

Nepanglish: A Standardizing Variety of English

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Abstract

This article is based on a research report entitled "Attitudes of the Secondary Level English Teachers and Students to the Models of Pronunciation of English," which was presented in the 15th International Conference of NELTA, Kathmandu, 2010. This research investigated the attitudes of the Secondary Level English teachers and students in Dhangadhi on four varieties of English: British English, American English, Indian English, and Nepalese English (Nepanglish), and discovered that they are extremely positive to Nepanglish.

Key words: British English, American English, Indian English, Nepalese English, Nepanglish

Introduction

English has been so varied that when we talk of it, we have to be aware of the variety of being used, as there exist different varieties of English. So we have to accept the fact that "There is no such thing as the English Language" (Aarts and Aarts ,1982). This is all because English has been widely used around the world by people of different regions, cultures, languages, and so forth. Harmer (1999) argues in favour of this and maintains, 'There is a multiplicity of varieties and this makes it difficult to describe English as any one thing'. So it is very natural to speak of varieties of English or world Englishes because there are several varieties of English identified, for example, British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English South African English, Nigeria English, Indian English, Sri-Lankan English and so on. This is not only the case of the countries in American, European, African and Australian continents; even the countries in Asian continent have been greatly influenced by English. As a result, many different varieties of English have been developed and some are still emerging.

Regarding the expansion of English in South Asia, Kansakar (1998), in the same vein, maintains, 'In recent years, speakers of English in countries like India and Nepal have been influenced by American English through tourism , radio, television and other media of mass communication. This situation has given rise to a curious mixture of South Asian, British and American varieties of English, which are referred to generally as South Asian English.' Here Kansakar generalizes the varieties of English used in the South Asian countries as 'South Asian English'. But the fact is that English has many varieties even in South Asia because every nation that uses English as a second or foreign language, in question, is claiming the English used there to be of their own variety. In the context of Nepal too, English which has the status of foreign language is considered to be developing as a variety of its own, i.e., Nepalese English or 'Nenglish' (Rai, 2006) or 'Nepanglish' (as recommended through my research).

English used in Nepal is of its own type - neither is it like that of British nor American, nor anything else because when Nepalese speak English they can be easily identified as Nepalese, not as Englishmen or Americans. So it is rather a very high time to investigate on Nepalese English (Nepanglish) and develop it into an internationally-accepted variety of English because here English is losing its Englishness and getting highly influenced by Nepali language. In this regard, David Crystal has also mentioned in his Encyclopedia of the English language that 'Nepalese variety of standardizing variety is emerging gradually'.

Objectives

The research was carried out with the following major objectives:

1. To ascertain the model of pronunciation of English being taught by the secondary level English teachers in Dhangadhi,
2. To find out the model of pronunciation of English the students prefer to learn
3. To find out the strategies taken up by the teachers and students to improve their pronunciation of English.
4. To ascertain the teachers' and students' attitudes towards the Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish)
5. To find out the teachers' and students' attitudes to the necessity of native-like pronunciation of English.
6. To make some recommendations

Significance of the study

This is a novel research as no research has been carried out to study on English teachers' and students' attitudes about the model of pronunciation of English in Nepal, in particular; and Nepalese variety of English, in general. So the researcher opines that the findings of the research will certainly help the researchers in English, the English language teachers, linguists, and language policy makers. For the researchers it will be a stepping stone to investigate further on Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish). The teachers will be familiar with the students' attitudes to different models of pronunciation of English, and accordingly teach them. The students will also find out the model of English that most of them want to follow. The linguists will certainly be aware of the attitudes expressed by the teachers and the students and focus on the studies on developing Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish). Similarly, the language policy makers can consider it while planning language policy. On the whole, as it is a small step in the process of developing Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish), its significance will lie in developing Nepanglish as a variety of World Englishes.

Methodology

This research is heavily based on primary source of data. For that secondary level English teachers and students were selected from 8 different schools of Dhangadhi. 4 schools were English medium and 4 were Nepali medium. All those schools were well-reputed so they were purposefully selected. There were 80 secondary level students, 10 from each school; they were selected randomly. The students were from both grades- 9 and 10. The students from 3 schools were from grade 9 and others were from grade 10. Similarly, 8 teachers were selected, 1 from each school. The teachers were also selected purposefully- the senior most English teacher. The teachers had different qualifications and experiences. One teacher was an M. Ed. with 16 years of teaching experiences; another one was an M. A. with 9 years of teaching experiences; the other one was an M. A. and B. Ed. with 24 years of teaching experiences; two were B.Ed.'s with 9 and 14 years of teaching experiences; the other two were a B. A. and a B. Ed. with 5 and 14 years of teaching experiences; and the other was a B. A. with 15 years of teaching experiences. The teachers in the study were better- qualified and experienced. So their attitudes hold special significance.

The tool for data collection consisted of two sets of questionnaire-one for the teachers and another for the students. They were distributed among them visiting their schools. The question items were related to eliciting their attitudes to the varieties of English, especially Nepanglish.

Discussion

The analysis of the students' and teachers' responses clearly shows that they have very similar attitudes to the issues being discussed so far. The first set of questionnaire was distributed among the students, and they responded to all the questions. Regarding the varieties of English they have been learning, most of the students (63.75%) opined that they have been learning British English; 18.75% of them Nepalese English; and 17.5% of them American English. When asked what model of English they would like to learn, the highest number of students (42.5%) responded that they would like to learn American English; 35% of them British English; 21.25% of them Nepalese English; and 1.25% of them Indian English. To the query whether they like their teacher's pronunciation or not, majority of the students (68.75%) responded positively, whereas 31.35% of them were just satisfied. The central question of the research was to find out their attitudes to whether Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish) should be developed or not. To this query, an overwhelming majority of the students (96.25%) responded that it should, while 3.75% of them responded that it is not necessary. Next question asked their view about the necessity of native-like pronunciation of English. To this, most of the students (65%) opined that it is not necessary; 18.75% responded 'yes', and 16.25% 'if possible'. The last question asked about their strategies to improve their pronunciation of English. Most of them (75%) used electronic media, while very few of them responded that they improved their pronunciation from their teachers, colleagues and native speakers.

The second set of questionnaire that consisted of 5 question items were for the teachers to find out their attitudes to the varieties of English. The first question asked them about the variety of English they have been teaching. To this, most of the teachers (87.5%) responded that they

have been teaching British English. However, quite interestingly, 12.5% of them responded that they have been teaching Nepalese English. To the question whether they should have native-like pronunciation of English or not, 50% of them responded 'yes'; 37.5% 'if possible'; and 12.5% 'no'. The focal question to the teachers was regarding their attitudes to whether Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish) should be developed or not. To this, an overwhelming number of teachers (75%) responded 'yes', whereas 25% of them said 'no'. When asked what variety of English they think the students would like to learn, most of them (62.5%) responded that they think the students would like to learn British English. However, 37.5% of them predicted that the students would like to learn Nepalese English. As regards to the strategies taken up by them to improve their pronunciation of English, most of them (87.5%) heavily depended on electronic media. But few of them used dictionary, talking to friends, and their colleague as the strategies to improve their pronunciation.

Major findings:

1. There is good correlation between the variety of English the teachers have been teaching and that the students have been learning, as most of the teachers (87.5%) and students (63.75%) agreed that they have been teaching and learning British variety of English.
2. American variety of English is being popular since most of the students (42%) expressed their attitudes that they would like to learn this variety.
3. Only 35% of the students responded that they would like to learn British English.
4. Nepalese variety of English is slowly getting its status as a variety of English as 21% of them responded that they would like to learn this variety.
5. Most of the students (68%) liked their teachers' pronunciation of English, this implies that they like Nepalese model of pronunciation of English as it is nearly impossible for Nepalese English teachers to have native like pronunciation of English.
6. Most of the students (96.25%) agreed that Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish) should be developed.
7. Similarly, most of the teachers (75%) also responded that Nepalese variety of English (Nepanglish) should be developed.
8. Most of the students and teachers were found to have used electronic media as a strategy to improve their pronunciation of English.

Avenues for future research

Based on the research findings, the researcher would like to make the following major recommendations to the concerned authorities:

- The government of Nepal should pay attention to develop Nepanglish. For that many researches should be carried out to recognize this variety. And materials for school and college curricula should have Nepanglish as well.
- Similarly, the English curricula for schools and campuses should be based not only on British English but American and other varieties of English should also be included.
- Language learning centers for practicing different varieties of English should be established at different parts of the country so as to expose the students into them.

- The teachers who prefer teaching British or American English should have native-like pronunciation of English.
- The government of Nepal should increase the access of varieties of English through mass media to the students.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire to Students

School:

Student's Name:

Class:

1. Which variety of English have you been learning?
 - i. British
 - ii. American
 - iii. Indian
 - iv. Nepalese
2. Which model of pronunciation of English would you like to learn?
 - i. British
 - ii. American
 - iii. Indian
 - iv. Nepalese
3. Do you like your teacher's pronunciation of English?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Just fine
4. Do you think Nepalese variety of English should be developed?

- i. Yes. ii. No. iii. Not necessary
5. Do you think you should develop native –like pronunciation of English?
i. Yes. ii. No. iii. If possible
6. What strategies have you been following to improve your pronunciation of English?
i.
ii.....
iii.....
iv.....

Thank you very much indeed!

Appendix 2

Questionnaire to Teachers

School:
Teacher's Name:
Qualification:
Experience:

1. Which variety of English have you been teaching your students?
i. British ii. American iii. Indian iv. Nepalese
2. Do you think teachers should have native –like pronunciation of English?
i. Yes. ii. No. iii. If possible
3. Do you think Nepalese variety of English should be developed?
i. Yes. ii. No.
4. Which model of pronunciation of English do you think students prefer to learn?
i. British ii. American iii. Indian iv. Nepalese
5. What strategies have you been following to improve your pronunciation of English?
i.
ii.....
iii.....
iv.....

Thank you very much indeed!