Spread of English Globalisation Threatens English Language Teaching (ELT) in Pakistan

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this article is to see English in its global role and to find out whether its globalisation causes any concern for ELT pedagogy in Pakistan. For this purpose, to record the perceptions of the ELTs (English Language Teachers and ELSts (English Language Students) regarding English as a Global Language and its pedagogical concerns for ELT in Pakistan, questionnaires were distributed among the students and teachers of Two Universities and one Post Graduate College. Later on, interviews were also conducted. The results showed that, quite contrary to the hypothesis, Globalisation of English would produce detrimental impact on the indigenous languages and culture and its teaching at University and Post Graduate Levels. But the respondents found it a healthy phenomenon taking exception only to inharmonious contents of the English Language (EL) in the Pakistani context.

Introduction

It is extremely difficult to decide when globalization started as we know it today and where it is now. Robertson (2003:3) says, "Globalization as a human dynamic has always been with us, even if we have been unaware of its embrace until recently." He then argues that the third phase of globalization is currently going on: "the first, after 1500,

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centred on the globalization of regional trade; the second, after 1800, gained impetus from industrialization; the third derived from the architecture of a new world order after 1945" (Robertson 2003:4). The most recent debate regarding globalization is attributable to two factors; first, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and secondly, the use of technology enabling people to become more connected and mobile than ever before in human history.

English in the global perspective

It is now a well established fact that English has become a world language (see Graddol 1997, Jenkins 2000; McKay 2002). To understand the concept of English as a global language, it is necessary to know the definitions of *world language*, *international language*, or *global language* which have been used interchangeably in this thesis. It is also necessary to understand the abbreviation ELF.

For some, any language with a large number of native speakers is a global language (Graddol 1997, McKay 2002). If this assumption is accepted, then Mandarin (China), Spanish, and Arabic must also be considered as international languages because they are also spoken by large numbers of people. However, as McKay explains, "Unless such languages are spoken by a large number of native speakers of other languages, the language cannot serve as a language of wider communication" (McKay 2002:5). English is not only used among people from the English speaking countries but also by those whose mother tongue is not English. This is well supported by Graddol (1999, cited in McKay 2002), who states that,

> … based solely on expected population changes, the number of people using English as their second language will grow from 235 million to around 465 million during the next 50 years. This indicates that the balance between L1 and L2 speakers will critically change, with L2 speakers eventually overtaking L1 speakers. (Graddol 1999:62 cited in McKay 2002:13)

In fact, Jenkins (2000) maintains that,

> For the first time in the history of the English language, second language speakers outnumber those for whom it is the mother tongue, and interaction in English increasingly involves no first language speakers whatsoever. (Jenkins 2000:1)

Both Graddol (1999) and Jenkins (2000) believe that the increasing popularity of English as a language of communication among the non-native speakers will certainly give them ample opportunity to determine the future of English, and to some extent, a prominent "norm-providing" status as well.

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According to Crystal (1997), another element ensuring the status of English as a global language is its prominent recognition in almost every country of the world. This particular role of the language can be achieved only by making English an official language used in government offices, law courts, and in the media and education systems of the country. This is why English is sometimes called a *second*, an *additional*, or an *auxiliary* language. In addition to English as the official language of the country, it is also given preference in foreign language teaching even if it is not the second language.

Crystal (1997) asserts that English is the most widely taught foreign language in almost 100 countries of the world. Some other scholars opine that a global language has no frontiers of usage but goes across borders and different cultures.

Widdowson (1994) defines a global language as one that serves "a whole range of different communities and their institutional purposes, and these transcend traditional, communal and cultural boundaries" (Widdowson 1994 cited in Jenkins 2000:7). Smith (1976, cited in McKay 2002), one of the first scholars to define the term *global* or *world language*, suggests that a world language is one used by people from different nations to communicate with each other. His assumptions regarding pedagogy used for learning an international language is cited in McKay (2002:12). They are as follows:

1. International learners do not need to internalize the native speakers' cultural norms,
2. the ownership of international language becomes "de-nationalized," and
3. the role of education in the learning of international language is to enable the learners for the communication of their ideas and cultures to others.

According to Pennycook (1994), the concept *global* implies not only that the language is used across nations but also within a nation. Therefore McKay (2002) suggests a modification of Smith's second assumption. McKay (2002) claims that with regard to the use of English in the outer circle countries, the ownership of English should be re-nationalized rather than de-nationalized. This means that the use of English should be embedded in local contexts of use (see Kramch 1993, Holliday 1994, Pennycook 1994, Cook 2001, and McKay 2002). Based on this concept, McKay (2002) reframes Smith's assertions as follows:

1. As a global language, English is used both in a global sense for international communication between countries and in local sense as a language of wider communication within multilingual societies.
2. As English is a global language, the use of English is no longer connected to the culture of the inner circle countries.
3. As a global language in a local sense, English becomes embedded in the culture of the country in which it is used.
4. As English is a world language in a global sense, one of its primary functions is to enable speakers to share with others their ideas and culture.

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Finally, Brutt-Griffler (2002, cited in McKay 2002) puts forward four central features characterizing the development of a world language:

1. A world language is the product of the development of a world econocultural system, which includes the development of a world market and business community, as well as the development of a global scientific, cultural, and intellectual life.
2. A world language tends to establish itself alongside local languages in multilingual contexts composed of bilingual speakers.
3. A world language, unlike an elite lingua franca, is not confined to the socioeconomic elite but is learned by various level of society.
4. A world language spreads not by speakers of that language migrating to other areas but rather by many individuals acquiring that language.

Today, no other language apart from English fulfils these parameters which are of a global language.

English and globalization are very debatable terms

Within the discussion regarding the spread and globalization of English, there exists a controversy among linguists and social scientists which has led to a polemic discussion regarding its imperialistic and hegemonic role. This debate parallels that of globalization.

It is maintained by some that the effects of both the imperialistic and hegemonic forces acting in combination with the exploitative nature of globalized English combines to create greater cultural and linguistic damage than they would independently.

The debate actually started with Philipson's book *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992) and resulted in a great amount of literature dealing with the politics of English as a global language. The author says that the global spread of English is a continuing form of imperialism, and that those involved in its spread (for example, the British Council) are motivated by colonial ambition. Further, he holds EFL as a lucrative source for this linguistic imperialism. He disapproves of both the concept of globalization and the spread of English globally. His stance regarding English as a global language, in addition to his personalized concept of linguistic imperialism, has been criticized by many scholars.

Alan Davies (1996) argues that imperialism does not equal hegemony, which is more complex and contradictory than Philipson leads his readers to believe. It has also been suggested that Philipson does not discuss the resistance periodically raised against English as a global language. Philipson's viewpoint seems to be strongly biased against English as a global language.

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Nonetheless, whatever reaction his work has caused among scholars, it has led to significant research as Robert Holland (2002:21) notes:

> To whatever extent one may disagree with Philipson's (1992) analysis…the fact remains that such work goes some way towards redressing an important imbalance. It is no longer admissible simply to accept as given the status of English as a prime international tongue: a critical appreciation of its role and a critical approach to English-language pedagogy, are indispensable.

The need of English in this globalization era

Translation has been essential within human communication systems for thousands of years. Monarchs or ambassadors needed translators for a successful exchange of ideas. Yet, this was not a permanent solution for all inter-linguistic communication and had inherent limitations. Translation is only plausible if there are two or three languages in contact. If more than three languages are involved, the situation becomes more complex and a lingua franca, or common language, is needed.

Sometimes pidgin languages were formed from the native languages as lingua franca for mutual trading. At times the indigenous language of the most powerful ethnic group emerged as a lingua franca in the area. In other cases, a language such as English or French was accepted from outside because of the political, economic or religious influence of a foreign power. When the need for a global language is required by international, academic and business interests, the adaptation of a single lingua franca is most evident. (David Crystal: 10, English as a global language, 1997)

This is a time of rapid change. We are living in an unprecedented time of personal communication and world travel. For this to keep pace with the technology we have already developed, we need a global language. If this language is English, as Crystal says, "let the fittest survive and if the fittest happens to be English then so be it.

The speakers of English in the world

The consequence of the present trend with English becoming a global language increases the number of English speakers around the world rapidly. Otto Jespersen (1968, cited in Pennycook 1994: 7) gives insightful approximations of the number of English speakers since the 15th century. In the year 1500, English speakers were estimated at 4 million, in 1600, at 6 million, in 1700, at 8.5 million, in 1800 between 20 and 30 million and in 1900 between 116 and 123 million. Today, English speakers are estimated to range between 700 million and 1 billion (Crystal 2002: 2).

However, the English language is not used equally throughout the world because its role as a lingua franca changes according to the national context in which it is used.

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According to Kachru (1985), the number of the speakers of English can be represented through three concentric circles.

The *Inner Circle* includes countries like the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia where English is the primary—and often the only language—for the majority of the population. The *Outer Circle* refers to countries such as Singapore, India and Nigeria, where English has become a part of their major institutions, and plays the role of a *second* or *additional* language alongside local languages.

The *expanding circle* consists of countries where English is only one of other foreign language. These countries fully understand the importance of English as a world language although they do not have a history of colonization by members of the Inner Circle, nor does English have any special administrative status in the society as it does in the outer circle countries (Crystal 1997: 54). Kachru (1985, cited in McArthur 1998) sees the inner circle countries as "norm-providing varieties," those in the Outer Circle as "norm-developing varieties," and those in the Expanding Circle are the "norm-dependent varieties."
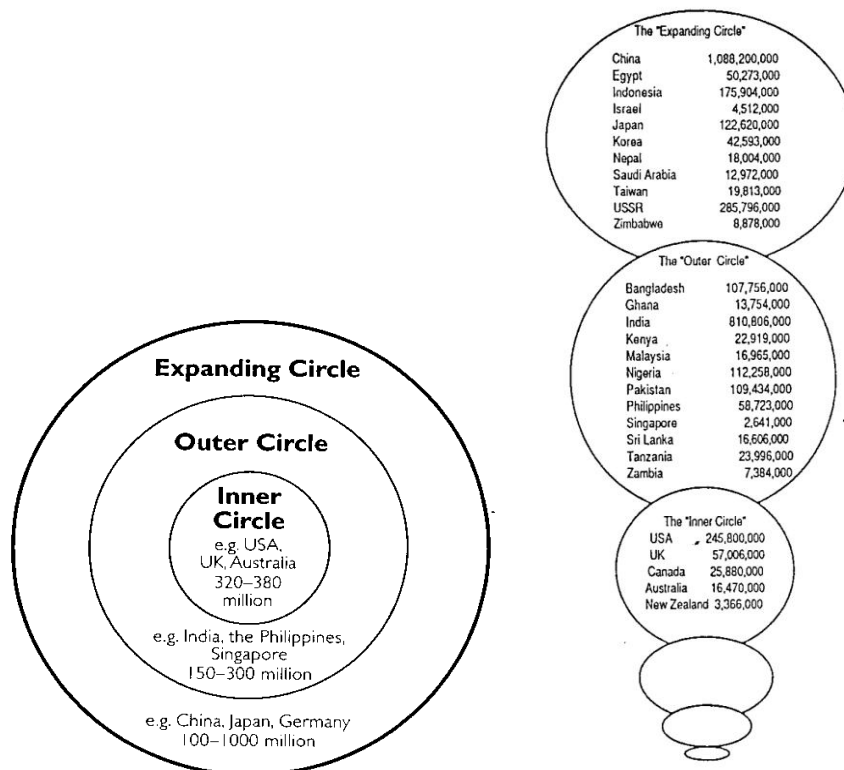

Figure 1.   Kachru's concentric circles of English

Graddol (1997) suggests a different classification of the English speakers around the world and tries to overcome the shortcomings in Kachru's three concentric circles. Like Kachru, Graddol, he too, divides English speakers into three large categories. *First*

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language speakers (L1) are those who use English as the first and, often the only, language; these speakers commonly live in countries where the dominant culture is based around English such as the United States and Australia. *Second language speakers* (L2) use English as a second or additional language. As English is present in their own communities, so their own local cultures can be represented through it, while it increasingly differs from the varieties of English spoken by first language speakers in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and elsewhere. The third category comprises those who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) as *foreign language speakers*.
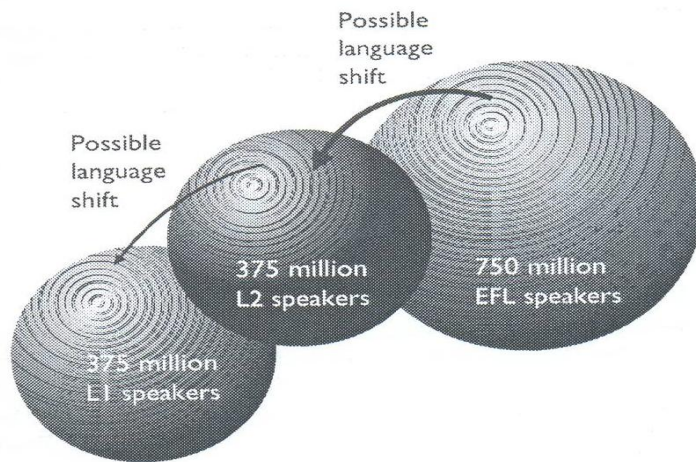

Figure 2. David Graddol's model
Source: (David Graddol 1997, *The Future of English*, P 10)

The only obvious difference between the Kachru's and Graddol's models is the difference in the number of the speakers of English they list around the globe. Graddol further suggests that L2 speakers from the expanding world will eventually outnumber L1 speakers.

A number of other scholars have proposed different models regarding the spread of English around the globe. The oldest model of the spread of English is Streven's World Map of English predating the map by Kachru. Later, in 1987, McArthur proposed his model, *Circle of World English*.
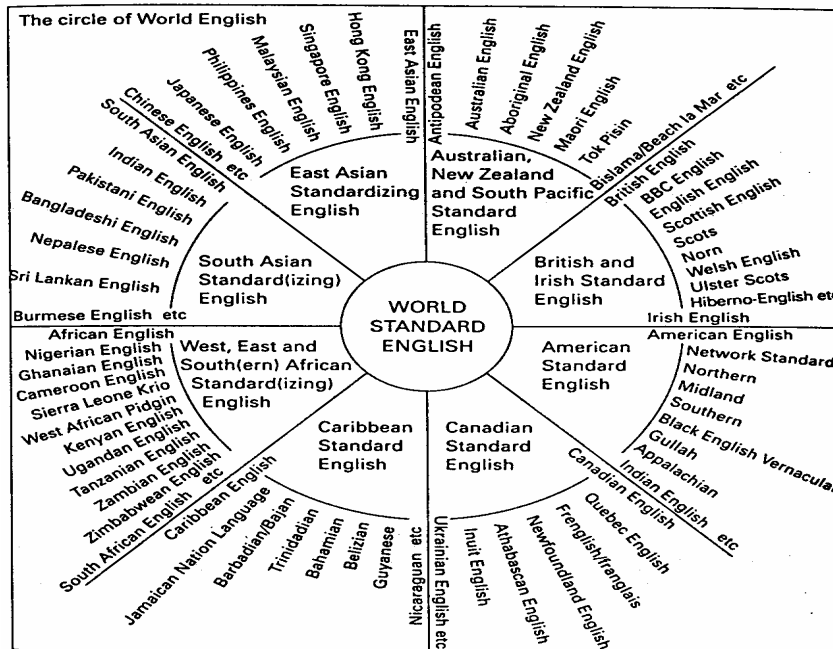
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Figure 3. McArthur's model of World Standard English
(From McArthur 1987:11)

McArthur's circle has *Standard English* (SE) at its centre. Moving outwards, a band of regional varieties including both standard and standardizing forms come next. Beyond these, divided by spokes separating the world into eight regions, is what McArthur (1998:95) describes as "a crowded (even riotous) fringe of sub varieties such as Aboriginal English, Black English Vernacular (now known as *African American Vernacular English* or *Ebonics*), Gullah, Jamaican Nation language, Singapore English and Ulster Scots" (Jennifer Jenkins: 20, World Englishes, 2003).

There is another recent attempt from Modiano which accounts for the spread of English. He breaks completely with historical and geographical concerns. He bases the first of his two models, "The centripetal circles of international English," on what is mutually comprehensible to a large number of proficient English speakers. He is not concerned with whether or not they are native or non-native speakers. (Jennifer Jenkins: 20, World Englishes).

After carefully considering comments from others, he redrafted his models based on features common to all varieties of English. EIL is in the centre as a core of features understandable to a majority of native and competent non-native speakers of English. Though there are still problems with Modiano's models, they have been effective to date in demonstrating the spread of English.

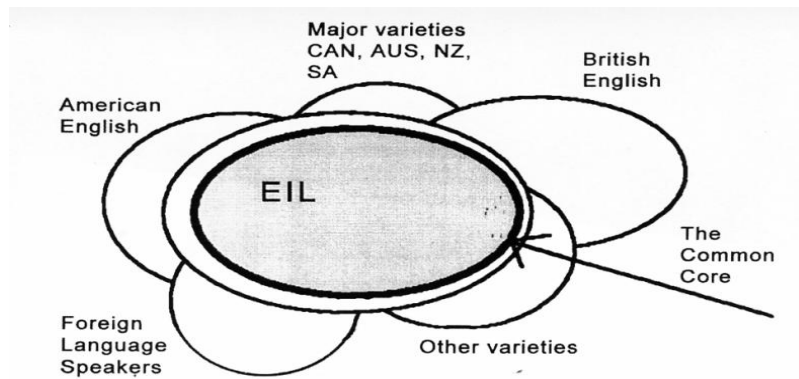Language in India www.languageinindia.com   535
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Figure 4. Modiano's model of EIL (From Modiano 1999a:10)

English as an International Language

International English can be read in short for *English as an International Language* or EIL. Though the longer term is more unwieldy, it is more precise because it suggests its international role rather than making it a distinguishable variety called *International English* (Seidlhofer, 2003). McKay (2002), in her book entitled *Teaching English as an International Language*, also makes use of the shorthand term and defines it like this: "International English is used by native speakers of English and bilingual users of English for cross-cultural communication. International English can be used both in a local sense between speakers of diverse cultures and languages within one country and in a global sense between speakers from different countries." (p. 132).

This means that English which is learnt by speakers from the Expanding Circle includes speakers of English as a native language (ENL) and those who speak English as a mother tongue (EMT) in all its dialects (Kachru's Inner Circle). It equally includes speakers of New Englishes, World Englishes, indigenized English and nativized varieties (Kachru's Outer Circle). Wherever English is chosen as the preferred option for cross cultural communication, it can be referred to as EIL. Besides EIL, other interchangeable terms which may be used include:

English as a *lingua franca* (as in Gnutzmann 2000).
English as a global language (as in Crystal 1997).
English as a world language (EWL) (as in Mair, in press).

Both English as a medium of intercultural communication (e.g. Meierkord 1996) and another term for EIL is also worth considering. This second term is *World English* (Brutt-Griffler 2002). This second term is innovative and gives greater clarity to EIL.

English is thus being used for wider communication across the world despite vigorous opposition to its label, *International English*, *World English* or *Global English*. But whatever it is called, it continues to be the lingua franca in the world today.

The impact of globalization on English: A multitude of Englishes

This rapid spread of English is attributed to the explosive globalization following World War II and the redistribution and reintroduction of English and its expanding dimensions in the post-colonial context. This historical background is essential for understanding the new post-World War II role of English. Debates regarding the linguistic imperialism and hegemonies continue, but in the field of ELT, significant enlightenment comes through recognition of the post colonial varieties of English.

This change in the understanding of ELT has made it necessary to review several older notions regarding English terminology and its usage in the wider context. As a result, several problems have arisen causing linguists, social scientists and educators to re-evaluate the varieties of English which are to be taught. In the following section we will attempt to explain the changing perception of English and the concept of Global English with its various labels.

English and its changing perceptions

The immense global spread of English throughout the world has often been viewed as an offshoot of linguistic imperialism. In turn, this has created considerable hardship for the ELT industry. Robert Holland (2002:21), who is obviously dissatisfied with the English teaching industry, says that in the applied linguistics of the 21st century, "it is no longer admissible simply to accept the status of English as a prime international tongue; a critical appreciation of its role, and a critical approach to English-language pedagogy, are indispensable."

Holland's statement emphasizes how significantly perceptions are changing regarding English. The recognition of post colonial varieties of English has caused an applied linguistic approach encouraging multiple uses. Varieties of English are no longer seen as distant from the central English but rather as its multifaceted forms. The results of this shift in perspective can clearly be recognized in the following quotations:

> "The closing decade of the 20th century marked a major change in the worldwide perception of English" (McArthur 2001a:7).

> "The meaning of English has changed [because it is a] transnational or international medium for the great majority of users [and] its national users are the exception rather than the rule" (Bowers 1999:243).

> "There is no English language anymore…the English language that we think of as a global thing is something totally different" (Cox in an interview with Dale and Robertson 2003:16-17).

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Linguistic and academic attention was drawn to English as a global language during the decade of the 1980s. Linguistic studies evaluating countries influenced through newly acquired English helped form the notion that English was becoming a global language with global ownership (e.g.Fishman, Cooper and Conrad 1977; Platt, Weber and Ho 1984; Pride 1982). Following these writers' comments, Strevens asks, "Whose language is it anyway?" In a paper with this title, he argues that "English belongs to everyone who wants or needs it, and that it belongs exclusively to no nation, no community, no individual" (Strevens 1982:427).

Widdowson (1994) was another remarkable contributor to the emerging perception of English. In his, *The Ownership of English* he questions the L1 authority for setting traditions and standards.

He argues that it is no longer necessary to conform to the norm of the native speaker. He accepts localized English and strongly disapproves of the bias against non-native speakers in favour of native speakers. Pennycook (1994) also contributed to the emerging perception of English when he said that imperialism and hegemonies of English can only be combated by appropriating the use of English in one's own socio-cultural contexts.

Research Methodology

Questionnaires were given to the University and Post Graduate Students and Teachers to record their perceptions regarding English as a Global Language and its might be pedagogical concerns for its teaching, contents, cultural similarity and methodology. The data was both qualitatively and quantatively analyzed and for the quantitative analysis SPSS was used.

Conclusion

It was expected that globalization and English would be considered as threats to the Indigenous culture and all the languages but the data indicated otherwise with the very mixed reactions from the respondents of the research. Before the research, a fear was felt and presumed that there would be a dislike for the cultural imperialism and American language but the results showed altogether different results rather English was considered a great source of cultural enrichment rather than a threat. It was thought that an easy medium of communication necessary inside and outside the country.

Globalization is still a debatable and further research is going on its status. The preceding details assess the role of globalisation in the spread of English language. There is an abundance of literature on the uses of English across the world which has created significant confusion to such a degree that there is no agreed definition of English which can be universally applied. Therefore, there is much need for case studies which would examine the use and status of English in specific contexts.

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Application of the theoretical approaches is not enough but some further practical researches must be conducted to know the effect of the globalization phenomenon in the Pakistani context.

The results of this research show that as English language is used widely in every part of the world and therefore much linguistic awareness regarding English and its relationships with the indigenous culture and languages are to be shown in details in the future,
In response to what we have discovered, there is a great need of a corresponding shift in English pedagogy. Therefore, English Language Teaching should reflect the global diversity of the language and prepare the learners with the skills they need for successful communication in multiple contexts.

Yet, considering the diversity in the use of English, the focus should not be on a single model. Rather, the goals of ELT should stress expertise in using English as a medium of communication and not on acquiring a specific language model.

Furthermore, the content of ELT courses should extend beyond L1 dominated countries. As English is often used in a lingua franca context, university courses in English should heighten students' awareness of the different varieties of English. Students need to be exposed to a wide range of English accents in order to increase their perceptive abilities concerning L2 varieties (Brutt-Griffler and Samimy 2001; Rampton 1990).

As Jenkins (1998) suggests, the emphasis in teaching oral skills should be placed on communication, reception and accommodation. In using English globally, speakers must adjust to one another in order to understand each other. This flexibility is just as important as, if not more than, the mastering of prescribed linguistic forms. Courses in English should thus place more emphasis on the ability to communicate using the medium of English rather than on the teaching of a particular form of English. Reaching beyond teaching national models of English also implies the need to move away from teaching methodologies. As another linguist Lam says, the reality of English "necessitate[s] a turning away from the study of the *national cultures* of the metropolises and from simply using the language to describe *local* life ways" (emphasis added) (Lam 1999:391).

Limitation of the study

It was very hard to collect the data within the time period I was given, therefore, of necessity; my study was limited to just two universities and one post graduate college for data collection for convenience and early submission of research. Consequently, considering the geographical size and population of Pakistan, this study is inadequate to represent the entire country. It is therefore impossible to generalize my findings but at least a step towards awareness of the globalization of English in the Pakistani context.

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The questionnaire may not have properly been handled by the respondents as due to their tight time schedule. Finally, this study was done as a simple research project. Its aim was to understand how the international role of English was perceived by teachers and students in Pakistan, and how that perception affected their teaching. To my knowledge, this is the first study of its nature to have been conducted in Pakistan and it is hoped that future in-depth studies will follow and many future studies would contribute to improve the concept of English as a global language.

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