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Alan Davies
Native Speakers and Native Users

Brief abstract

Studies of global English refer to the *native speaker* as the model for all users. The question addressed in this research is how necessary the native speaker is. The current literature offers two challenges: (1) post-colonial World Englishes (for example Indian English, Nigerian English) which claim that the *native user* has replaced the native speaker; (2) English as a Lingua Franca, the use of English for international communication by educated non-native speakers. How far these claims are political and how far linguistic will be assessed, leading to a consideration of whether we still need the native speaker as a touchstone.

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Aims and Objectives

- to clarify the relation between native speaker and native user in new varieties of English, assessing how far issues are political and how far they are linguistic.
- to consider whether language norms can develop in a speech community which has no native speakers.
- to consider how far the notions of standard language and the ideal native speaker are isomorphic.
- to summarise in a state of the art review recent and current work on the native speaker in relation to World Englishes, English as a lingua franca and the relation between claims of bias and the construct of the standard language
- to develop a protocol for investigating bias in performance by samples of educated non-native speakers of English on tests of speaking and writing.
- to bring together in a research monograph the connected issues of the native speaker, the standard language, the native user, ultimate attainment and new varieties of English.

Methodology

- A research assistant (RA) will be employed to carry out a literature search and to undertake the data entry and test analyses.
- A monograph will be completed in draft form by the writer over the course of the project,
- Research Design: tests of speaking and writing, based on exemplar IELTS tests will be developed for 3 groups of test takers (50 per group x 3 = 150), each to take 2 writing and 2 speaking tasks. There will be 24 raters in total, 8 raters per group (Bangalore, Melbourne, Vienna). Qualitative analyses (eg discourse organization) and quantitative analyses (eg FACETS) of the scripts as well as introspective interviews with the raters will be carried out and reported.

Outcomes:

- Clarification of the current status of the native speaker concept
- Clarification of how far the native speaker is a political rather than a linguistic concept
- Empirical evidence on the issue of bias in international English language tests against speakers/users of World Englishes
- Three publications .