

## **English in the Expanding Circle – A third diaspora?**

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**ABSTRACT:** In looking at the spread of English to the rest of the world, two diasporas have currently been discussed in World Englishes literature. The first diaspora of English is found in countries such as Britain, the United States and Australia, where English is the native language. This is due to the early migration and settlement of native speakers of English into these countries, later regarded as homelands to these peoples. The second diaspora of English is found in countries such as India and parts of Africa, countries which were historically colonised at one time or the other by Britain. And although there may be local languages spoken in these countries, English continues to assume an important position because of its ties with the coloniser. Within Kachru's conception of the three circles of English speakers in the world, the Inner Circle constitutes the first diaspora while the Outer Circle forms the second diaspora. This paper puts forward the view that the third and Expanding Circle should not be considered in the same light as the Outer Circle due to the absence of colonisation in its historical background. It is further argued that non-colonisation holds the key to understanding the attitudes of speakers in this Circle towards a nativised variety of English in general and the potential establishment of a nativised pedagogical model for teaching and learning.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In writing about the attitude of speakers in the Expanding Circle towards ELF (English as Lingua Franca), Seidlhofer & Jenkins (2003) deplore the fact that despite the groundbreaking work done in ELF in the Outer Circle, such work has not impacted the Expanding Circle in a similar way:

In most Outer Circle contexts, of course, the long and vigorous struggle for the acknowledgement of their very own socio-political identities has been largely successful ... The naïve notion of a monolithic, uniform, unadaptable linguistic medium owned by its original speakers and forever linked to their rule(s) has been recognised as simply contrary to the facts ... Outer Circle linguistic independence has, on the whole, been given the linguistic seal of approval. In the Expanding Circle, a totally different situation presents itself.

(Seidlhofer & Jenkins 2003:141)

This “totally different situation” experienced in the Expanding Circle has to do with the less fervent attitude towards research and interest in ELF shown by speakers of European Englishes and other English as a foreign language countries around the world

when compared with the vibrant debates and discussion clearly evident in the Outer Circle (Jenkins 2006). What is interesting here is not so much the indifferent and lukewarm response to ELF by speakers in this Circle but the comparison made of the response between the Expanding Circle and the Outer Circle speakers. I believe that this comparison reflects the recent and emerging focus on the Expanding Circle. It leads one to question the assumption gleaned from what has so far been written about World Englishes where the Outer and Expanding Circles appear to be lumped together as one and the same in terms of speakers, historical background and the migration of English in the first place. This assumption was recently commented on, albeit indirectly, by Jenkins (2006), when she lamented over the lack of vigour in ELF research in European English both in Europe and other so-called foreign Englishes countries. One of the reasons she offered for this lack of zeal for the variety is that English in many such countries did not arise as a result of colonisation. Although she did not expand upon this point, I believe that it is the *non-colonisation factor* that holds the key to understanding the attitudes of speakers in the Expanding Circle towards ELF and ELF pedagogy.

In connection with this non-colonisation factor, this paper looks at the issue of English in the Expanding Circle from a less explored historical viewpoint. Primarily, it seeks to put forward the argument that, contrary to popular assumption, the dispersal of English to the Expanding Circle may be quite distinct from that for the Inner and Outer Circles. And as such, while the expressed attitudes of its speakers towards a nativised variety of English such as the ELF may seem to be outwardly similar with those in the Outer Circle, their reasons behind such attitudes may be quite different. With this purpose in mind, the paper sets out to argue for the existence of a third diaspora for English in the Expanding Circle. It then proceeds to show how knowledge of this diaspora can help towards understanding the expressed attitudes of the Expanding Circle speakers towards the ELF variety and how it could have impacted their response to a nativised pedagogical model for teaching and learning.

## 2. DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

While a number of terms have been used to refer to the variety of English spoken worldwide in Non-Native English speaking (NNEs) countries, I will use the term ELF in this paper to refer to the English spoken by NNE speakers in the Expanding Circle. This term is considered to best express the variety under discussion in this case – one that promotes a sense of community, seeks to reduce the differences between English speakers globally and encourages the thinking that “mixing of languages is acceptable” (Jenkins 2000:11). Furthermore, ELF projects the kind of pedagogical model that is addressed in this paper, a variety that represents the main purpose for learning English today among speakers for whom English is not a native language, particularly within the Expanding Circle. Gika (1996) best encapsulates such a pedagogy as the teaching and learning of

English “to help people communicate easily, talk to each other without linguistics and even cultural barriers, understand each other better ... to bring people closer” (p.15).

### 3. THE THIRD DIASPORA OF ENGLISH AND THE NNE ATTITUDE TOWARD ELF

To appreciate how non-colonisation may be an influencing factor, a historical account of the way in which English was historically dispersed around the world is examined. Kachru’s (1992) first discussion of the spread of English can be conceptualised within three circles (Fig. 1): the Inner Circle of English as native language (ENL) speakers (e.g., Britain, USA, Australia, New Zealand), the Outer Circle of English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers (e.g., India, Singapore, parts of Africa) and the Expanding Circle of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speakers (e.g., China, Japan, Thailand). He went further to describe each circle of speakers and claims that English language standards are traditionally determined by the ENL or “norm providing” (p.356) speakers. As these are native speakers, they are traditionally looked at as providers of the correct norms of the English language. The ESL or “norm developing” speakers in the Outer Circle have English quite well established in their countries due to years of exposure to the language of their coloniser. Thus, it is not surprising that they have developed affective ties to the English language and even after gaining independence, they seek to develop their own standards of the language. The EFL or “norm dependent” varieties in the Expanding Circle are regarded as “performance” varieties without official status and are therefore dependent on standards set by ENL speakers in the Inner Circle. Many of the countries in this Circle have not been colonised by Britain or a native English speaking country, at least not to the extent of those in the Outer Circle such as India, Singapore or Malaysia. Moreover, many countries in the Expanding Circle do have English as a foreign language within their borders.

And it is this Circle that currently holds the world’s interest in studies on World Englishes. This is not surprising, considering that this Circle is the fastest growing in terms of number of speakers, compared with that of the Inner and Outer Circles. There are currently more non-native English speakers (henceforth NNEs) in the Expanding Circle than the Inner and Outer Circles put together, as shown in Fig. 1.

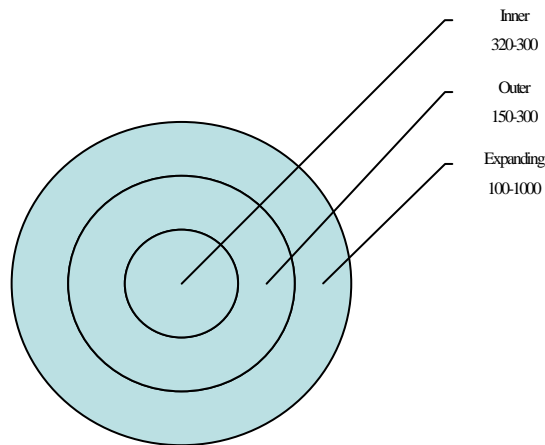


Fig. 1: The three circles of English according to Kachru (1985) with estimates of speaker numbers in millions according to Crystal (1997).

Indeed, it is believed that by the twenty-first century, English speakers in this Circle will outnumber those found in both the Inner and Outer Circles. Moreover, it is predicted that the particular variety of English used by these speakers, which Jenkins (2000) calls English as Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF), will expand in function from NNEs inter communication to using it for intra communication (Graddol, 2006; Crystal, 1997, 2003). The dramatic increase in the number of ELF speakers, together with the expanding use of ELF both internationally and nationally have generated a lot of interest in English in the Expanding Circle. Certainly, there have been active research and discussion particularly in areas such as speaker attitudes towards ELF and the idea of a unified ELF pedagogical model (Jenkins & Seidlhofer, 2001; Jenkins, 2000, 2003, 2006; Seidlhofer 2001, 2004, 2006; McKay, 2003; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006).

Kachru's three concentric circles have been discussed together with the two main dispersals or diasporas of English to the rest of the world historically in Jenkins (2003). English was first spread to the world at large through two main dispersal means or diasporas. Diaspora 1 was the migration of native speakers of English into countries such as America and Australia. These settlers brought their families over to the new countries, set up communities and became permanent residents on these lands. This resulted in the mother tongue varieties of English, namely, American English and Australian English.

Diaspora 2 is the spread of English into countries colonised by Great Britain, such as those in parts of Asia and Africa. People in these countries have their own local languages but were ruled by the native speakers of English for a considerable period of time. The need for communication between the governed locals and the colonial government led to code mixing of English and the local languages. English has, however, retained its status as the superior language because it was the language of administration and learning

institutions. It is largely from this Diaspora that led to the emergence of “New Englishes” evident in many countries around the world today, particularly in ex-colonised countries where there is the added struggle for ownership of a language once considered to belong exclusively to their colonisers, countries such as India, Singapore and parts of Africa.

If one could build a corresponding link between the two diasporas of English to the three concentric circles of speakers, it is also quite clear that Diaspora 1 would correspond to the Inner Circle. This circle consists of the mother tongue speakers in the ENL countries of Britain, Australia and the USA, traditionally regarded as the models for the English language. Diaspora 2 would correspond to the Outer Circle speakers, people who have been colonised by ENL speakers at one time or other in their history. As a result of the colonial rule, English assumes a significant position in such countries, and although it may not be the native language of the local people, it has nevertheless become a very important second language used for both inter- and intranational communication. Moreover, English in most of these countries has been institutionalised and plays important functional and affective roles in education and other domains of everyday life.

What is less clear, however, is the Expanding Circle. The tendency has been to think about the Expanding Circle in terms of Diaspora 2 together with the Outer Circle. As such, terms like “ownership” of English and “linguistic imperialism” which appear to be of primary concern in the Outer Circle countries also assumes primacy in the Expanding Circle. The belief is that because the struggle for ownership of English and the fight against linguistic imperialism is very much the concern in the Outer Circle, so the same concern could be said to be true for the Expanding Circle. This is so even when many of the countries considered or listed under this Circle may never have been colonised by Britain or any other native English speaking country in the way those in the Outer Circle were.

This paper argues that a third Diaspora should be considered, one that is linked to the conception of the Expanding Circle, and that the manner of dispersal of English to this Circle may be quite distinct from that experienced by countries in Diasporas 1 and 2. First, the spread of English to this Circle of countries has a more recent history compared to those in Diasporas 1 and 2. Here, English was not transplanted through speaker migration, either as the early movement of British settlers into new lands such as the United States and Australia or through colonisation of countries in parts of Asia and Africa in the early colonial period. Rather, it is spread by individuals in an existing speech community acquiring it as an additional language for international or intranational communication, a phenomenon Brutt-Griffler (2002:115) calls *macroacquisition*. Individuals acquire English in order to share their own cultures with others, for the promotion of international trade and tourism and for economic development as well as for access to technology. Because these are countries without a sustained colonial history with a native English speaking coloniser, they have a strong historical sense of their own cultural and national identity. It is this confidence about who they are nationally and culturally that negates the fear of

assimilation of a set of external cultural norms through the learning of another language. Indeed, according to Seidlhofer (2001), ELF speakers in the Expanding Circle may not be particularly concerned with *linguistic imperialism* nor, if I may add, with the whole idea of *ownership of English* which seems to be the preoccupation of speakers in the Outer Circle.

Contrary to Seidlhofer's (2001:141) argument that ELF speakers "are not primarily concerned with emulating the way native speakers use their mother tongue within their own communities", I believe that native speaker competence is something prized in the Expanding Circle communities. Listed among the main requirements for appointment as English language instructors and teachers in China, Japan and Korea, for example, is that the applicant should be a native speaker of English. The idea behind learning English, therefore, may not be to assimilate the native speaker culture nor to own the language in any such sense, but to simply master it as a tool for communication, to attain "linguistic power" (McKay 2006:117), where influence of the standard language from the Inner Circle still has considerable currency, particularly as the gateway to international business, technological and scientific knowledge.

From the above discussion, it appears that an appreciation of the particular way in which English was first spread to the countries in the Expanding Circle may be a significant factor in understanding why ELF speakers in the Expanding Circle may not have attitudinal issues with a native-speaker variety of English when compared to that experienced by speakers in the Outer Circle (Seidlhofer & Jenkins 2003). More or less free from the negative experiences of colonisation and being rooted strongly in their respective national and cultural identities, these speakers are interested in striving for native-like competence in using the language in the sense mentioned by Johnson (2005) and Pennycook (1994) in the next section of this paper. In addition to its impact on the Expanding Circle, speaker's attitude towards an ELF variety, the particular manner of dispersal of English to this Circle of countries may also be a significant contribution in any discussion of a nativised ELF model for teaching and learning for its speakers.

#### 4. THE THIRD DIASPORA AND THE ELF PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

In support of Gika's (1996) embodiment of the current thinking behind an ELF pedagogical model mentioned in the beginning of this paper, Jenkins (2000) believes that an ELF pedagogical model should place emphasis on (i) intelligibility and communication between non-native speakers, (ii) promoting a sense of togetherness, (iii) stressing commonality rather than differences between people and (iv) the implication that "mixing of languages is acceptable" (p.11). Indeed, with the introduction of the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) (Jenkins 2000) for the teaching and learning of English phonology, Willis & Jenkins' (1999) rationalisation of the six-option approach to an EIL lexicogrammar and Seidlhofer's (2004) Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) for ELF

speakers among others, it appears that a legitimate ELF model for teaching and learning purposes could be possible not too far off in the future.

In reality, however, the situation appears to be more complex than anticipated. Interwoven with the current search for more approaches to an ELF model and research on the subject are conflicting comments and expressions of reservations made by various writers with regards to ELF as a variety of English to be taught and learnt in school. Graddol (2006), for example, in his review of ELF, noted that in terms of teaching and learning English, it is “probably the most radical and controversial approach to emerge in recent years” (p.87) and may therefore not be widely adapted in many parts of the world, and I might add, particularly within the Expanding Circle speakers. Kirkpatrick (2002), for example, claims with considerable bafflement that a nativised model has not been accepted in all Expanding Circle countries. It is my argument that language attitude plays an important role in the acceptance of any nativised pedagogical model. Considering the diaspora of English in these countries, and without the baggage of colonisation, these people may be less interested in “owning” English than in looking for the “correct” (and therefore native-speaker) model for teaching and learning. Thus, when it comes to pedagogy, a standard variety of English (British and/or General American) will be the only one to be embraced, largely because it is codified, influential and has with it historical authority. It helps learners to “get on” in the world in terms of knowledge, expertise and communication. In her writings on present-day English learning, McKay (2006) asserts that what drives people to learning English today is not to learn English because of an intrinsic interest in the language or its speakers, but because of the desire to access scientific and technological information, international organisations, global economic trade and higher education. Considering that school English is largely learnt for such purposes, it is not difficult to understand why bringing in an ELF variety into the teaching and learning arena may not be an attractive idea.

The instrumental motivation to learn English may also question the assumption made by writers of ELF that an EIL/ELF curriculum that promotes international cross-cultural understanding will be considered a welcome move by learners (McKay 2003, 2006; Phillipson 1992; Leung 2005; Bolton 2005). This instrumental motivation refers to a keener interest among Expanding Circle speakers in English as a global language rather than an international language. The distinction between the terms “global” and “international” here is best put forward by Halliday in the following way:

International English has expanded by becoming World Englishes, evolving so as to adapt to the meanings of other cultures. Global English has expanded – has become “global” – by taking over, or being taken over by, the new information technology, which means everything from email and the internet to mass media advertising, news reporting and all the other forms of political and commercial propaganda. And the two seem not to have really mixed. Infotechnology seems still to be dominated

by the English of the inner circle; under pressure, of course, but not seriously challenged, perhaps because the pressures have no coherent pattern or direction.

(2004:416)

This important distinction should be noted as it compels us to entertain the possibility that there are many learners in many parts of the world who have no wish to adapt English to express meanings of their own cultures, nor are they expressly interested in finding out more about each other, their cultures or languages. According to Pennycook (1994), students in China, for example, very often have already fostered close ties and relationships with one another outside the classroom, and therefore do not need to learn about one another all over again within it. For such students, their learning agenda is quite different. They are in the classroom to learn a language to better their status socially, economically and intellectually. Thus, linguistic imperialism and hegemony or cultural appreciation may not be on their learning agenda. In many instances, students themselves express a desire to learn about native speaker's culture and values. Johnson (2005:2) in his study of non-native English speaking students in an adult language programme in a Midwestern American university found that the students themselves desire "cultural lessons" about the native speaker's values, beliefs and way of life. They believe that such knowledge could help them in their acquisition of the language and that intimate knowledge of native speaker culture could be a boost to "use English in real world and culturally imbued contexts." Clearly, there is no fear of native-speaker-cultural-assimilation, linguistic imperialism or even a desire to "own" English on the part of these students, due partly to an instrumental motivation for learning the language as discussed in McKay (2006). Also, and more significantly, many ELF speakers from the Expanding Circle have no lasting historical colonial ties with a native speaker English coloniser (Jenkins 2003; Seidlhofer 2001) and as such may not experience the kind of identity struggle experienced by speakers in the Outer Circle.

Even then, an interesting observation appears to be emerging within the Outer Circle, that with memories of colonialism waning, even ESL speakers are today less concerned with linguistic imperialism and "ownership". Bisong (1995) cites an example where, even in Nigeria, more and more parents prefer to have their children educated in international schools by native speaker teachers not because they wish to assimilate the native-speaker culture, but because of the economic benefits of knowing English. Parents are generally quite secure in the belief that their children's mother tongue will not be threatened. The same can be said for English speakers in Singapore where the material and economic rewards of the language are the main motivators for parents wanting their children educated in "good" English schools (Chew 1999).

Furthermore, the third diaspora of English serves to add to and strengthen the positive impact of a standard variety on traditional school language pedagogy. Questions about the possible negative cultural and social implications of the native-speaker standard



variety may not affect speakers in the Expanding Circle as much compared to those in the Outer Circle. In this regard, there is less concern about struggling with cultural identity due to learning a standard variety. Rather the objective in learning a language is to seek a variety that is most suited for education purpose, the language of academia, literature and exchange of information and more recently one that can act as an effective tool for technological and economic advancement. In short, what is being sought after is a standard variety, one that can help a NNEs function like a native speaker globally. For all these reasons, the standard variety and its mutual and reciprocal relationship with language learning in the school is a powerful factor that an ELF model will have to contend with. And if one could define what a standard language is, perhaps the closest that comes to mind is Hughes & Trudgill's (1979) definition of it as a dialect of educated speakers of the language used in writing, for teaching in schools and universities and also that heard over the radio and television. It is also the variety that ESL/ELF learners are taught in formal instruction (Trudgill & Hannah 1994). Strevens (1985) calls standard English the grammar of the educated. From these definitions arises the consensual agreement among NNEs individuals that a standard language is an educated variety predominantly taught in formal institutions. Within the Expanding Circle, the standard variety (either British or American) is without question the "correct" model for school pedagogy or any other learning purposes.

In addition, the whole concept of standard language ties in very well with the school learning culture within the Expanding Circle that is not very different from the universal school culture painted by Tomlinson (1988) as one that treasures conservatism, convergence and control, generally ignores diversity and discovery and promotes transmission of knowledge and values. Indeed, such a school culture is conveyed by McArthur (2004) in his vivid recall of language learning in his days as a schoolboy:

I was not taught the grammar of my everyday vernacular, but an idealized grammar for writing in an English I would need if I hoped to become a competent upwardly mobile British citizen. (p.18)

McArthur's experiences encapsulate the learning of English within a formal school setting in ENL, ESL and EFL situations alike. School-based pedagogy, according to him, has never been about diversity in language use but homogeneity in terms of grammar and academic skills. Certainly, one of the goals of school learning, and this includes language learning, is academic excellence expressed in terms of grammar knowledge and skills acquisition (Van Lier 1997; Doughty 1998). Widdowson (1998) argues that schools are more concerned with language learning rather than language using. Knowledge about language forms has always been emphasised over language function. From the school's viewpoint, language is a system of linguistic forms and classroom learners can profit from the direct and explicit instruction of these forms (Richards & Rodgers 1986). Given this

knowledge about the school linguistic code, and the impression one gathers from current readings on ELF as a variety which concerns itself more with language use rather than with language learning, it may be difficult for schools to take on board an ELF curriculum as it currently stands. According to Tomlinson (2006), because schools have quite clear objectives when it comes to learning English in the school, unless an ELF model aligns itself to the overall goals of language education in the school, it will not garner much support from the school for teaching and learning purposes.

It follows therefore that schools will recognise the language variety that fulfils all the four criteria of standardisation: selection, codification, elaboration of functions and acceptance. Based on the research literature, it appears that while the ELF variety may not meet with too much resistance with the first three criteria, it becomes problematic when taken within the fourth criterion, which unfortunately is also considered the most important of all the criteria put together. Non-acceptance may come from native speakers who feel threatened that their language has been repackaged, so to speak (Strevens 1992; Braine 1999). More important, however, is the general indifferent and even belligerent attitude towards ELF from the non-native speakers themselves. More importantly, for the Expanding Circle speaker, the question may not be so much about hostility or ambivalence but usefulness. S/he may not see the economic advantages of learning a nativised model, not if there is a standard variety available. And while there has been growing acceptance for nativised English observed in the amount of literature written in non-native varieties (e.g., Indian, African, Singaporean writings) (Leung 2005) these are not sufficient to make a global impact. In the manuscript submission guidelines for authors in many international journals, for example, contributors are required to write in either standard British or American English. It is well understood that if an article is written in a nativised variety of English, it will probably need to undergo considerable revision in terms of vocabulary and grammar for it to be accepted for publication.

The reality, according to Tomlinson (2006) is that very few learners may be willing to learn a nativised variety. Moreover, teachers may not be willing to teach anything other than the standard language as is shown in Jenkins' (2005, 2006) study of teacher attitudes towards the LFC (Lingua Franca Core). They regard it as incorrect pronunciation when compared to native speaker accents. She concludes that "it cannot be taken for granted that teachers (let alone speakers) from the Expanding Circle wish unequivocally to use their accented English to express their L1 identity or membership in an international community" (p.541). Similarly, Sand (2005) in her study on the usage of the definite and indefinite English articles across varieties of World Englishes, concludes that the question is not whether such usage could be standardised and codified as a model for ELF pedagogy but whether it will be accepted by institutions and ELF speakers themselves. She believes that nativised English may not lend itself to any kind of standardization as long as it is being stigmatised as being non-standard. It makes sense then that learners will not want to invest time, effort and money to learn a nativised language if it is considered a

stigmatised variety by the rest of the world. Both these studies reflect an important point where Expanding Circle speakers are concerned, that there is no desire on their part to express their L1 identity through English, this they can proudly do in their own language. So if this be the case, they do not see any good reason why they should not learn the standard native-speaker variety of English and to be able to use English like an L1 speaker with the wider English speaking world.

The current picture, with regards to the advocacy of ELF pedagogy for the Expanding Circle particularly is quite unclear. One impression gathered from writings on EIL/ELF is the urgent call for some sort of unified ELF model to be put in place for pedagogical purposes (Jenkins 2000; Jenkins & Seidlhofer, 2001; Leung 2005; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006). More recently, however, there appears to be a subtle change on this standpoint. In Seidlhofer's (2006) recent article on *English as Lingua Franca: What it isn't*, for example, she argues that research work on LFC and VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) is purely to describe how ELF is used by speakers in the Expanding Circle to perform specific tasks in specific situations and not to "pre-empt any local pedagogic decisions" (2006:45) or to put in place a set-prescribed rules to be applied pedagogically. Yet, in an earlier article (Seidlhofer 2001), a call was made for codification in ELF as a prerequisite for acceptance, a codification used in the sense found in Bamgbose (1998) which equates it to standardising the rules of usage similar to codified norms derived from an exonormative standard. I believe that these conflicting viewpoints highlight not only the ambiguous position of the Expanding Circle when it comes to discussion about ELF and pedagogical models but also the lack of well-documented studies focusing on ELF within this particular circle of speakers. Perhaps, a clearer picture will emerge if a distinction could be made between the Outer and Expanding Circles in terms of how English was spread into each Circle in the first place.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper brings to light a key consideration that could offer valuable insights into the issue of ELF both as a variety and pedagogical model in the Expanding Circle. It argues for a third diaspora of English for the Expanding Circle, a manner of dispersal that is quite different from the way English was spread to countries in the Inner and Outer Circles. The paper proceeds to demonstrate how the third diaspora can help provide further understanding into the expressed attitudes of people in this Circle towards ELF as documented in current literature. In addition, this third diaspora serves to further impact the potential implementation of an ELF pedagogical model for the purposes of teaching and learning in the Expanding Circle. The intention of this paper is not to add confusion to current debates about English and language attitudes in the Expanding Circle, but to

provide a critical appreciation of the issue from yet another perspective where terms like “ownership” and “linguistic imperialism” may not take centre stage in the learning and use of English in the Expanding Circle.

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