

Juggling between the Exonormative and Endonormative Models of English: Developing a Model of Proficiency in English for the Indonesian Local Context

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Abstract

The position of the English language has essentially dominated various fields ranging from business, industry and commerce, banking, transportation, tourism, advertising, education, and others. In term of English language users, the non-L1 English speakers outnumber L1 of English speakers in many countries around the world. Thus, communication in English occurs among non-L1 English speakers. However, English language teaching, particularly in countries where English is regarded as a foreign language, still has a tendency helping to learn to be able to communicate with L1 English speakers. To this end, an exonormative model of English has become the norms. The aim of this study is to develop a model of 'Proficiency in English' which meets the needs of the English language users within the Indonesian context. This study employed an iterative design-based research approach that consists of four main stages i.e. 1) the analysis of practical problems, 2) the development of solutions, 3) the evaluation research of the solutions in practice, and 4) the reflection to produce design principles and enhance solution implementation (Amiel & Reeves, 2008). This article describes the results of the first stage of the study which reveals that the teachers of English employed their endonormative model of English to their students in the process of teaching English despite their desired goal for attaining the exonormative model of English

Keywords: Exonormative model of English, Endonormative model of English, English language teaching, Proficiency in English.

Introduction

English has become a prevalent language in various fields ranging from business, industry and commerce, banking, transportation, tourism, advertising, education, and others. As it is popularly used in economic and cultural areas such as the language of international organizations, of the motion picture industry and popular music, of international travel, of publications, and of education (McKay 2002, 2010, 2012; Crystal 1997; Graddol 1997), it has gained an international function that leads to the status as an International language (Marlina, 2014). This condition affects many countries to actively use English and even adopt it as an official language or requiring their people to study it as a second and foreign language (Crystal 1997; McKay 2002).

Based on the spread of English, its acquisition patterns and the role of the English language, Kachru (1986) categorized the countries around the world into three circles which he calls the concentric circles. The first one is the Inner circle countries where the exonormative models of English are used as a national language. The Outer circle countries which are known as the former British and American colonies. In these countries, English is used as an additional institutionalized language along with the other official local languages. In the Outer circle countries, the endonormative models of English become the norms. The third one is the Expanding circle countries where English does not have an official status and it regarded or studied as a foreign language. Therefore, the exonormative models of English are adopted as the norms of reference.

However, Kachru's concentric circles have been challenged due to the current changing role and status of English in some expanding circles countries. The mass mobility of the people across the three circle countries and even they settle permanently in the countries make the today English users speak other languages than English. These people develop and use English in plurilingual context with fluent English and other languages (Crystal 1997; McKay 2012; McKay and Bokhorst-Heng 2008; Graddol 1999). In addition, McKay (2003, p.11) has predicted that 'the number of individuals who have some familiarity with the language today is vast and growing'.

As a result, it is common to find the English language users who are bilingual or multilingual nowadays and the famous 'native speaker' has become the minority (Bloch and Starks 1999; Graddol 1999; Jenkins 2009; McKay 2003). Due to the changing role and status of English in many countries, the non-native speakers of English in Outer and Expanding circle countries have developed the pluralistic forms of English as these speakers project their cultural identities by using English. Thus, the variations of English have emerged and developed within the three circle countries.

In term of English proficiency, there is a common traditional assumption that to be proficient in English, the English language learners and its users have to attain native speaker-like proficiency. Thus, the model of exonormative English as the point of references such as British English and American English has dominated, particularly in the Expanding circle countries. However, this model has become unrealistic in multilingual contexts because the communications happen not only between the native speakers of English but also among the non-native speakers of English. This leads to constructing the meaning of English proficiency as Canagarajah (2013, p.9) suggests that 'Proficiency in the world of postmodern globalization requires the ability to negotiate this variability'.

As proficiency in the English language has become a complex construct, English language teaching in the Indonesian context, is still regarded as the ideal model of proficiency in the near native-like. The exonormative model of English [in this context of the study, it refers to either British or American English] has become the only norms to be taught and learned. The 'Western paradigm of English language teaching' (Wang & Hill, 2011) has dominated the practices of the teachers of English in Indonesia Unfortunately, this 'goal' of learning English is unattainable for the English language learners of Indonesian.

Despite the sociolinguistic realities, the English proficiency in Indonesian is still being measured against the exonormative model of English based on the assumption that the English users would use English to communicate with the native speakers of English who employ exonormative English. (e.g. Brown, 2004; Jenkins, 2006b). This condition should be shifted so that English language educators and learners could have guidance regarding what is meant to be proficient in English in this 21st century.

The aim of this study is to develop a model of 'Proficiency in English' which meets the needs of the English language learners and users within the Indonesian context. As this study has four stages and it is still on its ongoing process, this article only reports the results of the first stage of the study i.e. the analysis of the practical problems.

Method

A design-based research approach was employed for designing this model of 'Proficiency in English'. It is adopted as this research methodology is suitable for the local educational context. It is in accordance with Plomp (2007, p.12) suggests that the purpose of this kind of design is to design/develop an intervention (such as programs, teaching-learning strategies, and materials, products and systems) with the aim to solve a complex educational problem and to advance our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes to design and develop them. In addition, Wang and Hannafin (2005, p.6-7) describe that design-based research (henceforth DBR) is 'a systematic, but flexible methodology aimed to improve educational practices through iterative analysis, design, development, and implementation, based on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings, and leading to contextually-sensitive design principles and theories'. Thus, this design is applicable for educational practices such as English language teaching because it creates an environment for collaboration among a team of researchers and language educators.

There are four main stages in the process of this study as seen in Figure 1. They are 1) the analysis of practical problems, 2) the development of solutions, 3) the evaluation research of the solutions in practice, and 4) the reflection to produce design principles and enhance solution implementation (Amiel & Reeves, 2008). Within these stages, it is seen that the nature of DBR is dynamic and flexible research process.

DBR comprises cyclical and iterative process (Wang & Hannafin, 2005) so that the model of 'Proficiency in English' could be refined to meet with the Indonesian local needs. To this end, the development of the model of 'Proficiency in English' will undergo a series of testing and refinement cycles. Data is collected systematically in order to re-define the problems, possible solutions, and the principles of the model that might best address them. As data are re-examined and reflected upon, new designs are created and implemented, producing a continuous cycle of design-reflection-design. This

means that the problems, solutions, methods and the designed principles are continuously refined, tested and developed as the knowledge enhanced (Amiel and Reeves, 2008, p.35).

The participants of this study are a cohort of teachers of English who serve at senior high schools around West Sumatra Province, Indonesia and the researchers who are the English language educators at a tertiary level. The teachers of English were interviewed and their practices in the classrooms were observed in order to provide the qualitative data regarding their personal constructs of 'Proficiency in English' and the attributes for this construct. The qualitative data were analyzed inductively. This article is only focusing on reporting the results of the qualitative data analysis in the first stage of the study that revealed the practical problems faced by English language teaching and learning in Indonesia. These results could inform the second stage of the study which is focusing on the development of the solutions of the problems.

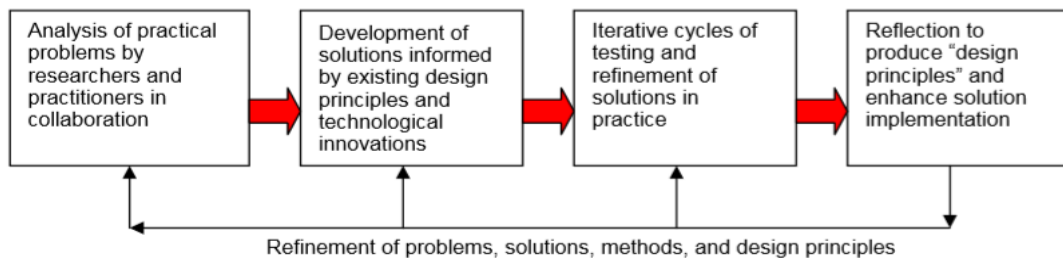


Figure 1: Design-based research, based on Amiel and Reeves (2008)

Results and Discussion

Based on the analysis of the qualitative data which were obtained through observations, it was found that the teacher of English employed the endonormative model of English. From the observational data, these teachers made several marked phonological, morphological and syntactic variations when they were speaking in English to their student in the classrooms. The model of their endonormative English is described as follow:

1. Phonological variation

The diphthongs in English such as; [ei], [ou], [ai], [au], [uw], [ow], were pronounced as a single vowel. The examples can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: Variations in diphthongs sound.

The English Words	The phonetic transcription of the local teachers' pronunciations	The American/ British English phonetic transcription
Told	tɔld	toʊld
Explain	æks'plan	ɪk'spleɪn
Take	tæk	teɪk
Ok	ɒ'kæ	oʊ'keɪ

Other variation of sound was found in the Palatals fricatives are pronounced as alveolar fricatives or stops, e.g.: [ʃ] > [s], [θ] > [t], [ð] > [d]. Neither Indonesian nor Minangkabau (the local language) have the fricatives /sh/ and /th/. The example can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: Variations in Fricatives sound.

The English Words	The phonetic transcription of the local teachers' pronunciations	The American/ British English phonetic transcription
Sections	seksən	seksjənz
Three	tri	θri:
they	deɪ	ðeɪ
Question	kewsən	kwestʃən

2. Morphological variation

The morphological rules in their spoken English did not change the verbs form into *the present, past* and *future*. This may be the cause that either Indonesian or Minangkabau language does not recognize the changes of the tenses/time on the verb but rather only giving the indications of time as seen in the following data:

(D.9) Why you are not come yesterday?

S P Comp

(D.21) Collect your homework that Miss give to you last week!

P Comp conj SP Comp

3. Syntactic variation

The syntactic variation appeared on the use of the verb as a predicate (P) and compliance with the subject (S) at the grammatical level. In the structure of the exonormative English sentence, it is always formed on the noun phrase (NP) which is acted as a subject and it is followed by a verb phrase (VP) as a predicate. The use of the form of the verb is always influenced by the subject (S). For example, when the subject in a single sentence, the verb form used is also in the singular form. On the other hand, when the subjects used are in the plural form, the verb must also be in the plural form as well. However, in Indonesian or *Minangkabau* language (the local language), the predicate used is not influential on the subject, because the verb does not recognize the singular or plural form. Thus, it is likely to affect the formation of a phrase used by those teachers. The examples can be seen as follow:

(D.84) *Rudi, you have to study hard*

(D.19) *My mom love me very much*

From the interviewed data, these local teachers revealed their personal constructs on 'Proficiency in English'. According to them, 'Proficiency in English' comprises the exonormative constructs. Within these teachers constructs, it was found their perceived ideas that in 'Proficiency in English' means having knowledge of the language and the ability to use it. The element of knowledge covers the exonormative model of English which refers to the English of the native speakers such as American or British English. Meanwhile, the ability element covers the performances which are adhered to the norms of Academic English that also refer to the exonormative model of English. In addition, they expected that being proficient means speaking like the native speakers of English.

The perceived ideas toward 'Proficiency in English' are still related to the so-called American and British English. This suggests that in the Indonesian context, the traditional monolingual view is still being reflected. The condition could be caused by the requirements such as in schools that have defined the English curriculum and then use the standardized test that measure the English language learners against the exonormative model of English. In addition, there are students who would pursue their academics at the tertiary level where only the standard form of English from the exonormative model is accepted.

Many local teachers of English in Indonesia are mostly familiar, trained and experienced the exonormative model of English either British or American one. In line with Kirkpatrick (2007) reports from the local Chinese English teachers that he observed; it was found that these teachers have no option than to teach the model they have learned. This may also happen in other expanding circle countries like Indonesia. From these teachers' educational background, they have been exposed to the norms of American or British English ranging from the prescribed syllabus, the textbooks and to other learning materials.

Despite recognizing that the use of the exonormative model of English is only in an academic context, there is also still an admiration and expectation to be able to speak English like the native speakers of English from the Inner circle countries. This is in accordance with Sifakis' (2005) study which reports the belief of the teachers of English toward the desired pronunciation on the exonormative model of English. The study by He and Zhang (2010) in China also reveal that native exonormative models were the most desirable in China's English classrooms at the tertiary level.

Conclusion

The results of the data analysis in the first stage of the study reveal the evidence that the local teachers of English employed their endonormative model of English to their students in the process of teaching English. However, their practices were contradicted to their reported personal constructs on 'Proficiency in English' which contained their desired goal for attaining the exonormative model of English. These conflicting realities put these teachers into a condition of 'juggling' between the two dilemmas. On the one hand, they have to teach and prepare their students to attain the exonormative model of English which is used for standardized examinations. On the other hand, they could not avoid the existence of their endonormative model of English which they use and exposure to their students themselves, particularly within the spoken forms. These analysis results could inform the development of a model of 'Proficiency in English' which meets the needs of the English language learners and users within the Indonesian context in the next stage of the study. Hopefully, there will be none of the 'juggling balls' are dropped by these local teachers of English and they could maintain their 'performance' well.

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