

Summary

This thesis concerns the evolution of English into that of a lingua franca, an international language of communication. Such status has implications for the way it is taught in a modern context, particularly in terms of cultural content. Learners no longer need the traditionally high proportion of Anglophone content to communicate with people of many cultures through the English medium as they did when learning the language to interact with native speakers. In spite of this, mainstream English language teaching (ELT) continues to place native speakers and Anglophone culture at the centre of English language acquisition. Part one of the study begins by investigating where such cultural bias exists. Chapter one shows that its roots lie in the origins of ELT in educating subjects of the British Empire to serve their rulers. Chapter two illustrates that the assumption that learners acquire the language in order to interact more or less exclusively with native speakers continues to exist today in the mainstream methodology of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and lesson content.

Part two in an analysis of materials, cultural requirements and models, begins with chapter three which demonstrates in a comparative study that a leading global ELT course book continued to place a high focus on Anglophone culture across multiple editions over a period of twenty four years. Such practice runs counter to academic findings over that period. This section considers concepts such as Intercultural Sensitivity and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), in addition to conducting two further studies. The first of these (chapter four) is a qualitative analysis of the opinions of a group of Chinese university students as to the proportion and variety (L1 culture vs. other cultures) of cultural content that should be included in their English language courses. The second study in chapter five analysed the replies of contributors comprising teachers, linguists and learners, to an international discussion group on which they considered the most appropriate model of English for contemporary ELT. The former found that learners were very much aware of their cultural needs and valued a mix of their own culture for ease of reference, in addition to multicultural in consideration of the kinds of international communications they would likely have. The

latter found that while the Standard English model remains the most suitable choice because of its long established conventions, high standards and codification, a more contemporary form should include considerations of World Englishes and English as a lingua franca.

Part three of the thesis begins in chapter six by identifying the cultural bias that exists in three groups that occupy the English language classroom; native English speaking teachers (NESTs), non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) and additionally, the learners. This information enabled the production of a model that illustrates the obstacles to intercultural communication that each group experiences; some are different, some are common to two or all three groups. Awareness of these obstacles allows teachers to confront their own sources of cultural bias before they introduce elements of Intercultural Communicative Competence to their lessons. Chapter seven looks at ways in which ICC can be integrated into the lesson content to run parallel to the language element. The literature shows that including ICC content and language instruction do not need to be mutually exclusive as one may compliment the other. Furthermore, there does not need to be disruption to the curriculum as common course book topics can be easily adapted to include elements of ICC and ELF-awareness, an approach that considers the needs of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) learners. Such knowledge was consolidated in the creation of an English lesson entitled *Shopping around the world* in chapter eight. This concept lesson includes the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and includes grammar and vocabulary exercises. It caters for learners of English as a lingua franca, reduces the proportion of Anglophone content in favour of multicultural content, includes elements of ICC and Elf-awareness, and focuses on the language and skills learners need in order to interact interculturally. Finally, it was considered important to conduct an Action Research study (chapter nine) in which the concept lesson was taught as a trial to four different classes by their teachers. Opinions gathered from both the teachers and learners revealed that the content, some of it unconventional, received a generally positive reception from both groups. This led to the conclusion that educators and publishers need not be concerned that such material would be negatively received.

The contribution of this research is the identification and bringing together of areas where cultural bias lies in mainstream ELT and demonstration of how such imbalance can be overcome. This is in order to facilitate the recognition by all stakeholders involved that a more relevant model is needed for a language that is a lingua franca which by its nature needs more inclusivity of all cultures and intercultural skills than is currently provided in its teaching.