canagarajah (2002) argues, carry with them ideological domination and linguistic imperialism.

In recent research, Seidlhofer (2004) proposes that the grammatical features that occur frequently in interactions in the Expanding Circle do not cause any problem for comprehension despite deviating from standard English (Seidlhofer, 2004). Jenkins' (2007) research into the phonology of English in the periphery resulted in her suggestion that a lingua franca core is required for intelligibility but an ability to imitate the native speaker variety precisely is not crucial. Seidlhofer (2004) and other researchers in ELF argue that dropping the third person –s , Invariant question tags, non-standard use of articles and non-standard use of prepositional patterns do not cause any problems for comprehension among speakers. Such arguments relate to a wider proposition that English is now used as an international language by a wider circle of users. It is therefore not up to native speakers to determine what is or is not acceptable in the expanding English context.

Canagarajah (2002) points out that deficit linguistics or the belief that one dialect is inherently superior to another is a limiting perspective that disinterests and further alienates international users of English. The word 'foreign' in particular has largely negative connotations, strongly associated with concepts of not belonging, unfamiliarity and strangeness. Wheeler and Swords (2004) explain that while variation in language structure is always present, positive values are associated with the Standard English of the Inner Circle while non-standard English is considered bad.

Kachru *et al* (2006) and Mauranen and Ranta (2009) perceive that the way in which different contexts of English language learning and use have been categorized have become increasingly fuzzy. Canagarajah (1999) describes two approaches to teaching language: mainstream pedagogy and critical pedagogy. Mainstream pedagogy continues with the present attitude towards standard English to reproduce, in the future, what we now have. Critical pedagogy sees learning as involving all of a person's personal background, influenced by one's environment, especially one's own cultural traditions and social practices. In an international context, critical pedagogy can lead to establishing models that

project English as a resource to users in the expanding circle that can be customized to local needs and objectives.

5. **ENGLISH IN THE PERIPHERY**

The global spread of English has caused new linguistic and cultural ties with the peripheral context as a result of the nativization processes. The emergence of World Englishes paradigm is concerned with the practices of English beyond its native context or the Inner Circle. The principle arguments put forward about the global presence of English, represent fundamental challenges to mainstream assumptions about the nature of English language learning and teaching in the Expanding Circle or the periphery. Dewey and Leung (2010, p. 4) perceive that the countless applications of English in the peripheral context have molded English into localized varieties that have become the norm in the expanding context of application.

One of the things mainstream pedagogy considers axiomatic, according to Canagarajah (1999, p. 17) is that knowledge and thus learning is supposed to be value-free, disinterested and pragmatic, which implies that teaching too is 'an innocent and practical activity of passing on correct facts, truths and skills to students'. The TEFL construct, however, as evident from the above, is value laden with Inner Circle tenets that may not hold in the peripheral context of use. Yet, from the provided responses it seems that mainstream pedagogy still influences much of ELT practices.

The problems surroundings the foreign language teaching model are tied up to the projection of one standard English, typically defined as the English of a native speaker, usually American or British, and consistent with a native speaker's fluency, pronunciation and idioms. However, based on the perceptions and experiences of English language users in the expanding context of the periphery we can no longer assume that the purpose of learning English is to use it with native speakers in their native context, as evident in students and tutors' responses. In recent years, the terms English as an international language (EIL) or English as an additional language (EAL) have emerged to refer to the use of English in contexts where it functions as an international language among speakers of other linguistic backgrounds.

Modiano (2001, p. 159-173) agrees that the teaching and learning of a geographically, politically and culturally 'neutral' form of English, which is perceived as a language of wider communication and not as the possession of native speakers, is one of the few options we have at hand if we want to continue to promote English language learning while at the same time attempting to somewhat 'neutralize' the impact which the spread of English has on the cultural integrity of the learner. Dewey and Leung (2010, p. 4-5) propose the need for "substantial rethinking at the conceptual level..to detach , or rather disentangle our notion of English from its supposed ancestry, if we are to understand its contemporary socio-cultural relevance and corporeal developments".

When considering the worldwide status of English today it becomes essential to reform ELT from the users' perspective and teach English as an international language, train teachers accordingly and develop the appropriate material for such a model. Dewey and Leung (2010, p. 12) provide that the features of the communicative model in the Expanding Circle context are not yet fully defined. The ways in which language is used in EFL enterprises within specific speech communities have tended to refocus on the rules of correctness and use as specified by native speaking models from Anglophone backgrounds. This has redirected the efforts of localizing ELT models into the elusive TEFL frames. As such, the focus of EFL teaching is not on the use of English in the Expanding Circle or the periphery but rather on expanding Inner Circle models to the peripheral contexts. A more realistic model needs to focus on the functional utility of ELT in its localized contexts without the pressures associated with the need to master irrelevant aspects of native speaker model.

7. CONCLUSION

The concept of English as a foreign language has been a disputed matter among linguists for some time now, particularly in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and English language teaching (ELT). In these fields, the ultimate goal or standard has been the unattainable ideal of a native speaker, which further alienated the learner and disappointed the user. However, the consideration of the views of the users in this case study has given reasons to reconsider the traditional TEFL models and propose a reformed alternative based on the requirements and perceptions of the international user of English.

Participants in this case study identified communication and work as priorities in learning and using English, however, the contexts and environments in which English is perceived to operate are mostly the local contexts and with non-native speakers. As reported by 430 student respondents only 8.5% perceive traveling as their main concern and 12.5% expect using English with native speakers. This aspect reflects new realities and dynamics leading to shifting teaching and learning experiences from native speakers' contexts and models to nonnative speakers'. Responses on the importance of attaining native-like accent or preference to study with a native speaker presented declining reverence for the native accent and native speaker norms as the standard. A move away from the conventional EFL model as a response to the changing needs of learners was evident in students and tutors responses.

The English language finds itself at the centre of the paradoxes which arise from the global spread of English and its international use in the periphery. Graddol (2006, p. 82) proposed that English as a foreign language, which has been the dominant English model in the second half of the 20th century, is now giving way to a new orthodoxy which is more suited to the realities of global English. Smith and Nelson (1985) argue that learning a foreign language should be to enable learners to communicate their own ideas and cultures to others and not to internalize the culture and ideas of the Inner Circle. Moreover, according to Crystal (1997, p. 137) in terms of EIL, native speaker competence will no longer be enough as speakers of the Inner Circle will need to familiarize themselves with EIL to be able to function in international contexts.

This case study, through an exploration of local realities and users' perceptions on English in the Expanding Circle revealed the deep divisions between assumptions and applications surrounding EFL in one context embarking on importing a new MA in TEFL programme for its future teachers across the university's geographic regions in the Arab world. The study comes strongly in favour of a reformed model that incorporates users' perspectives on English as an international language (EIL).

This study has three kinds of implications; descriptive, applicational and theoretical. At the descriptive level, the study provides a description of how participants in the Expanding Circle or periphery perceive and use the English language as a functional medium in communication and work. At the applicational level the study offers

propositions on an English language model, based on the users' perspective that fulfills communicative functions relevant to the expanding context, without the need to ameliorate 'native speaker' models. EFL tended to highlight the importance of learning about the culture and society of the native speaker and stresses the centrality of emulating native speaker behavior. At the theoretical level, the study suggest the need to reform the existing TEFL model which has exhausted teachers and learners and side tracked them into focusing on segmental units of the language rather than preparing competent users in the international context. English language teaching in the periphery should incorporate critical pedagogy to identify the styles, themes and structures associated with the international communities of practice, in addition to comparisons with native contexts of English. An EIL model should be tailored to international and cultural communication. It should tolerate diverse accents as long as intelligibility and comprehension are maintained, adopt sociolinguistic competence in communication, maintain multilateral discourse approach to writing and apply critical pedagogy in teaching and learning English in the periphery.

Widdowson (1994, p. 144) has made a puzzling proposition of the nature of EIL by suggesting that English as an international language could be equated with English for specific purposes (ESP), because for most non-native learners the purpose of learning is to be able to become 'members of expert communities'. However, in this EIL model a more realistic and pluricentric model of English is advocated where language norms and themes are locally defined. Canagarajah (2006) presents a framework where "nativeness" and "authenticity" in the TEFL model are replaced by qualities of "expertise", and "relevance".

McKay (2003) emphasized that as English is a world language, the local and international culture must be represented in its teaching. McKay (2003) argues that English teachers can teach English effectively when they integrate the local culture into their curriculum while also incorporating the broad picture of international use. English tutors need to consider *how* English is being taught in order to avoid reinforcing its imperialistic image, and present it as a more democratic medium in relation to other languages and cultures. McKay (2003) proposed that the cultural content of English should not be restricted to societies whose native language is English; that local expectations related to the teachers' and that the students' roles in teaching and learning of English should be

considered and the students' local cultures must feature in the material. Bilingual teachers' dual qualities in their mastery of the local and international culture must be acknowledged within such model.

Teaching English in the EIL model should focus on the functional utility of the language for international users. Extending the educational space to the social and cultural contexts of language use would help connect language with its users. If we really want to promote English as an international language we should be adopting a new appropriate model that can encourage functional utility in the international context of English and allows for local authentication.

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