

How linguistically diverse are ELT textbooks?

Mili Gabrovsek Sanders
lgabrovsek@hva.nl
AUAS, Faculty of Education

Nationaal Congres Engels
Ede, 22-3-2024



Source:
ELT Buzz, 2024

Today's programme

- Textbooks in the English classroom
- Linguistic diversity of English
- Key issues in addressing the linguistic diversity of English in textbooks
- Analysis / evaluation of textbook samples
- Wrap-up



“The most commonly found elements in second and foreign language classrooms around the world are teachers, learners and textbooks.”

(Richards, 1998, p. 125)

**the Dutch
context**



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Textbooks in the English classroom

- Basis for **language input and information about English**
- Impact **what is taught and how**
- Substantially **influence how students view language** (Matsuda, 2012)
- Introduce (Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013) vs. constrain innovation (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Seidlhofer, 2017)
- Widely acknowledged significance (McGrath, 2016)

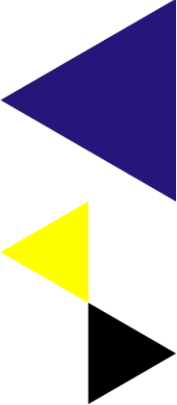
A textbook is...

- a recipe
- a springboard
- a straitjacket
- a supermarket
- a holy book
- a compass
- a survival kit
- a crutch

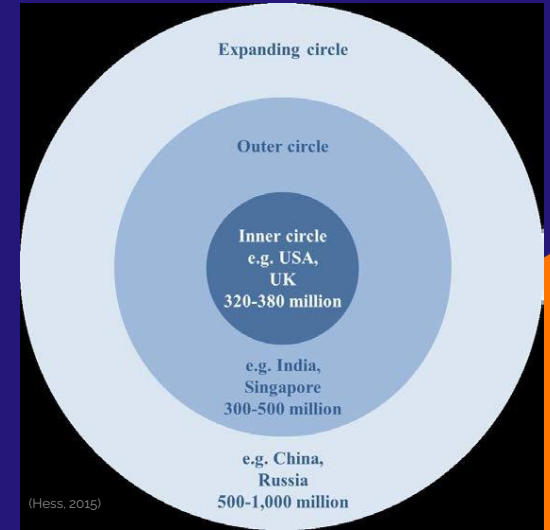
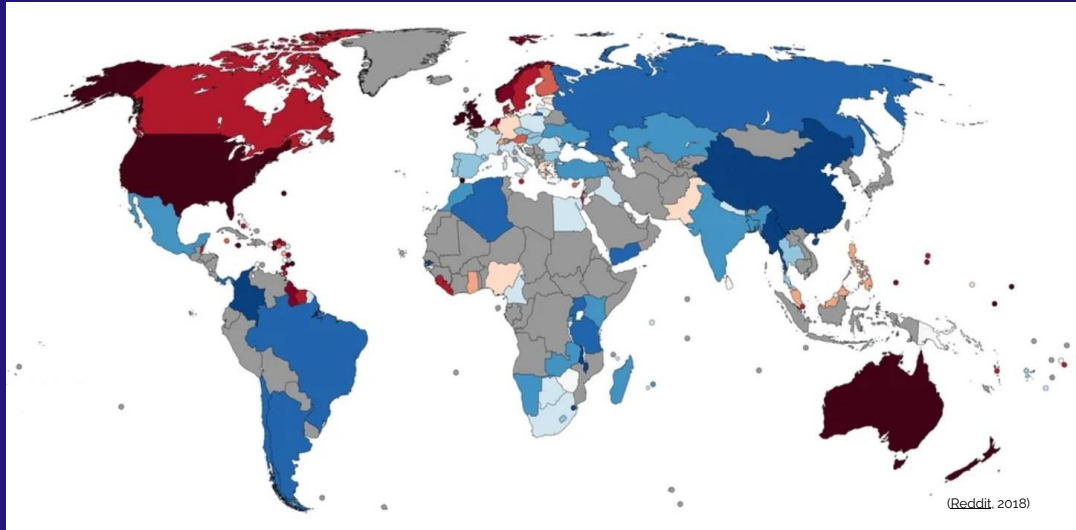
(McGrath, 2016)

Which is the most appropriate metaphor, in your view?

Which of the metaphors reflects how you use textbooks in your classes? Why?

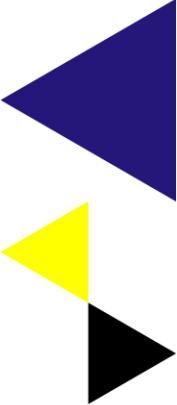


Linguistic diversity of English



English as a global language...

- English as the most widespread and widely taught language in the world (e.g., Cenoz & Gorter, 2020) → a **“globalinguistic phenomenon”** (Mauranen, 2012), primary use as **the global lingua franca** (different L1s)
- English as **messy** (Matsuda, 2020) → **different use(r)s and varieties** emerge as the language is molded by the new communities which adopt it; English becomes **pluricentric**
- the majority of people around the world today learn English after infancy → **institutional education**



...in a multilingual reality

- **350 – 380 million native speakers** vs. **1.5 to 2 billion non-native speakers** of English (estimated) → 80%
- Status and ownership
- Multilingual turn and English as the language of multilinguals / **multilingua franca** (Jenkins, 2015) → NNS use English in tandem with other languages (Matsuda, 2020)
- **English-speaking world** → What are its boundaries?

A cha(lle)nge for English teachers

To what extent does your textbook empower you to incorporate the linguistic diversity of English into your lessons?



Teacher testimonials

“Being a waiter in London or working as an assistant in a skiing centre in London are not possible real-life situations for my learners.”

“The listening tasks include only Standard British and American English, depicting their users as the only owners of English.”

“What struck me was the fact that while the coursebook went in-depth on parts of a nation's culture, the text was narrated by an American or English speaker. Students would learn about Holi through the eyes of an American man visiting the colourful Indian religious festival.”

“In each chapter, students are taught the ‘correct’ British RP as a primer for the speaking task.”

“Multilingual language users or languages other than English are never mentioned.”

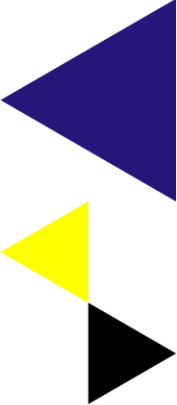
Materials analysis / evaluation

- 20 MEd student-teachers, different educational tracks
- **4.25**/10 (average score)

Key issues in addressing the linguistic diversity of English in textbooks

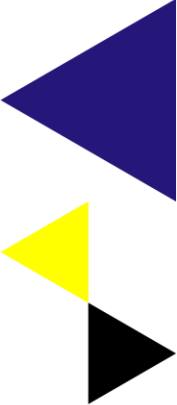
Language use(r)s...

- Linguistic diversity is (often) not acknowledged → a monolithic representation of English exclusively or largely based on selected models (BrE, AmE) and norms
- Limited scope / presence of different varieties of English (native and non-native)
- Native speakers dominate (as target interlocutors)
- (Largely absent) non-native speakers are often not depicted as legitimate, successful communicators
- Little space for multilingualism / other languages (e.g., language awareness) → monolingual orientation



...and their culture

- Often treated as static → rules and conventions limited to Inner Circle countries / all people from XYZ that belong to the same culture behave in a certain way
- Insensitivity to learners' (local) contexts and dominance of NS culture
- 'the plastic world' (Siqueira, 2015), → playing it safe: 'cultureless' / not (fully) exploiting (inter)culturally sensitive topics: PARSNIPs



Analysis / evaluation of textbook samples

To what extent do the samples reflect the linguistic diversity of English and its users?

- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- Would you make any adaptations to the samples if you were using them with your learners? (Which and why?)

- Groups
- Think – group – share

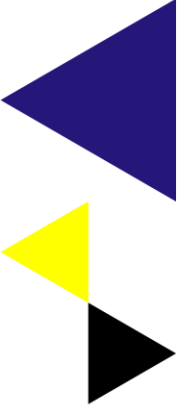


Exploring this topic in class

- Exposure to a wider variety of NS and NNS varieties (listening comprehension tasks, learners' projects and presentations on lesser-known varieties, comparing short written texts in different varieties)
- [International Dialects of English Archive](#), [Speech Accent Archive](#), TED Talks, successful L1-L2 / L2-L2 interaction
- Postcolonial writing (Trevor Noah's *Born a crime*)
- [West African Pidgin](#) (BBC)
- Global issues in English (the UN and Guterres) and global sources (Al Jazeera, Euronews, The Times of India)
- More realistic communicative settings / varied target interlocutors (VET & German)
- The linguistic diversity of English as a class topic → (adapted) reading texts (e.g., *The amazing world of Englishes*, Siemund et al., 2012, De Gruyter Mouton)
- Acknowledging and exploiting English speakers' multilingualism
 - language awareness in translation tasks (structure, equivalents)
 - reading (literary) excerpts in one language and summarizing them in English (translanguaging)
 - linking to linguistic diversity in Dutch / the Netherlands (role, hierarchy, attitudes, discrimination, etc.)
- Using cultural content from a wider range of sources (local, learners' own, international)
- The Eurovision Song Context

Why is this important?

- **Exposure to more variation, different speakers, English as pluricentric → 'real' English in the classroom**
 - a realistic image of global English use (raising awareness)
 - familiarity with different varieties (receptive training) → successful communication in global contexts, sense of ownership
 - broadens students' linguistic and cultural perspectives (attitudes)
- **Multilingual non-native speakers as legitimate users of English**
 - acknowledging and exploiting multilingualism / scaffold → learning English better
 - a realistic role model of a successful English user vs. unrealistic targets / linguistic insecurity (different backgrounds and levels of proficiency)
- **Broadened scope of the English-speaking culture → intercultural communicative competence**
 - dynamic, fluid, not exclusively tied to any specific national culture



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