ELF-based Pronunciation Teaching in China

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Abstract

Many scholars nowadays suggest that English teaching in places such as China should be based on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) rather than native-speaker styles of speech. Crucial for this is the Lingua Franca Core (LFC), the set of pronunciation features that are claimed to be essential for international intelligibility. This paper considers the LFC in the context of China, to determine which of the features of English pronunciation that typically occur with speakers from China should be a priority for teachers. In addition, the paper discusses accommodation to the needs of listeners, something that is a central component of ELF-based teaching, and it notes that the teaching of accommodation skills is practical, attainable, and fun.

Key words: English as a Lingua Franca; the Lingua Franca Core; Chinese English; pronunciation; accommodation

1. Introduction

Traditionally, models of pronunciation for learners of English around the world have usually been based on the speech of native speakers, mostly from the UK or the USA. However, in recent years there has been a movement away from this dependence on native-speaker norms, because English has become a world language that is no longer owned just by its native speakers (Graddol, 2006), and furthermore second-language speakers of English generally use the language to communicate with a wide range of people from various different places, not just those who happen to come from Britain, America or Australia. Indeed, many scholars (e.g., Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004) now suggest that English teaching should be based on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), the style of

the language as it is used internationally, and others (e.g., Walker, 2010) have explored the development of ELF-based curricula.

This paper will consider the implications of the proposals for ELF-based teaching in China. The focus will be on pronunciation, to assess the potential effects of ELF-based teaching on the spoken targets of learners in China, but consideration will also be given to other aspects of ELF-based teaching, particularly the development of accommodation skills as well as the use of idiomatic language. However, first we should consider models of World English, in order to provide a suitable context for the discussion.

2. Models of World English

In the 1980s, Braj Kachru formulated his Three Circles model of World English. In this model, the Inner Circle consists of the traditional sources of English, such as Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia. The Outer Circle includes places which had a colonial link with Britain or the USA and which have now adopted English as an official language. Examples are Singapore, India, Nigeria and the Philippines. Finally, the Expanding Circle represents territories where there was no colonial link to Britain or the USA but where English is increasingly used as a language of commerce and international communication. Such places include China, Japan, Germany and Brazil (Kachru, 2005: 14).

Some aspects of Kachru's model have been criticized recently, particularly because it is historically and geographically based and therefore fails to capture the fluidity and variability of language usage, and furthermore some countries cannot easily be classified (Jenkins, 2009a: 20-21). However, it still provides a useful framework for the description of World Englishes, so reference will be made to it here.

Kachru suggested that speakers from Outer-Circle places such as India and Singapore should be encouraged to develop their own norms of English, because their Englishes are evolving into fully mature varieties, a process that is described in detail by Schneider (2007). In contrast, Kachru envisaged that speakers in Expanding-Circle regions such as China and Japan would continue to look to the Inner-Circle for their norms. However, others (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2007) have suggested that Inner-Circle norms are no longer relevant for English as it is used internationally, and speakers in places such as China should not need always to refer to patterns of pronunciation in Inner-Circle countries.

The proposals for ELF-based teaching might seem quite radical from the perspective of an Expanding-Circle country such as China, where there continues to be a widespread belief in strict adherence to externally-specified native-speaker targets, even if learners in practice rarely attain these targets. However, when we acknowledge that most speakers of English in China are likely to need to speak to people from Japan, India and Korea more often than to people from the UK, the USA or Australia, and also when we recognize that Inner-Circle Englishes are not necessarily the most intelligible internationally (Smith & Nelson, 2006), then ELF-based teaching begins to make a lot of sense.

A key issue here is practical: as most Outer-Circle speakers use English not to integrate into Inner-Circle societies but rather to communicate with a range of

people around the world, the goal of speaking English should be to achieve maximum intelligibility for this international audience. In this connection, we can identify some Inner-Circle pronunciation patterns that do not improve international intelligibility, particularly the occurrence of reduced vowels in unstressed syllables and also the use of stress-based rhythm. Indeed, international users of English often find it easier to understand people who articulate all of their syllables clearly and precisely, with full (unreduced) vowels, and in addition they sometimes find that the use of syllable-based rhythm enhances intelligibility. If this is the case, we can ask if teachers of English should continue to promote patterns of pronunciation which do not help speakers to be understood internationally just because native speakers use those patterns. Furthermore, if time in the classroom is not spent on trying to achieve unattainable native-speaker targets, this can free up valuable resources that can be spent on more productive tasks, such as developing accommodation skills.

3. The Lingua Franca Core (LFC)

The suggestion that some sounds are more important than others should not be too controversial, so all teachers would probably agree that it makes sense to focus primarily on the most important sounds. However, Jenkins (2007) has gone one step further and proposed that there is actually no need to teach some sounds. Indeed, in her research on interactions in English between speakers from different parts of the world, Jenkins (2000) reports that only some of the sounds of English contribute to breakdowns in communication, so she argues that there is no need for learners of English to master those sounds that do not cause a problem.

In line with this, Jenkins (2007: 23-24) has proposed a Lingua Franca Core (LFC) of just those features of English pronunciation that are essential for international intelligibility. Specifically she has suggested that:

- The dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are not important.
- All the consonants of English apart from the dental fricatives are important.
- Initial and medial consonant clusters are important, but simplification of final consonant clusters should be allowed.
- The exact quality of individual vowels is not important, except for the mid-central vowel /ɜː/.
- Vowel quantity (the distinction between long and short vowels) is important.
- Vowel reduction (the use of a reduced vowel such as /ə/ in unstressed syllables) is not important.
- Stress-based rhythm is not important; use of syllable-based rhythm is fine.
- The placement of nuclear stress (identifying the key word in an utterance) is important.
- The fine details of pitch movement for the various intonation patterns are not important.

In summary, Jenkins (2007) proposes that the following features of pronunciation which are found in most varieties of native-speaker English do not need to be taught to learners

of English: dental fricatives, final consonant clusters, vowel quality (apart from the mid-central vowel), reduced vowels in unstressed syllables, stress-based rhythm, and the pitch movements associated with intonation.

In this paper, the pronunciation of speakers from China will be analyzed, to consider what implications the LFC proposals have for English as it is taught in China.

4. Features of the Pronunciation of English in China

Thirteen students, 10 male and 3 female, aged from 18 to 21 from various provinces in China were recorded reading the North Wind and the Sun passage (hereafter NWS, see Appendix) and also being interviewed for two minutes by a male speaker from the UK, mostly talking about their families, and their pronunciation was described in Deterding (2006). Here the main features of their pronunciation will be discussed within the context of the LFC.

4.1 The TH Sounds

To avoid prescriptive language, here the sounds at the start of words such as *thin* and *that* will be referred to as voiceless TH and voiced TH respectively. We can therefore state, for example, that voiceless TH can be pronounced as [θ], [s], [t] or [f] without suggesting that any of these is "better" or "correct".

There is a tendency for speakers in China to use [s] for voiceless TH. In the NWS passage, there are no words with initial voiceless TH, but the passage has four tokens of the word *north* in which there is a final voiceless TH. Five of the 13 speakers always pronounced this voiceless TH in *north* as [s], another four used [s] in some tokens but not others, and four speakers consistently used [θ]. In the interviews, there was also widespread use of [s] by the speakers at the start of words such as *think* and *three*, though some speakers had [θ] in these words

For voiced TH at the start of *that*, *than* and *then* in the NWS passage, one speaker always used [d] while three sometimes used [d] and sometimes [ð], five speakers sometimes used [z] and sometimes [ð], and just four speakers used [ð] consistently. In the interviews, six speakers had [d] in the middle of *mother* and *brother*, three had [z], one had [d], and one had no consonant in the middle of these two words. (The remaining two speakers did not utter either of these words.)

It is not surprising that speakers in China have problems with dental fricatives, as these sounds do not occur in Standard Chinese (Duanmu, 2007; Lee & Zee, 2003). However, as mentioned above, the LFC proposals suggest that use of dental fricatives for the TH sounds is not important and does not need to be taught. We should also note that avoidance of [θ] and [ð] occurs in some Inner-Circle Englishes, including the speech of many people from London and also Ireland (Wells, 1982: 328, 428). In Outer-Circle Englishes, use of [t] and [d] for the TH sounds is extremely common, occurring in Singapore (Deterding, 2007: 13), India (Sailaja, 2009: 21), Brunei (Mossop, 1996), the Caribbean (Gramley & Pätzold, 2004: 270), some speakers from Nigeria (Gut, 2004), and

throughout South-East Asia (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Does use of [θ] and [ð] for the TH sounds enhance intelligibility? Maybe, though we might note that the official Aviation Radiotelephony Manual for air-traffic communication, a domain where international intelligibility is critically important, recommends that both *two* and *thousand* be pronounced with a [t] at the start (Civil Aviation Authority, 2010, ch. 2, p. 3). In any case, insisting on the use of [θ] and [ð] for the TH sounds does not seem worth the effort, especially when so many speakers around the world use other sounds.

4.2 Voiced Fricatives

In Standard Chinese, the sound at the start of 日 *rì* (*sun*) and 人 *rén* (*person*) is occasionally classified as a voiced fricative (e.g., Duanmu, 2007: 24), but it is more usually classified as an approximant (e.g., Lee & Zee, 2003). Apart from this, there are no voiced fricatives in Chinese, so this class of sounds is often problematic for English speakers in China. Quite apart from /ð/ (as discussed in the previous section), /v/, /z/ and /ʒ/ can raise difficulties for speakers from China. For the data from the NWS passage, /v/ is omitted or pronounced weakly by some speakers in the word *traveler*, and others omitted the /z/ at the end of *as*.

Perhaps the most widespread problem regarding fricatives for Chinese speakers of English is /ʒ/, as it often gets pronounced as the approximant [ʃ]. Although /ʒ/ is by far the least common consonant in English (Cruttenden, 2008: 232), it occurs in a few basic words, particularly usually, and many speakers from China pronounce this as [juːʃəli] without realizing there is any problem. Although the NWS passage does not have any instances of /ʒ/, five of the speakers were asked to read a sentence with usually in it, and three of them said it with [ʃ].

The LFC does not allow any substitution for the voiced fricatives (apart from /ð/), and teachers should ensure their students can produce these sounds accurately.

4.3 Final /n/

The vowel before a final nasal consonant becomes partially nasalized in all varieties of English (Ladefoged, 2001: 172) in a process that might be classified as anticipatory assimilation. However, this anticipatory nasalization of a vowel is particularly prominent in the English spoken in China, to the extent that sometimes the closure associated with the final nasal consonant is omitted entirely. As a result, a word like *sun* sometimes gets pronounced as [sʌ], with a nasalized vowel but no final consonant.

In the NWS data, two speakers omitted the final consonant in all three tokens of *sun*, while another six speakers did this with at least one token, and only five speakers produced a clear final consonant for all three tokens.

As final /n/ is a consonant, it is part of the LFC, so its clear articulation is important for the international intelligibility of English.

4.4 The Distinction Between /n/ and /l/

Most speakers in China have no problems with initial /n/ and /l/, as both these consonants occur in syllable-initial position in Chinese (Duanmu, 2007; Lee & Zee, 2003). For example,

/n/ and /l/ differentiate 你 *nǐ* (*you*) from 里 *lǐ* (*mile*).

However, in southern China, initial /n/ and /l/ are sometimes merged. This is particularly common in Hong Kong (Hung, 2000; Deterding, Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2008) and Cantonese-speaking areas, but it is also found among speakers from the central provinces of Sichuan and Jiangxi. In the data from Deterding (2006), one speaker from Jiangxi pronounced *last* and *law* with an initial [n].

Distinction between initial /n/ and /l/ is important in English, and the LFC would not allow these two sounds to be conflated. In cases where students merge these sounds, teachers must work on it and ensure they are differentiated.

4.5 Final Consonant Clusters

The only final consonants in Standard Chinese are /n/ and /ŋ/ (Duanmu, 2007; Lee & Zee, 2003). While /p, t, k/ and /m/ occur at the end of a syllable in some regional varieties of Chinese such as Cantonese (Zee, 1999) and Southern Min (Taiwanese) (Chung, 1996), no variety of Chinese has final consonant clusters. Not surprisingly, speakers of English in China often find such clusters difficult.

In fact, it is normal for /t/ or /d/ to be omitted from consonant clusters in Inner-Circle styles of English if they are at the end of the word and the next word begins with a consonant. For example, Cruttenden (2008: 303-304) gives *next day*, *raced back*, *last chance*, *first light*, *just one*, *old man*, *left turn*, *bold face*, *mashed potatoes*, *tinned meat*, *gazed back* and *loved flowers* among a long list of phrases where the /t/ or /d/ in the first word is often omitted. However, it seems that learners of English in China are reluctant to do this, feeling that it is lazy pronunciation. Instead, they often add an extra vowel at the end of the first word, to ensure that there is no omission of the final consonant. In the NWS passage, seven speakers added a vowel after *wind* in the phrase "Wind blew", and five did the same in the phrase "Wind gave".

Although the LFC tolerates word final consonant cluster simplification and it also allows the insertion of an extra vowel if this can aid in intelligibility, there is a problem if this extra vowel results in *wind* sounding more like *window*, or if *fast* sounds like *faster*. Perhaps we can conclude that a very short added vowel at the end of a word-final consonant cluster does not matter too much if it does not end up sounding like an extra syllable.

One final point is relevant here: although Inner-Circle speakers regularly omit the final consonant in phrases such as those listed above, does this omission aid intelligibility? And if it does not, do speakers in the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle need to mimic this behavior just because that is how people in the UK and USA speak? One of the fundamental principles of ELF-based teaching is to achieve maximum intelligibility, and there seems no need for speakers to pretend that they come from Britain or America if they do not. Roach (2009: 117) argues that it is important for learners of English to be able to understand fast colloquial speech, but there is no need for them to learn all the patterns in their own speech.

4.6 Vowel Quality and Quantity

One feature of the English spoken in China is that some learners use materials from the UK while others prefer American materials. As a result, some speakers have /ɒ/ in *hot* while others have /ɑː/, and some have /ɑː/ in *class* while others have /æ/. The LFC does not worry about the quality of individual vowels apart from /ɜː/, so all these pronunciations would be fine.

However, the LFC does emphasize vowel quantity, particularly the distinction between long vowels in words such as *feast* and short vowels in words such as *fist*. Chinese has no such distinction between long and short vowels, so this is something that teachers need to work on.

4.7 Vowel Reduction

In most varieties of Inner-Circle English, there is a schwa /ə/ in the unstressed first syllable of words such as *considered* and *confess* and also the weak forms of function words such as *than*, *to* and *of*, and this use of a schwa can be described as vowel reduction. However, speakers from China often use a full vowel in these words. In the NWS passage, three speakers had a full vowel in the first syllable of *considered* while ten had a schwa, and six had a full vowel in the first syllable of *confess* while seven had a schwa. For the function words, all but one speaker had a full vowel in *than*, all but one speaker had a full vowel in *to*, and all thirteen speakers had a full vowel in *of*.

It seems that speakers in China may have a schwa in the unstressed first syllable of polysyllabic words such as *confess* but they nearly always use a full vowel in function words such as *of*. One explanation for this is the extensive rote learning of vocabulary lists in China, and the surprisingly widespread belief that the best learner is someone who memorizes every word in the dictionary. If words are learned in isolation, some speakers may have a schwa in the citation forms of long words but they will never learn the weak forms of function words.

From the perspective of ELF-based teaching, does this matter? The LFC states that there is no need to teach vowel reduction. While it is certainly true that listeners will need to be able to deal with the regular occurrence of reduced vowels if they are to understand the speech of people from the Inner Circle, there seems little need for them to actually produce such speech, especially as many speakers in China believe that using a reduced vowel in words such as *than* and *of* is a lazy way of speaking. One might also note that avoidance of reduced vowels is widespread in the Englishes of places such as Singapore (Deterding, 2007: 29-30), throughout South-East Asia (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006), the Caribbean (Wells, 1982: 570) and West Africa (Wells, 1982: 639). In fact, one might conclude that avoiding reduced vowels is the norm in new varieties of English around the world, and speakers of such Englishes find that the use of full vowels in function words can enhance intelligibility. If speakers of English from China can speak well and fluently with full vowels in all function words, there seems no reason to encourage them to change their patterns of speech in this respect.

4.8 Rhythm

The relative absence of reduced vowels may substantially contribute to the perception of syllable-based rhythm. Although claims about fixed categories of rhythmic timing in languages have sometimes been questioned (Roach, 2009: 110), differences in speech rhythm can actually be demonstrated by measurements of the duration of successive syllables, especially for Outer-Circle varieties of English such as that of Singapore compared with Inner-Circle varieties such as British English (Low, Grabe & Nolan, 2000). Moreover, the observation that some Outer-Circle Englishes have a more syllable-based rhythm than most Inner-Circle varieties is common, and syllable-based rhythm has been reported for the Englishes of Singapore (Deterding, 2007: 31), India (Sailaja, 2009: 34), East Africa (Gramley & Pätzold, 2004: 323), West Africa (Wells, 1982: 639), Jamaica (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008: 98) and Hawaian Creole (Wells, 1982: 651).

Crystal (1995) notes that Inner-Circle Englishes also sometimes exhibit syllable-based rhythm, for example in baby talk, many types of popular music, and some television commercials. Indeed, he notes that the language of air traffic control (*Airspeak*), a domain where intelligibility is critically important, tends to use "an even rhythm throughout" (1995: 175) in order to achieve extra clarity. Crystal (2003: 171) further suggests that syllable-based rhythm might one day become the norm even in Inner-Circle Englishes, and he advises against fostering norms of rhythm where they are not appropriate (2003: 172). We might finally note that some exceptionally articulate and well-respected international figures, such as Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan, tend to have full vowels where other speakers would use reduced vowels, and as a result the rhythm of their speech might be classified as substantially more syllable-based than that of most speakers from Inner-Circle countries. But nobody seems to suggest that there is anything wrong with their speech, or that they should try to improve their intelligibility.

Many textbooks targeted for the US market regard the adoption of stress-based rhythm as essential (e.g., Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996), and Teschner and Whitley (2004) introduce the rhythmic foot in chapter 1, considerably before the vowels and consonants of English are described in chapters 5 and 6, in the belief that stress-based rhythm and the alternation of strong and weak syllables is the fundamental framework on which the rest of the sound system of English is based. But there seems little need for learners of English around the world to adopt this approach, given that syllable-based rhythm is so widespread in varieties of World English and in many cases it seems to enhance intelligibility. People who intend to live in the USA or UK might benefit from using stress-timed rhythm; but those who do not plan to live in an Inner-Circle country can use syllable-based rhythm.

Many speakers of English in China use syllable-based rhythm, and this is accepted and even encouraged in the LFC. There seems no need for teachers to try to change this style of speech.

4.9 Stress on the Final Word

There is a tendency for the final word in a phrase to receive heavy emphasis in the English of speakers from China, possibly as a means of indicating the end of the utterance. For

example, in the NWS passage eleven out of the 13 speakers stressed the final pronoun in the phrase "fold his cloak around him".

Emphasis on the final word in an utterance is quite common in the English spoken in East Asia, being found in Singapore (Goh, 2005; Levis, 2005), and also in the English as it is used as a lingua franca throughout South-East Asia (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006). However, the placement of nuclear stress is regarded as important in the LFC, so it seems that stressing of final pronouns can cause problems for international intelligibility, though perhaps not in East Asia. This is therefore something that speakers in China should work on.

4.10 Intonation

Apart from the placement of the intonational nucleus, something that Wells (2006) refers to as "tonicity", the LFC allows a wide range of intonational pitch movements, the "tones" in Wells's model. Indeed, Grabe, Kochanski and Coleman (2005) have shown that there is wide variation in tone usage in the British Isles, even though the placement of the nucleus is more fixed. Given this wide variation among native-speaker varieties of English, there seems little need for learners of English in China to master the exact pitch movements that happen to occur in one variety of British or American English.

5. Discussion

We have seen that, for ELF-based teaching, some features of the pronunciation of English by speakers from China are crucial for international intelligibility while other features are not important. Specifically, the voiced fricatives (apart from /ð/), final nasals, the distinction between /n/ and /l/, the distinction between long and short vowels, and the placement of nuclear stress are things teachers should work on; but there is less need to pay attention to the dental fricatives, individual vowel quality, vowel reduction, rhythm or the pitch movement associated with intonation.

Many teachers believe that the ELF-based proposals present a cut-down target, of "dumbing things down". However, this is not in fact true. First, use of full vowels rather than reduced vowels actually involves more acoustic information, not less, which is why the use of full vowels in unstressed syllables can enhance the intelligibility of speech. Second, many students find pronunciation drills both frustrating and boring, and reducing the time spent on these drills can free up valuable classroom resources for other more productive tasks. One can conclude that the ELF proposals do not involve a reduction in the time allocated to the teaching of speaking and listening; it is just that the time is spent in alternative, more productive ways than tedious pronunciation drills.

One of the main proposals for ELF-based teaching by Jenkins (2007) and also Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2009), and something that Walker (2010) considers in some depth, is a focus on the development of accommodation skills which enable speakers to adapt their speech to the needs of listeners. Indeed, always adhering to a native-speaker model of pronunciation is not helpful in this respect, as in many cases use of an Inner-

Circle style of pronunciation does not actually enable the speaker to be easily understood in international contexts

The teaching of accommodation skills is much easier in a classroom with students from diverse backgrounds, and it is not so straightforward to implement when the students all come from the same background, as is the case for most language classes in China. Nevertheless, it is not difficult nowadays to present students with recordings from speakers from around the world and thereby allow them to become familiar with different ways of speaking. For example, Walker (2010) includes a CD with a wide range of recordings of speakers from Malaysia, German, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Argentina, China, Spain, Japan, Morocco, Brunei, and many other places, and this can be an extraordinarily valuable resource for the teacher. Furthermore, he proposes some classroom activities, such as paired dictation and transcription activities between two students, which can be used to develop accommodation skills even in classes with students from the same background.

We should also acknowledge that native-speaker targets in pronunciation are not attainable for most learners, and this can be incredibly demotivating. In contrast, although the development of accommodation skills may involve just as much work, it is achievable and it can also be lots of fun. In fact, one might conclude that ELF-based teaching involves more work, not less, than striving to achieve traditional native-speaker targets, but the development of accommodation skills is practical, productive, and enjoyable. ELF-based teaching should never be regarded as a "soft" option.

We might consider one final issue in connection with ELF-based teaching. Jenkins (2009b) warns about the use of native-speaker idioms when speaking English in international contexts, and she is undoubtedly right that one must always be sensitive about what listeners can understand and what they cannot. After all, this kind of awareness is central to successful accommodation. However, one problem is that language use with no colorful idioms would be rather bland. An alternative suggestion is that we should not necessarily eliminate idiomatic usage, but instead we should be seeking to enrich the English we use with a wide range of idioms from India, Nigeria, the Philippines, as well as China and Japan. In fact, Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2009) show how international users of English can collaborate to develop their own innovative idiomatic usage, which is a nice example of how the language can be extended. Sometimes ELF-based teaching can indeed be more work, but it can also be highly enriching.

6. Problems with ELF-based Teaching

The proposals for ELF-based teaching have been discussed here, particularly with reference to their implications for the pronunciation of speakers from China; and it is suggested that the proposals might be attractive for English teachers in China, because they are practical, achievable, and fun. However, we must admit that there are substantial problems.

First, many teachers are likely to feel considerable alarm at the suggestions that some features of pronunciation, such as the use of dental fricatives, the exact quality of most

vowels, the use of reduced vowels, and the pitch movements associated with intonation, do not need to be taught. However, if we start from the standpoint that some things are more important than others and priority should always be given to the most important things, then perhaps the proposals can be a bit less alarming.

Second, there is currently a shortage of ELF-based teaching materials, including dictionaries and other reference materials. It is hoped that a wider range of teaching materials, such as Walker (2010), will be developed in the near future.

Finally, many teachers may feel it is hard to implement assessment in the absence of a fixed target. Perhaps the most important aspect here is that assessment of speaking should focus on the things that matter, such as voiced fricatives, the distinction between /n/ and /l/, the length of vowels, and the placement of nuclear stress, rather than the less important features. And, when assessing the speech of their students, teachers should always consider how intelligible the speakers might be in an international context, rather than how close they are to some native-speaker target.

In the foreseeable future, it seems probable that most English teaching in China will continue to be based on Inner-Circle norms, partly because of the huge resources that have already been invested in native-speaker materials. Nevertheless, it is hoped that, at the very least, consideration of the ELF-based proposals can allow teachers to reflect on their teaching, to re-evaluate their priorities, and thereby become better teachers. And maybe, one day, widespread adoption of ELF-based teaching will become a reality in China.

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Appendix

The North Wind and the Sun Passage (IPA, 1999: 39):

The North Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger when a traveler came along wrapped in a warm cloak. They agreed that the one who first succeeded in making the traveler take his cloak off should be considered stronger than the other. Then the North Wind blew as hard as he could, but the more he blew the more closely did the traveler fold his cloak around him; and at last the North Wind gave up the attempt. Then the Sun shone out warmly, and immediately the traveler took off his cloak. And so the North Wind was obliged to confess that the Sun was the stronger of the two.

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