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Teaching a Standard Variety of English or a Local Standard: The Case of Cameroon

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Abstract

The linguistic and cultural legacies of British colonization include, among other things, the emergence of several varieties of English shaped by the social, ecological, cultural, historical, political and linguistic realities of the different places where the language was introduced. In postcolonial settings, the growth of new nations was inextricably bound with identity construction in the use of English, both as a symbol of independence from the colonial power and a marker of identity from other varieties of English. Looking at English language teaching and testing, however, that quest for identity is easily silenced; there is still a strong dominance of the standard language ideology, with British and American varieties providing norms for teachers all over the world. This paper investigates major controversies surrounding TESOL practice and highlights the dilemma faced by the non-native English teacher in the process of choosing a variety of English for the language classroom. Taking Cameroon as case study, the paper shows that it is not plausible to teach only one variety of English in that country, be it British, American or Cameroon English. While English multi-dialectalism in Cameroon requires exposing learners to many varieties of English, teachers can reach that goal by taking advantage of the linguistic creativity found in literary texts.

Keywords: TESOL, standard language ideology, Englishes, pedagogy

1. Introduction

The ownership of the English language has aroused a great controversy in TESOL practice for the last twenty years. On one side, native speakers and supporters of the Standard English ideology claim that the English language is first and foremost the language of its native speakers, and should be used and taught to non-native speakers in its standard form (Prator, 1968; Quirk, 1990 and Trudgill, 2008). On the other side, non-native scholars and supporters of the World Englishes framework (Kachru, 1986; Modiano, 2001; Canagarajah, 2005) believe that a language that has become so widespread and which has undergone profound transformations in each region or country where it is used, ceases to be the sole property of its native speakers, and this multiple identity should be reflected in pedagogy.

The second view has gradually gained credence through scholarly publications and seminars on English language and literature teaching in Cameroon, though Standard British English (henceforth SBE) still remains the most used and recommended variety for assessment and proficiency testing. Caught in the swirl of these conflicting tendencies, the Cameroon English language teacher faces a difficult dilemma: what variety of English should be taught to Cameroonian students? Is it Cameroon English—which exhibits some differences in vocabulary, syntax, discourse and pronunciation from British English— or SBE? This paper revisits some of the major controversies in the domain of English language teaching, describes the dilemma that grips the English teacher in Cameroon and suggests a teaching approach that takes into account both needs of maintaining intelligibility with native speakers and asserting a Cameroon English identity which reflects the ecological, linguistic and sociocultural realities of the Cameroonian context.

2. The Emergence of New Englishes and their Identification

The term ‘New Englishes’ is used in this work to refer to non-native varieties of English that have become indigenized in their local contexts, i.e. varieties of the language found in ex-British colonies or in many other countries where English is widely used after the official language. Cameroon English, Chinese English, Sri Lankan English, for instance, are New Englishes. However, the term should not be confused with ‘World Englishes’, which is used by scholars in the field to refer to all varieties of English associated with a specific geographic setting and culture, irrespective of the manner and place in which they have evolved. Then, the term World Englishes (henceforth WEs) in this work refers to varieties used in native and non-native settings altogether. Three models are used to discuss the emergence and identification of WEs. They are the ENL/ESL/EFL model, Kachru’s concentric circles and what will be called here the socio-geographic model.

ENL/ESL/EFL differentiates speakers of English from their sociolinguistic and political relationship with the language. ENL or English as a Native Language refers to varieties spoken in territories where English has been traditionally used as mother tongue or native language. England, Ireland, Canada, the USA, Wales, etc. are part of this group. ESL or English as a Second Language refers to non-native varieties of English resulting from British colonization. Those varieties emerged through the education system either as a result of phonological influences of local languages on English, or perhaps, of non-native students’

difficulties to adapt to the phonology of English. Then, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Singapore, India, Pakistan, etc. fall in this second category. Finally, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is the acronym used for non-native varieties resulting from globalization and the emergence of English as an international language. As Jenkins (2003) holds, EFL "is the English of those for whom the language serves no purposes within their own countries" (p. 13-14). Brazil, China, Japan, South Korea, Senegal, Germany, etc. belong to this category.

Kachru (1992) proposes a different model of the spread of English around the world based on three concentric circles that "represent the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts" (p. 356). These are the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. Remarkably, Kachru's three circles correspond respectively to ENL, ESL and EFL. Kachru (ibid) argues that depending on the influence of some varieties of English upon others, Inner Circle Englishes struggle to provide norms for other language users. Meanwhile, Outer Circle varieties tend to develop their own norms while Expanding Circle varieties depend on Inner Circle norms.

The third model, called here the socio-geographic model, seeks to account for differences among varieties of English from three perspectives: geography, ethnicity and level of education. As far as geography is concerned, emphasis constantly shifts from national denominations such as Cameroon English, Indian English, Chinese English, etc. to much larger groupings and vice-versa, depending on the acceptance or not by scholars of indigenous varieties as local standards (see next section). Then, it is common to hear of West African English, East Asian English, as well as African English or Asian English.

Ethnicity has also been used to differentiate between linguistic features of several non-native varieties of English. Examples of ethnic varieties documented include Tamil and Malay Englishes in Sri Lanka; Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa Englishes in Nigeria, Francophone vs. Anglophone varieties in Cameroon, etc. The advantage of the ethnic perspective is that it accounts for particularities in usage that are specific to certain ethnic groups only.

Finally, the level of education is important in the process of identification of varieties of English given that most ESL territories claim rights on English in local contexts. Then, it becomes imperative to distinguish between educated and uneducated English, though the practical line between who is educated and who is not remains blurred. In this wise, studies by Brosnahan (1958), Berry (1964), Banjo (1971), Sey (1973) and Masanga (1983) cited in Atechi (2006) distinguish between educated and uneducated English in countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Cameroon, using the GCE Ordinary Level as yardstick for measuring level of education.

From a different perspective, the standardization of non-native varieties in their contexts of use poses a chain of problems in the English Language teaching (henceforth ELT) profession at two distinct levels: acceptance and pedagogy.

3. Problems of Acceptability

The idea of teaching a local, national or regional (Cameroonian, West African or African)

variety of English first raises concerns about acceptability. Are both native speakers and non-native speakers in favor of using local varieties of English as standards? This question has divided applied linguists over three decades now. Prator (1968) argued that non-native varieties of English cannot and should not be accepted as local standards. Quirk (1990) echoed him, stressing that English is only one language and should remain a monolith. Therefore, any attempt at standardizing a local variety is undesirable. Prator and Quirk's arguments are based on the idea that using local varieties as standards constitutes a threat to the existence of English as one language, because English might end up breaking into a number of mutually unintelligible dialects. Quirk (ibid) contends that "there is the need for native teachers' support and the need for non-native teachers to be in constant touch with the native language" in order to keep language and teaching standards unstained in non-native contexts.

WEs scholars, however, oppose standard language ideologies on grounds that they attempt to control, own and teach English according to native-speaker norms. Kachru and his followers (Yamuna Kachru and Nelson, Bolston, and Modiano) advocate an understanding of English use in multilingual contexts and invariably hold that it is unrealistic or simply impossible to impose native-speaker norms in non-native settings. The controversy eventually became a battleground between the two camps. For instance, Quirk (1990) mocked the liberal tendencies of norm-developing Englishes in handling standards, and referred to Kachru's position as "liberation linguistics". Responding to Quirk, Kachru (1991) strongly criticized Standard English ideology on grounds that it fails to consider the teaching and learning of English in relation to the ecological and socio-political factors related to the language's current spread and use. Conclusively, he referred to Quirk's position as "deficit linguistics".

This opposition led in 1991 to a "cross-Atlantic disagreement" (Jenkins 2006) that took the form of the *English Today* debate (see Seidlhofer 2003 for more information on involved protagonists). Remarkably, this controversy has had an impact on TESOL practices insofar as it has raised awareness of English usage in non-native settings among TESOL professionals and has become an issue of concern for a much larger audience (Jenkins, 2006). Jenkins (ibid) adds that since 1991, TESOL Quarterly, a main journal in applied linguistics, has published articles that approach teaching language (for example pronunciation, speaking or writing) from a WEs perspective.

It is important to note that there is a third pole in this debate that has garnered attention recently, probably because it seeks to cover the ground left between monocentrist scholars on one hand, and pluralist scholars on the other hand. This position is known as English as an International Language (EIL) or English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Pennycook (2008) describes the ELF/EIL position as an attempt to understand

> how to come to grips with a non-centrist understanding of English as an international language that is dependent neither on hegemonic versions of central English nor on nationally defined new Englishes, but rather attempts to account for the ever-changing negotiated spaces of current language use (p.3).

In the same perspective, Rubdy and Saraceni (2006:8) contend that the ELF model "liberates

L2 speakers from the imposition of native speaker norms as well as the cultural baggage of World Englishes models". Finally, Kirkpatrick (2006) holds that the ELF model is preferable to both native speakers' centrist and Outer Circle pluralist models in that it becomes

> the property of all, and it will be flexible enough to reflect the cultural norms of those who use it. In this it differs markedly from both native and nativized varieties of English, as native and nativized varieties must by definition reflect the cultural norms of their speakers (p.79).

As the above quotations imply, the ELF/EIL model attempts to bridge the gap between the two sides of the controversy with the aim of promoting a more objective approach to teaching and understanding English across the globe. However, this position has come under severe criticism and suffers from its proponents' (Seidlhofer and Jenkins) constant urge to define and defend their arguments.

The main critique formulated against the EIL/ELF position is that it closely approximates native-speaker's prescriptivism, as it tends to impose a new, but rather limiting model on learners. Rubdy and Saraceni (ibid), for instance, display pessimism on the EIL/ELF stance and question whether one form of prescriptivism is not just replacing another (p.10). This pessimism stems from Jenkins's argument for a need to describe and clarify English pronunciation in order to maintain intelligibility, and Seidlhofer's work on the lexicology and grammar of English that can be used at the international level. Both Jenkins and Seidlhofer vehemently reject accusations of prescriptivism on grounds that their approach lays emphasis on descriptive methods. Seidlhofer (2006:42) further contends that the descriptive approach she uses is primarily interested in "the polymorphous nature of the English language". Jenkins (2006) expresses her fears that if unchecked, the pluralist model may seriously impede mutual understanding among speakers of English (p.35), and that her main aim in ELF– to safeguard intelligibility as far as pronunciation is concerned– is not an attempt to impose a standard and unique pronunciation model on speakers (p.36).

From the above discussion, there seems to be no consensus on which model best accounts for the realities of current language spread and use. However, it is evident that the controversy reaches far beyond the realm of linguistics. Makoni (1992) and Simo Bobda (1994) contend that there are economic reasons behind the fight to maintain a native variety of English as the norm in the classroom. They argue that native speakers struggle to control the ELT business by supplying teachers and pedagogic materials to the rest of the world. The TESOL industry based in England and the USA would lose large amounts of money if non-native varieties were used as local standards in Asia and Africa, because there would be no more supply of native-speaker teachers and pedagogic materials. Nevertheless, whether accepted or not in the classroom, non-native Englishes create a considerable number of pedagogic problems.

4. Pedagogical Implications

It can be inferred from the previous discussion that though scholars in applied linguistics in their majority acknowledge the polymorphous nature of English, the idea of teaching

non-native varieties of English is still a major point of division and frustration. Initially a mere linguistic controversy (monocentrists Vs. pluralists) in the 1980s, the debate quickly moved to issues on the ownership of English (see Widdowson 1994), to the status of the non-native teacher on the ELT market and, finally, to the non-native teacher's dilemma in teaching.

There are many arguments against Standard English pedagogy. In this study, however, we shall discuss two of the main recent points of view. First, Seidlhofer (2005) argues that teaching Standard English is not very realistic, given that it is not a language variety easy to define. She argues that "in terms of numbers of speakers and domains of use, an insistence on Standard English as the only option for all purposes is… difficult to justify" (p.159). Furthermore, there is no scientific indication that teaching a 'standard' variety of the language will result in learners' reproduction of that same standard, given that the influence of learners' background languages and learners' incapacity to reproduce certain sounds or language items correctly, among other factors, can significantly undermine standard language teaching.

Second, it is not plausible to teach and learn English through texts or course materials that display a foreign language culture sometimes totally alien to both teachers and students. In that perspective, Cunningsworth (1985) holds: "cultural gaps pose problems to learners of English, particularly where the social, political or religious differences are great" (p.19). Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) believe that culture in the EFL classroom is not only a problem for learners, but also for teachers. They argue, for instance, that a textbook containing lessons on "dating" is socially and religiously inappropriate in Morocco. They hold that "many Moroccan teachers of English are uncomfortable in the role of presenters of alien cultures with which they may not identify and which they perhaps have not themselves experienced" (p.8).

Though it appears unrealistic to teach a monolithic Standard English, it is also not feasible to implement a pluralist teaching methodology. The major weakness of the pluralist model is, according to Pennycook (2008), the fact that it

> does not provide such a useful stance on global English teaching, since it has always been more concerned on the one hand with description of varieties rather than pedagogy, and on the other with Outer Circle Englishes rather than global or expanding Englishes.

From the above quotation, the WEs framework remains more in the form of theory than practice (Jenkins, 2006). Seidlhofer (2005) posits that WEs and ELF scholars' advocacy for pluralism does not reflect "grassroots practice", which is characterized by an "(unquestioning) submission to native-speaker norms" (p.170).

This dichotomy eventually raises the question of the ownership of English. On the issue, Crystal (2000) comments: "it is a point often forgotten, especially by monolingual speakers of English, that a language which has come to be spoken by so many people has ceased to be the exclusive property of any of its constituent communities. Nobody 'owns' English now" (p.5). He further adds that all speakers of English around the world have rights in the

language, irrespective of their status as first, second and foreign language speakers. However, this view is not shared by other (centrist) linguists. For instance, Jenkins (ibid) argues that both native and non-native speakers still believe in native speaker ownership of English though there is more subtlety today in saying that. Trudgill (2008) is more assertive when he claims that English is historically the language of its native speakers, as it “stems from them” and “resides in them”.

Remarkably, Jenkins and Trudgill’s ideas have a bearing on the status of the non-native teacher on the ELT market. Here again, there is a controversy opposing applied linguists against the native vs. non-native distinction to those in favor of the distinction. However, the most largely held view by both native speakers and non-native speakers is that the native teacher is the better. On the issue, Jenkins (2000) holds that non-native teachers are better prepared to teach in non-native settings than native teachers because they passed through the same route of acquisition.

Another challenge in implementing a pluralist English language pedagogy relates to designing new course materials that take into account the cultural and linguistic realities of local contexts of use. On this point, Simo Bobda (1997:226) notes with satisfaction the growing tendency in textbooks that gradually reflect the non-native speaker’s cultural and sociolinguistic backgrounds. He also believes that such textbooks significantly improve learning and pedagogy, insofar as both teachers and learners deal with issues related to their immediate environment.

From the above, pedagogical problems abound when it comes to teaching non-native varieties of English in their local contexts. While Prator and purists display ethnocentrism (the idea that there is need for non-native teachers to use centrist models in teaching), pluralists still lay emphasis on the need for diversity though there is no clear outline on how to put this into practice. The concluding idea seems that the native teacher is more vested to teach in his context while the non-native teacher is equipped to teach in non-native settings.

Now, it is time to investigate the impact of the TESOL controversy in Cameroon, a non-native English context. To begin, it is important to review some of the main features of Cameroon English (henceforth CamE) that distinguish it from SBE or American English (henceforth AmE).

5. Some Major Characteristic Features of Cameroon English

Mainstream CamE is deeply rooted in the local culture and results from contacts between Standard English and many other languages spoken in the country, including French, Cameroon Pidgin English and about 250 indigenous languages. Like other non-native varieties resulting from British colonization, CamE falls within Platt et al.’s (1984) criteria of classification of New Englishes:

i) It has developed through the education system.

ii) It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was not the language spoken by most of the population.

iii) It is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write it in the region where it is used.

iv) It has become ‘localized’ or ‘nativized’ by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words and expressions (pp. 2-3).

Evidently, the above descriptions imply that non-native varieties of English display features that are different from both SBE and AmE. The main levels of variation on which native and non-native varieties of English differ are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, idioms and discourse style.

At the level of pronunciation, the following features can be noticed in CamE:

- A tendency to replace voiced sounds by voiceless sounds. Examples include: girls /girlz/ for /girls/; dogs /dogz/ for /dogs/, etc.

- A tendency to shorten vowels. For instance, sheet /shi:t/ and shit /shit/ are pronounced interchangeably as /shit/.

- A tendency to turn diphthongs into monophthongs. For instance, go /gə / and no /nə / are rendered respectively as /go/ and /no/.

- A tendency to mark stress differently from SBE and AmE. In most cases, word stress falls later in CamE than in SBE or AmE. Ngefac (2010) provides examples of deviation of stress patterns in CamE in words such as spaghet'ti, identi'fy, investi'gate and commercia'lise with stress falling on the last syllables of the words. In the same vein, Kouega (2007) shows how stress is rendered on names in CamE. 'Christopher (stress on first syllable) becomes Chris'topher (stress on second syllable) while 'Helen becomes He'len.

At the level of vocabulary, new words are created to designate cultural, political or social concepts that do not have equivalences in SBE or AmE. Examples include *njangi* (kind of association), *eru* (kind of vegetable), *nchinda* (kind of attendant or slave), etc. Sometimes, English words are relexicalized using compounding processes. For example, *cry die* is used instead of mourn, *chopchair* for heir, *elephant grass* for a large herb in tropical zones, *born house* for birth celebration, *book work* for studies, *bush meat* for game, etc. (see Anchimbe, 2004 for more examples). Clippings, or short variants of words, are also frequent in CamE. For instance, *bro* stands for brother, *sis* for sister, *docky* for official document, *biz* for business (see Epoge, 2012).

At the level of grammar, Mbangwana (2004) illustrates differences between SBE and CamE through the following syntactic processes:

- The copy pronoun: My aunt *she* works in the Department of Public Health.
- The resumptive pronoun: There are students whom I am teaching *them* to write.
- Yes/no questions: The children are studying?
- That clauses: He phoned me *that* he is coming or He mocked me *that* I failed the exam.

There are many more examples of syntactic, idiomatic and lexical differences between SBE and CamE in Mbangwana (2004) that depict the extent to which English has become nativized in Cameroon. This dynamic use of the language poses considerable problems to English language teachers.

6. The English Teacher Dilemma in Cameroon

At this point, it is insightful to discuss the position of English language teachers in relation to the TESOL controversy and the dynamic use of the language in the Cameroonian context. Many Cameroonian TESOL professionals and scholars in New Englishes (Atechi 2008; Ngefac 2010; Mbibeh 2013) advocate a pedagogy based on the local variety of English. For instance, Ngefac (ibid) holds that "phonological features that can easily be promoted in the ELT industry in Cameroon through pedagogic efforts are those rooted in the sociocultural and pragmatic realities of the speakers". Meanwhile, Mbibeh (ibid) contends that the majority of teachers prefer that CamE be used in the English language classroom. However, there is a gap between theory and practice; teachers face great difficulties in implementing a non-standard English pedagogy because they were trained to teach only standard language forms. In fact, the syllabus of the Department of English of the Advanced Teachers' Training College of Yaounde – which provides models for the other two government teacher training colleges (Bambili and Maroua) – emphasizes content knowledge in Standard (British) English. English language common core courses include Structure of English, Advanced English Speech and Usage I & II (English phonology and correct usage of collocations and formulaic language), Academic Writing, Discourse Analysis and Error Analysis. Sociolinguistics and Varieties of English, the only courses that mainly deal with variation across Englishes, are generally taught as electives, depending on the availability of staff and number of enrolled students. Then, it is not surprising that after a solid training in "correct" English, many teachers worry about teaching "deviant" language structures to their students, even if these structures are called Cameroon English. Certainly, there are moral concerns behind the issue and boundaries that cannot be crossed. Even when morals do not come into play, there are practical issues that need to be taken into consideration. For instance, there are no pedagogic materials so far that clearly outline an approach to CamE grammar and pronunciation instruction. In addition to that, general education certification boards would not comply in the near feature with testing and certification based on a variety of English that is not standard. As evidence, the English language paper was introduced in the GCE Advanced Level exam a few years ago in order to improve student proficiency in "correct" English before they are admitted to tertiary education. Moreover, teaching a local standard would require, very often, to juggle CamE with SBE and AmE for clarification purposes. In this vein, Atechi (2008) provides insight into the challenges faced by the Cameroonian English language teacher when teaching pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. He argues, for instance, that CamE poses pedagogical problems because its vocabulary contains features from SBE and Standard AmE, as well as preferred forms used by Cameroonians, which are sometimes neither SBE nor AmE. Below are a few examples:

Table 1. Examples of preferred forms of lexical items in CamE

Standard British English	**Standard American English**	**(Preferred) CamE form**
Office of Foreign Affairs	State Department	Office of Foreign Affairs
Vice-Chancellor	President	Vice-chancellor
Parliament	Congress	Parliament
Lorry	Truck	Lorry
Bill	Cheque	Cheque
Essay	Term paper	Term paper
House of Commons	House of Representatives	House of Assembly/ National Assembly
Thermos flask	Thermos bottle	Flask

Source: Atechi (2008).

Teaching non-standard English features further exposes teachers to criticism from parents who do not tolerate any form of English sentence or utterance that is not British. For instance, many educated parents would meet teachers or school administrators to complain about teaching 'wrong' language forms to their children. Also, educators and parents fear that accepting non-standard English features might result in students' use of such features in formal contexts and academic writing. As such, the belief that standard language pedagogy is better remains very strong, with the result that language testing is based only on SBE. Adherence to SBE is so strong that only few teachers recognize and accept the use of AmE features in writing tasks. However, the use of non-English words and "deviant" structures is encouraged in creative writing, speaking and literature classes as a need to describe postcolonial or African concepts, ideas, objects or deities that do not have one-word equivalences in Standard English.

7. Using Texts by African Authors to Teach English: A Way out of the TESOL Dilemma

It is known that literature best reflects variation in language use and provides a corpus for both synchronic and diachronic studies of language. Through literary texts, one can have a clear idea of how language was used at a specific point in time by a particular group of people, and how language has evolved under particular circumstances from one century to another. Then, it becomes feasible to use literary texts in order to circumvent controversies in TESOL pedagogy. Literary texts by African authors constitute a rich repertoire of language patterns that reflect the various ways in which English is used by communities depending on variables such as region, gender, social class, level of education and ethnicity. The model outlined in this work suggests

that teachers use literary texts as sources of input to introduce students to non-native varieties of English. ESL students in Cameroon begin studying literature in middle school and could largely benefit from the diversity imposed by the study of the linguistic and semantic features of local and regional varieties of English. However, this model does not require that traditional English language instruction be stopped. Rather, it suggests that standard grammar instruction be backed up by the study of non-standard language features that abound in the literary texts produced by Cameroonian and other non-native English writers. In literature classes, as they co-construct meaning with their students, teachers should raise learners' awareness of particular lexical, syntactic or idiomatic features that are neither found in SBE nor AmE, but which define the style of the non-native English writer. Also, teachers should make students reflect on how these non-standard features contribute in revealing meaning. Meaning in non-native English literature dwells within not only the special linguistic features found in literary texts, but also the thematic developments and discourse styles that characterize such texts. ESL students could then easily discover their voices as future writers, with the knowledge that

> World Englishes writers are less and less interested in their putative subalternity to a former colonial power and increasingly interested in what constitutes, positively, the identity of the culture from within which they write as well as issues transcending national cultures. Similarly, they are less and less likely to worry as to the relation of the English they use to the notionally 'original' English of the Inner circle (Dawson, 2011:4).

Since one of the main concerns of World Englishes literature remains the question of identity, it is important that this sense of identity be transmitted to English language learners in non-native settings. Pedagogy-wise, this work provides classroom tips for teachers:

- Use texts (short stories, poems, songs, excerpts from books or newspaper articles, and dialogue) written/sung by Cameroonian and/or other African authors/artists.
- Make students read those texts aloud, and have them compare spelling, grammar and pronunciation between the New English under study and SBE.
- Allow students to use the local variety of English in classroom discussions.
- Engage students in activities such as translating CamE literary texts into SBE and vice-versa, and role-playing authentic texts in CamE.
- Finally, encourage students to use features of everyday language in creative writing tasks.

This model could be successful insofar as it attempts to address both needs of intelligibility with other varieties of English and the construction and consolidation of a Cameroonian identity in the use of English.

8. Conclusion

This paper investigated the major controversies in TESOL practice and the Cameroon English

teacher dilemma about what variety of English that should be taught in the classroom. Studies of conflicting views on the perception, acceptance, pedagogical implications of non-native varieties of English and the challenges faced by Cameroonian teachers reveal that there is still much ground to cover before a pedagogy based on CamE is implemented in Cameroon. Nevertheless, this paper highlights the idea that English language pedagogy in former British colonies should reflect the sociology of English in each local context. An effective English pedagogy in an ESL territory is probably not a native-speaker model, because native-speaker methods are constructed primarily to suit the purpose of ENL learners and to some extent, EFL learners. There is need for course books and pedagogy rooted in local contexts that address the cultural, linguistic and political interests of the people from a local to a global perspective. It should also be made clear that the intelligibility of English is not at stake with a WEs pedagogy because there is a core common ground shared by all varieties of English. This common ground is not a language on its own; rather, it is the type of English used among non-native speakers with different linguistic backgrounds. As long as speakers of English all over the world communicate from the background of this core common ground represented in all varieties (standard or not) of the language, there is no threat that English might end up breaking into mutually unintelligible dialects. Finally, teaching literature to students is a viable option to operate out of imposed native-speaker standards in order to build and consolidate the non-native speaker's identity in the use of English. More research should be carried out in this direction, from the triple perspective of curriculum, course book design and pedagogy.

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