

EXPOSURE TO ENGLISHES IN LISTENING CLASSROOMS: THE PERSPECTIVES OF INDONESIAN ESL LEARNERS

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Abstract: Due to the global scale of English use, English as a lingua franca (ELF) is at play. Given this reality, exposes to different varieties of English rather than a single variety of English, preparing second language learners to Englishes is paramount for readiness to involve in ELF communication. This paper reports on the classroom instruction of exposing college listeners with Englishes via TED talks using a portfolio to find out how they see these varieties and what they can learn from them. Data were from records of portfolio and questions at the end of the instruction. Using general inductive analysis, there were three lessons learned from the instruction. Acknowledgement of many models of English, Englishes can be the 'right' English, and Englishes as a marker of identity were lessons observed to appear from the Englishes exposure. The exposes to Englishes also brought about complexities of wholehearted adoption to Indonesian accent. Pedagogical implications for classroom instructions are also made.

Keywords: Englishes; English as a lingua franca; listening.

INTRODUCTION

English today becomes the language of multicultural interactions in the global context both in face-to-face communication and online digital encounters. Considering the fact that Non-Native Speakers (NNS) has outnumbered Native Speakers (NS), the interaction landscape is changing accordingly. Crystal (2003) and Schneider (2011) predict that there are around 2 billion English speakers today. Baker (2015) estimates that the number of NNS

proposed by Crystal has been considered 'conservative' figure by now. This number of NNS from the *outer circle* (countries which were under the colony of British resulting English to become the language of the community) for example Singapore, Malaysia, India, Philippines, South Africa) and from the *expanding circle* (countries which were not under the colony of British, therefore, English is usually a foreign language and not used widely except for instrumental purpose such as a business) for example, Korea, Thailand, Japan, Iran, including Indonesia, statistically surpass the *inner circle* in which English is a native language, for instance, the UK, US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand. This reality posits English to become a lingua franca. According to Jenkins (2009, p. 200), "English as a lingua franca (ELF) is the common language of choice among speakers who come from different linguacultural background". She explains that sociolinguistically English is used to get things done, to socialize, and to communicate (Jenkins and Leung, 2014). With this world-wide spread of English and ELF communication which take around 80 percent of the total communication, the aim for preparing the second language (L2) learners with varieties of English to succeed in the intercultural communication is paramount. That is, as Sung (2016a, p.190) argues exposing L2 learners with different accents, rather than one or two (i.e. Received Pronunciation and General American) will reasonably result in more prepared language users.

There have been few researches discussing the instructions to engage learners with English variations. Galloway and Rose (2014) report on their introducing the diversity of English to 108 Japanese college students. Using listening journals as a learning tool, the students were asked to note down the speakers' nationality, reasons for their choice, and make extended reflective comments over ELF audio interactions they listened to. The resources were from the internet, online corpora of English, and their own experiences talking with different speakers of English. The findings show that the students chose English varieties (especially Asian) compared to Native English. Their reason behind their choice was "unfamiliarity",

which suggests that the instruction mediate students to be motivated to get to know other English varieties and to reflect to them.

Another study was reported by Sung (2016a) with 28 Hong Kong university students. This study investigated L2 learners' experiences of using and learning English in a multilingual university context. Using semi-structured interviews and questionnaire survey, the study revealed that exposure to multiple accents is beneficial to raise learners' awareness of different accents in global ELF communication. However, the majority of the participants opted that Native English shall be used as a pronunciation model for teaching pronunciation.

The previous study confirmed that Englishes are seen differently as the studies revealed ambivalence attitude of the participant on their preferences toward English model to follow, that is whether Native English or Englishes. To this date, research examining the instructional effect of English varieties has been relatively rare (Marlina, 2017; Rose and Galloway, 2017). Moreover, in the Indonesian university context, little is known about Indonesian L2 learners' perspectives on the exposures to Englishes in college listening classrooms. A call for description of L2 learners' views on ELF has been renounced by Jenkins (2007) and Sung (2015). Asia is the magnet of ELF communications to take place in a huge number considering the English learners who also use it. Indonesia, as one of the countries in the expanding circle based on Kahchru's (1985) three concentric circles is a site worth investigating for the position of English is for instrumental purposes such as for business, education, and tourism (Widodo, Wood, and Gupta, 2017). It is interesting to see how Indonesian college learners see the varieties and what lessons they could learn from the exposures of Englishes toward their process of learning and process of becoming proficient users of English. This article discusses the instruction through which the students experienced exposes to Englishes in the classroom. This will start with the concept of English as a lingua franca and English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms, and ELF and listening for

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communication. The following sections will describe the context of the study, the method, findings and discussions. It also presents the concluding remarks and some pedagogical implications for listening to classroom use.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English as a Lingua Franca and English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms

There are two dominant native speaker varieties which have been used as a model in ELT, namely British and American English in many parts of the world. Mauranen (2018, p.15) asserts that ELT materials have a tendency to promote a given 'code' and promote clichés and beliefs about British and North American culture. Given the reality of the use of English in the global world, this position of making Native Speaker as the primary pedagogical model is challenged. Preparing the learners to successfully communicate with NS does not fit the idea of learners' preparedness for communication with the other possible interlocutors, NNS, which constitute the largest speaking population in the world, that is 80 percent. The possibility of learners making contact with NNS should be the priority by exposing them with other English varieties than RP and GA. This idea corresponds with the authenticity of language, which should become the determinant factor of choosing the language exposed to them via materials (Leung and Lewkowicz, 2018).

Reflecting on the realities, ELT should portray the global discourse of ELF use. This point was initially started by the changing of some terms and practices related to language planning and education policy such as mono-models, monolingualism, and monoculturalism which are replaced by multi-models, multilingualism, and multiculturalism (Bamgbose, Banjo & Thomas, 1995; Bhatia, 1997). This certainly questions the "ownership of the language". From ELF perspective, English is a property of its users. Therefore in the ELF interactions, realities of linguistic variations are inescapable. Multicultural values are in exchange, and these are embodied within the way these multilingual speakers manifest their

choice of vocabulary, discourse, pragmatic, semantic, and sociolinguistic way of making meaningful connections. In the context of pronunciation, for instance, Jenkins (2000, 2007), Kirkpatrick (2007), McKay (2002) argue that L2 learners must not prepare themselves to communicate with NS only as this poses a greater challenge for L2 learners to communicate in the international use of ELF (Jenkins, 2000). It hampers the learners to communicate globally as the possibility of their English use may be greater with NNS situations.

Reflecting from global situations, urgencies of ELF perspectives in English classrooms receive several challenges such as materials, language policy, pedagogy and assessment (Widodo and Fang, 2019). Many of ELT materials today still orient toward ENL (English as Native Language) (Jenkins, 2012). In Indonesia, ELT listening materials covering exercises and assessments, like in many parts of the world, are dominated with pronunciation models using the standard native-like English accents (RP and GA) (Tsang, 2019; Sung 2016a). This is added with popular book publishers that seem to disregard wider social, political, or cultural factors relevant to ELT (Cogo and Dewey, 2012, p.170). When materials, unfortunately, do not reflect the global discourse of English use, diversities of English, exposures on ELF communication, mutual intelligibility and understanding along with the appreciation of learners' L1 property (Galloway and Rose, 2014) are possibly silenced. Secondly, in the modern university's vision, internationalization is a significant word (Huang and Singh, 2014) because it marks a dream of the university to reach out to global impacts. English as a medium of instruction (EMI) as an example of language policy must answer the question of what 'international' is or who belong to the "international scope". If "international" means anyone who uses English, not only NS but also NNS, the policy of adopting what and how English is used and responded must reflect on ELF communication. However, the legitimacy of NS seems to stay strong in the outer circle and expanding circle (Jenkins, 2012). This is also strengthened with the

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slow response of standardized English tests, TOEFL and IELTS, which are still built on a stable portrayal of the monolingual model of English (NS model) (Harding and McNamara, 2018). This benchmark of proficiency, unfortunately, is used widely in global schemas which feed on the pursuing of NS model, leaving today's reality of diverse and hybrid uses of English and multilingualism neglected (Jenkins and Leung, 2019). These challenges are pictures of complexities on the preference and adherence to Englishes.

ELF and Listening For Communication

Exposing learners with variations of English help to prepare for real use of English (Sung, 2016a). Exposes to different accents of English develop learners' ability to interpret other pronunciations or referred to flexibility by Morrison and White (2005). It is also one of the ways to facilitate awareness, familiarity, and appreciation to Englishes, which contribute a greater good for nurturing learners as global listeners. Listening to different accents gives several benefits. First, listening to different varieties develops the understanding to both native and non-native accents in order that the learners refine the Englishes which are relevant for them (Seidlhofer, 2004). Second, listening to non-native speaker builds on a more tolerant attitude toward differences (Matsuda, 2006). She adds that it could help learners set realistic goals in how they would be proficient internationally (Matsuda, 2017). By listening to Englishes, L2 learners will broaden their perspective of the world. For instance, they learn that people who speak English are not only American, British, or Australian but they come from parts of the world like Korea, Taiwan, India, Arab to mention a few. So, preparing to speak and listen to people with various multilingual-cultural backgrounds means to prepare to speak and listen to these NNS encounters as well. Third, from a language acquisition perspective, variations or 'variability' is related to the function and context of the situation (Kachru, 1992, p.66). When L2 learners are exposed to variations, they most likely learn the functions and the context of which the variations are used.

With more variations exposed to them, learners will develop abilities to interact in ELF communication.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a classroom study (Spada, 2013) as this study investigated the effects of an instruction exposing Englishes to university students in the listening classroom. The study showcases an examination of the use of listening portfolio as an autonomous learning tool to introduce students to the diversity of English. The portfolio was a classroom project treated as an extra hour listening activity. It was assigned in the listening course for the second-semester students of English literature major taking Academic listening Classes at University of Jember located in East Java Indonesia. The course was developed as an academic listening of which the targets were enabling the students to be ready to prepare for the academic genre through audio exposures with several skills such as making inferences, distinguishing facts and opinion, taking notes, and making a summary. The course was taught once a week for 16 weeks, including mid-examination and final examination, which lasted 100 minutes for each meeting.

In all, there are two classes of academic listening with 47 students involved in the study, 12 males and 35 females of 19-20 years old. They were around pre-intermediate to pre-advanced L2 learners. They have been learning English for 6-8 years. The listening portfolio was a pedagogic activity, and students listened to speakers from a range of English-speaking backgrounds from TED talks. TED talks were chosen because they gave a sense of academic English use in accordance with the materials assigned by the curriculum. The talks were also chosen among other possible alternatives such as face-to-face conversation, entertainment, or youtube channel because these alternatives usually posed speakers' bias. For instance, a video in youtube which contained Indian speaker showcasing cooking, however, brought in comedy style gave different nuances of listeners' reception on their accent use. Listeners would be more likely to have

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stereotypes on Indian speakers as “not sophisticated” for example. In their portfolio, they must write down the summary of the TED talk, their response toward the content of the TED talk, and response to Englishes they listened to. They were also asked to note down the speakers’ nationality, the reasons for their TED talk choice.

Data were gathered from the listening portfolio as qualitative documentary data in the form of the artifact of learning (Gibson and Brown, 2009). In the portfolio they were required to write the content of TED talk they listened to every week, to choose which TED talk inspired them most, and to respond to the Englishes they listened to. The responses typically involved comments on whether English was clear, intelligible or understood to them, and pronunciation of some words or phrases which sounded different to their ears. For some learners, they wrote their observation of the linguistic differences, such as the use of “*lah*” of the Singaporean speaker. The data also came from students’ answers to questions in the classroom discussion made while the course run and when the course was about to end on their own English in relation to the existence of Englishes, and to NS standard. Additionally, when the course was about to end, I asked them to answer a reflective question asking whether they thought they had an accent and if they did, would they keep it or eliminate it. Together these different methods of collection were used to cross-validate or triangulate the data.

Using general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) the data from weekly portfolio responses along with the while-in class interview and discussion and the end-course questions were prepared as text, and read and re-read closely. Firstly, I read the data in detail to gain familiarity with the contents and understanding of the themes and events covered in the text. Secondly, I categorized some phrases and meanings in the specific text segments. Thirdly, I closely read the categories for possible overlapping coding and reduced the categories accordingly until they came to the core themes which were relevant to the research questions. The themes were: *there are many models of*

English, NS is not the only 'right' variety, and Englishes corresponds to building a local identity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As will be presented below, the analysis of the question data revealed how the learners saw the varieties and some lessons learned of the exposures to Englishes in listening classes from the participants.

There are a number of English models

Generally, the participants observed that having to listen to TED talks from different speakers every week who were from different nationalities (mostly from NNS) open their eyes in several ways. They acknowledged in the classroom discussion that they had not had any experiences of listening to TED talk before. The English that they listened to was also new in the way that some of them admitted never heard before. The others noted in the listening portfolio that the English were new because they never paid attention to where those speakers were from. The participants observed,

"...reflecting from what I did in these past weeks, watching videos, it turns out that every country has different accents."

"I was surprised...I thought that there were only American English and British. I found out that there are many accents like Chinese, Singaporean, Malaysian, Indian..."

These findings share some similarities with other research, Galloway and Rose's (2014), which was conducted in Japan in a way that the instruction challenged the students' presupposition toward unfamiliar varieties of English. The awareness of the existence of a diversity of English develops their understanding on the varieties other than English spoken by what so-called native speaker and different ways in which English is spoken by whoever speaks the language (Marlina, 2017). In the interview, the students made it clear

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that the project allowed them to get to know different Englishes for the first time. They concluded that the project challenged the preconceived exposures and stereotypes of what so-called 'rightful' model. Regarding this, the participants in this study made comments,

"I understand now that English can be spoken with any accents. Different accents make people get recognized where they are from. Accents show the identity of people from a certain country. So we must try to understand many accents in this world and never underestimate people who do not have a native speaker's accent when they speak English."

"As far as I can tell, diversity is a good thing. We cannot expect everybody to speak like native speakers because they might have different accents, vocabs, grammar. It seems to me that different English is beautiful and colorful as it shows the culture of the country."

The excerpts show that the project helped them to reflect on the existence of Englishes. The listening portfolio awakens their awareness of different varieties that evidently present in today's global spoken discourse. As the study of Sung (2016a), the participants accepted the fact that varieties are sociolinguistic realities. This understanding builds their positive responses toward the importance of understanding different accents. What is interesting is that the participants in this study see the different varieties as the results of different 'culture'. For example, is the realization of "assalamualaikum..." of Muslim speakers of English when performing greeting. From ELF perspective, the use of words, phrases which are connected to their local language is encouraged. Linguistic variations resulting from a different culture in contacts are something not to avoid to but to embrace. This is in line with the statement made by Rose and Galloway (2017) that in ELF and Global Englishes perspective, English spoken by NNS is legitimate variety as it carries cultural attribute which contributes to national identity. Regarding this, the value of multicultural and the spirit of preserving differences

that Indonesians have may become a strong entrance to advocate the importance of getting prepared for ELF communications in Indonesia. As Indonesia is a multicultural country of which the term tolerance both resonates in society and becomes one of the important educational notions in all levels (elementary to tertiary), the idea of communicative competence should involve NNS sociocultural knowledge. This suggests that the pursue of communicative competence must be brought within the role of English as a lingua franca where learners have the capacity to negotiate linguistic differences, relate to otherness, personal attitude, and knowing other's values and norms (Baker, 2016).

NS is not the only 'right' variety

Around 32 students agreed that an L2 learner did not have to sound like a native speaker. Some of their responses were:

"I think it does not matter if the world has many English varieties. In this era, it is obligatory to speak like native speakers. What matters is the accent that we have needs to be understandable."

"Various English with each characteristic of accent is a valid spoken English."

The extent to which a speaker's utterance is actually understood by the listeners is viewed as intelligibility (Munro, Derwing, Morton, 2006, p.112). Referring to the excerpts, the learners viewed that being understood is important in today's communication with others. Moreover, the varieties are considered valid or right. This acceptability of Englishes projects that the varieties own equal stance with NS. However, some of the learners also made comments on "pronunciation" of the speakers they listened to during the portfolio. Some of the speakers sound "easy to listen to" although some of them as they acknowledged "sounded strange to my ear". Due to these difficulties, few of them (15 learners) decided that having pronunciation like native speakers will be easier to listen to and to be understood. This ambivalent attitude resounds in many researches in

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the area of attitude toward different accents, for instance, in Tsou and Chen's (2014) study in Taiwan which found that the localized variety is not acceptable. The same finding also appeared in Sung's (2016b) study with Hong Kong learners. He suggests that the learners that prefer to native speakers' accent are dominated by the prevalent native-speaker's ideology or "nativeness" discourse which is very strong in the society. Intelligibility thus is associated with native speakers' accents.

However, apart from the fact that few of the learners in this study mentioned their preference to native speaker's accent for they think it will be easier to listen to and to be understood, the other learners also made some points on the benefits of the importance of getting used to listening to Englishes.

"From the Englishes, I listened to every week, I learn how other speakers with local accents speak and communicate. It made me realize that I should learn other accents too, so I would not make a problem or misunderstood something."

"I think listening to different varieties made me a better listener. In case someday I have friends from Malaysia, China, UK, India and many other...I could get used to their accents."

Reflecting from the excerpts, the learners felt that listening to Englishes broadened their view about how to interact with people using English with speakers having multicultural backgrounds. This suggests that getting to know different Englishes is seen as one of the promising ways to make successful international connections and communication.

Englishes correspond to building a local identity

At the end of the listening portfolio project, the learners were asked to answer a reflective question on whether they have an Indonesian accent, and, if they think they do, whether they are going to eliminate it or keep it. Reflecting from the reflective question made when the course was about to end, there were around 45 learners

believed that they had Indonesian accents. They added that they might not have only Indonesian accent, but also probably Javanese, or Madurese accent while speaking English.

"Yes, I think I have a strong Indonesian accent."

"I have a Javanese accent, I guess. Most Javanese like me have it too, and maybe the accent will come out suddenly because it is natural."

"I think accents show diversity in life. We need to respect each other no matter any accents they speak because they represent who they are, what country and culture they have."

From the excerpts, they felt that having an Indonesian accent while speaking English is natural and unavoidable because they are Indonesians. They believed that their English was from the results of having different culture, pronunciation system, and norms of Indonesia which evidently different from US or UK, even from the other nations. For that, an accent someone has must be respected. When they were asked further whether they wanted to keep their Indonesian accent or eliminate it, 33 learners said they would keep it, and the other 14 would like to eliminate it.

"My accents make my English hard to understand by my friends, my lecturers, or foreigners. Therefore I will learn American and British accents because they might be easier to understand to talk to a foreigner. Meanwhile .., sometimes, I will use my Indonesian accent to show my identity."

"I think I will eliminate my Indonesian accent because there are only American and British varieties in academic life."

"Speaking like native speakers will get me a nice impression from people. Besides, training myself to have native speakers' accent benefit me to do IELTS or TOEFL."

Reflecting on the learners' perspectives, their eliminating Indonesian accent was because they believed that their Indonesian accent was hard to understand. This perception was probably rooted in their experiences of getting 'pronunciation error correction' from

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teachers or peers. The correction may be caused by teachers' ingrained stereotype of the native speaker's model of pronunciation which became the target pronunciation instruction. NS pronunciation has always been lauded in ASEAN contexts (Deterding, 2013). This is strengthened with teachers' attitude of putting legitimation on NS pronunciation as a referential point in the classroom instructions (Lim, 2016).

Another reason for the learners' preference of having NS accents was because of what they believe to be true about academic requirements, including proficiency tests. They felt that having accents of NS would benefit their scores. Jenkins and Leung (2019, p.92) assert that language assessments, TOEFL and IELTS, fail to represent the modern world, that is twenty-first-century ELF reality. The tests are criticized to not to reflect on transcultural communication as they have been benchmarked to an idealized NS model for in fact global discourse nowadays orients to the multilingual repertoire. Brown (2019) adds that English language proficiency standard is inadequately defined because it leans toward a mono-model of English norm and value. It also does not respond to the use of learning English as a means of global communication, a way to foster internationalism and globalism, and a language for accessing global information.

Meanwhile, those who like to keep their Indonesian accent believed that it was okay to have accents as long as the English is understandable and do not cause misunderstanding. In addition, having an Indonesian accent means having an identity of Indonesian. This point was made quite strongly by the learners.

"We do not need to speak 100 percent like native speakers. Social conditions greatly affect my accent. However, I will learn native speakers' accents to understand what they say."

"I am going to keep it because it is my comfort zone and I am sure that no matter how good we speak, for instance like native speakers, our accent is still going to come back a little bit."

Generally, they felt that maintaining the Indonesian accent is a way to maintain their identity when conversing with others. It is considered important not to lose identity while using English. This suggests that a more positive attitude toward Englishes is present as a result of exposing them with Englishes via TED talk. Jenkins (2000) and Sung (2016b) clearly state that L2 accents are an expression of identity. This raises the recommendation that teachers could introduce learners to view that English is the property of its users, which involves NNS. Therefore, uniformity of norms and rules (NES's) is not relevant to real-world English use nowadays. This shall urge a tendency of acceptance to a more tolerant view on the diversity of English.

CONCLUSION

Preparing for multilingual interactions carried in English with NNES speakers involved is unavoidable today. The purposes of learning listening to participate in communication such as getting the message across the interlocutors and building harmonious interaction are nurtured to include the ability to be prepared for English varieties beside NS. This readiness contributes to the development of participating successfully in multicultural settings. This study concludes that exposing learners with Englishes in listening class raises the awareness of the existence of variations of English today which build a more tolerant view on the acceptance of accents other than NS.

Pedagogically, some implication could be made based on the findings. While the listening instruction incorporating portfolio which asks learners to write a summary of the TED talk video, to make responses on the content, and on the Englishes opens learners' views on the models available in global sociolinguistic use, it seems to suggest a development. Such instruction aiming at mapping some differences of forms, values and norms reflected from ELF communication should be managed to prepare learners to interact in ELF communication. Another point is through what media these

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exposures are given to learners, how intelligible the variations must need to be carefully thought and implemented. Discussion on how linguistic forms may be interpreted according to the culture of the speakers is also a major contribution to introduce some differences on the linguistic property every speaker has. Eventually, the discussion will lead to some strategies of how to respond effectively for ELF communication.

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