

LIA International Conference 2010

Sanur Beach Hotel & Resort, Bali, Indonesia

April 28 – 30, 2010



Abstract for Plenary Session

Globalisation and World Englishes: What are the benefits of non native teachers in teaching English as a Foreign Language?

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Many international educators and scholars from different backgrounds have long-established concerns about the current status of English as a global language, with the birth and development of "World Englishes" implying that English no longer belongs to its native speakers. It is difficult to say which variety of English should be considered "standard" due to the diverse variations of the language, with its inner circle of 309–400 million users, and outer circle of up to 1,400 million.

Such a context sheds new light on the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of native English speaking teachers (NEST) and non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST). Current discussions seem to describe NNESTs as being competent teachers of English, good models of successful learners and empathetic teachers, irrespective of their possible linguistic deficits in vocabulary, oral fluency and pronunciation. However, it seems that the main discussions are led by NESTs, mainly based on a comparative foundation, and focus on group membership (NEST vs. NNEST) and which group is intrinsically superior, rather than on pedagogical or linguistic competence. An explicit aim may be to convince readers and learners that NNESTs are 'competent enough' to teach English as well as NESTs. There has been little suggestion that NNESTs may be the best performers in their own cultural context, or that they are perfectly capable of consistent and effective teaching with the help of multi-media and advanced technology. In my report, I will focus on perceptions of the roles of NNESTs, and consider how NNESTs can employ their strong points in teaching and collaborate with NESTs to utilise the potential of both groups. I will argue that it is high time NNESTs became more professionally confident and involved in linguistic research and publication, and to have their voices heard as the majority force in TES/FL in the context of a globalised society which communicates through World Englishes.