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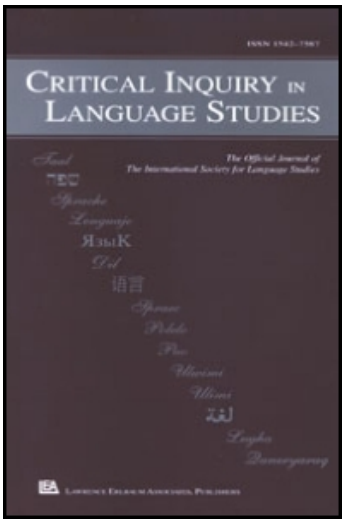

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The Vernacularization of English: Crossing Global Currents to Re-dress West-based TESOL

Vaidehi Ramanathan
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Based on a long-term, evolving exploration regarding English language teaching and learning in English-and vernacular-medium settings in Gujarat, India, this paper offers a discussion of two key points: 1) the degree to which English is vernacularized in multilingual postcolonial contexts, and 2) ways in which vernacular pedagogic practices are effective ways of learning and teaching English. The paper then moves into discussing the implications of such points for west-based TESOL—specifically teacher-education—which has historically viewed vernacular pedagogic practices in non-western contexts as not being 'effective' or 'communicative.' The paper concludes with a discussion of what I, as insider to both communities—a native to India and a partial practitioner of west-based TESOL teacher-education—am doing to build bridges between the two realms that have hitherto remained relatively separate.

> To neglect the past of India is to fail to utilize the deepest springs of Indian national life. The idea of Anglicizing over three hundred million people scattered in thousands of villages needs only to be stated to reveal its inherent impossibility. . .[English] is no longer taught in a kind of a vaccum without reference to the background of Indian thought and Indian experience. The mothertongue of the pupil is made, more than before, the medium of instruction. (Charles Andrews, *The Rennaissance in India: Its Missionary aspect*, 1912, pp. 38–33)

Given the ever-hastening globalization currents we find ourselves in, I wonder if it isn't time for those of us engaged in west-based TESOL to stop and think carefully about what we can learn and incorporate from non-western English language teaching and learning (ELTL) realities. As one who has been involved for the last 8 years on an exploration regarding English and vernacular language teaching in India—indeed the home community where I did my K-12, and a part of my graduate schooling—and as one who sees herself as a relative 'insider' to the applied linguistics/TESOL community here in the west—I am, in this paper, synthesizing what I have (naively) viewed as two separate strands of

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my researching, namely the sociopolitics of education in India and west-based teacher-education. In my recent teacher-education work (Ramanathan, 2002), I have suggested that all of us in west-based TESOL need to collectively find ways of building in a heightened meta-awareness about all issues related to inducting potential teachers into our disciplinary thought collectives: a critical awareness of the divergences, uncontainabilities and reproduced social practices around genres, pedagogic materials, and teacher-education programs and have done so with the explicit aim of rethinking and re-dressing some entrenched 'givens" in the field (Luke, 1988, 2003; Lin 2003, Lin & Martin, 2005; Morgan, 2003; Morgan & Ramanathan, 2002). When TESOL's dominantly western ideologies are interpreted in light of some local, grounded realities in non-western, postcolonial contexts—where English has long since been vernacularized and decolonized—the need for re-visioning west-based TESOL's onward march seems all the more imperative. I begin, then, with a brief explanation of why such visioning is crucial before addressing how the English language gets presented, taught and practiced in very local, vernacular ways in Gujarati-medium settings. The second half of the paper connects these India-related points to critically examine their relevance for west-based TESOL teacher education, and offers a discussion of some ways in which we can go beyond paying lip service to non-western realities to effect change in how we think about ELTL. The globalizing cross currents connecting diverse landscapes now make it imperative that we do so.

Viewing West-based TESOL as open-ended and decodable

The notion that TESOL's various workings be read as 'texts'/signs whose meanings are multiple, open-ended, and fluid stems partially from the Barthesian view that texts are wrought by their cultural codes and conventions, that they reflect and embody particular ideologies, and that they are not enclosed units trapping meaning within. If we view all texts and their meanings as being plural, manufactured, and uncertain—inviting incessant unpeeling and questioning—then we can better envisage a space whereby we recognize that meaning is not inherent in the TESOL-related issues that have come down to us as 'givens' and defaults, but "acquire significance by being strung together and by being decoded in particular ways." (Cavallaro, 2001, p. 65). The overall meanings that we have collectively assembled in the profession—our insistence on "communicative competence," "appropriate methods and materials," "English-only" policies, to say nothing of viewing grammar-translation practices as being dated, defunct and irrelevant—are only some of the ways in which west-based TESOL has created a set of meanings that have become the status-quo, a naturalized state that tends to dictate the "way things should be." When viewed from the light of ELTL realities in postcolonial contexts, this status-quo begs uncovering and revision. While the meanings I make from my extended and ongoing work in India emerge from links that I—as both "native" and "researcher" in that scene—establish, and thus also need to be viewed as open-ended and fluid

(Luke 2003) as well, they throw into relief some tropes of west-based TESOL that invite serious reconsideration.

At the risk of grossly simplifying my ongoing endeavours in India: in some of my research devoted to this work (Ramanathan, 2003, 2005a, 2005b) I show how the splintered, hybrid English that exists on the postcolonial Indian ground is entrenched at the base of a class-based divide (with ancillary ones of gender and caste as well), with issues of inequality, subordination and unequal value seeming to revolve directly around its general positioning with vernacular languages. The issue of English—having access to it, being fluent in it, "moving up" in the world because of it—playing a divisive role on postcolonial grounds is only just being articulated. The growing surge toward English and all things western hides pockets of deep ambivalence and contradictions and it is these concerns and ways in which they play themselves out across social stratifications that I am most concerned with. This general institutionalization of what I have called the "English-vernacular divide" (addressed in detail in Ramanathan, 2005 and summarized here) seems to a large extent, "rule governed," with "rules"—such as language policies and institutional constraints and orientations, among other things—delineating the scope and direction of individual and institutional action. The efforts of individual teachers and institutions to mitigate against the English-vernacular gulf are crucial in this regard because they partially indicate that these teachers have not only taken note of the strings that manipulate their and their students' movements, but take additional steps to actively resist the tugs while still participating in the performance. This delicate dance of participation and quasi-opposition shows up in a range of settings, including ways in which both EM and VM teachers draw on vernacular resources in their teaching, in their attempts at breaking down alien, western concepts into local, accessible terms, in struggling to have Indian writing in English represented in syllabi, in resisting becoming overly pro-English despite the surge towards it, and in hiring faculty who can teach English in the vernacular.

My present discussion on the vernacularization of English needs to be understood against this complex backdrop. Toward illustrating some ways in which English is completely localized, I offer a discussion of two key points: 1) degrees of vernacularization in content/readings of some K-12 English language textbooks used in Gujarati-medium classrooms, and 2) ways in which vernacular pedagogic practices—especially choral recitation and two-way translation methods—are presented as effective ways of ELTL. Both these issues—local content and pedagogic practices—are intended to not only make us collectively rethink how localized English is in multilingual contexts (thereby questioning the "pure," "unsullied" "native-speaking" status it has so long occupied in the west), but to question what passes for "effective" and "appropriate" learning and teaching in west-based TESOL. Incorporating these vernacular realities in the west is the first step in 're-dressing' west-based TESOL.

Vernacularizing English by drawing on local contexts for content: issues in readings

The extent to which the vernacular is amalgamated into readings in English language learning and teaching (ELTL) textbooks used in Gujarati-medium settings is extensive and is partially illustrated in instructions provided in Gujarati that direct students to draw on texts written in English. The following text based on a segment in an English language textbook used in the 6th grade is an example:

Figure 1. Local-Vernacular content in English language textbooks used in Gujarati-medium classes.

Text on "A visit to the fair"	Instructions in Gujarati
Who are they? They are Iqbal and Anis. It is their stall. That is a bangle stall. Who are those girls? They are Renu and Minu. It is their stall. There are many women and girls near the stall. Look at that giant wheel. There is a long queue near the wheel. There is also a merry-go-round near the giant wheel. There is a mini-train on the ground. There are many children on the train Look at those children on the elephant's back. Their parents are there, too. The men, women and children are happy. Purani, Nityanandanan, & Patel (1998, p. 54-55)	*Niche mela nu chitra aapyu cche. "There is" ane "there are" no upayog kari paanch vaakyo banaavo ane varg samaksh bolo* (After consulting the page with the picture of the fair, come up with 5 sentences in which you use "There is' and "There are." Udaharan (Example): There is a merry go round in the fair. *Niche aapela chitro juuo. Chitra ni niche aapel shabdo no upayog kari themnu varnan varg samaksh karo.* Kala, stall, table, gas stove, bowl, idlis, fresh, hot (Look at the pictures below. Use the listed vocabulary items in sentences of your own)

While some of the reading above is in English, instructions for activities based on it are in Gujarati. Also evident are degrees of vernacularization in the use of local images: characters called Iqbal, Renu and Minu, references to an elephant at the fair, a bangle stall, and fresh, hot idlis. Another segment—this time a piece of simulated conversation between friends, one of whom lives in a village and the other in a city—captures local colour as well.

Figure 2. Local-Vernacular content in English language textbooks used in Gujarati-medium classes.

<table>
<tr><th>Text</th><th>Activities</th></tr>
<tr><td>Amit: when do you watch TV?
Rukmini: We watch it on Sunday
Amit: And where do you go for a walk?
You do not have a park.
Yamini: But, you know Amit, we can go for a walk in the fields. I like the fresh air in the fields.
Amit: Well, let's go out this evening
Yamini: O.K. We will take you to the Mahadev temple.
Amit: Right. See you in the evening.
Yamini: O.K. Bye!

Purani, Nityanandanam, & Vansia 1999, pp. 150–151</td><td>Haveh paat man ma vaacho ane the-maathi surat vishaynaa vaakyo thaarvo. Tyaar baad paat varg samksh motethi vaancho (Read this conversation through quietly to yourselves, think about sentences by which you can describe your town/village; then read this conversation out aloud).
A Vibhaagmana prashno na jawaab B maathi shodhine lakno (match the questions in A with responses in B):
<table>
<tr><th>A</th><th>B</th></tr>
<tr><td>1. Who rides the scooter?
2. When do you play cricket?
3. Where do you live?
4. Where does your brother work?
5. How many chappatis do you eat?</td><td>1. I eat 6 chappatis.
2. He works in a factory.
3. I play in the evening.
4. I live in Patan
5. I play in the park</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

While the characterizations of village and city life in the above piece are static and inert, the references to local ways of living—of walking in fields instead of parks, of going to the village Shiva (Mahadev in the text) temple instead of watching TV—embed the English in this text to (what the authors of the textbook perceive as) lived, everyday realities. The activities, instructions of which are given in Gujarati, (comparing village and city living, working in pairs to formulate questions and answers, matching questions and their responses) also draw on local images (eating chapattis, playing cricket, and riding scooters).

Vernacularizing English through pedagogic practices: Choral responses and two-way translations in textbooks and classrooms

Elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2004, 2005) I have addressed how choral recitations in classrooms are partially justified by their use in non-academic learning and teaching practices, such as those used in Hindu temples. Responding chor-

ally at key junctures in *Kathas* (discourse events where a Hindu priest narrativises myths and at specific points elicits particular choral responses from the audience) is a common religious practice (one that I remember occasionally participating in myself as a child) and is sometimes used in Gujarati-medium classrooms, with the teachers' prosodic cues educing particular responses (Naregal, 2001). However, what is interesting is that choral recitation isn't just a practice "borrowed" from non-schooling arenas, but one that is partially formalized as a teaching practice in Gujarati-medium English language textbooks. The following excerpts partially illustrate this point:

Figure 3. Vernacularizing pedagogic practices: recitation/choral responses.

Tamaara shikshak boleh the pramaane nicheh na shabdo thatha shabdajuth bolo: (Say aloud the following words the way your teacher says them):		
I am	he is	yes
You are	she is	no
Be-be jodi banavi tamaara potana vishay ane tamaara jodidar vishay nichena udaharan pramaane vaakya bolo (In pairs, say these out aloud after the teacher has first said them; be sure to follow the example): *Udaharan* (Example)*: I am Ali, You are Radha*		
Jadeja, Srinivas, and Vansia, 1999, pp. 8–9		

The instructions above explicitly state that students should repeat/recite these words after the teacher. When I showed pages such as the previous to some of the VM teachers I have been extensively engaged with, many of them said that such instructions in Gujarati encourage teachers to engage in choral recitations whenever relevant. Certainly, my extensive observations of tertiary-level Gujarati-medium classes allowed me to see how teachers teaching a variety of different disciplines (Statistics, Geography, Psychology, English) prosodically cue their students to respond to particular questions in choral ways. As several of the teachers pointed out to me, choral responses allow students to participate without the apprehension of being judged.

Two-way translations

Another relatively common practice in both EM and VM language classrooms, but more so in VM classes is the use of two-way translations (Naregal, 2001), a practice whereby student-performance and comprehension is partially gauged by having students engage in reverse translations in a variety of contexts: to explain instructions, to provide overall meanings of a piece of reading, to translating passages from texts (in both Gujarati and English) in exams, to encouraging student-responses in one language when the teacher has asked a question in another and vice-versa. In VM settings and in classrooms where EM teachers teach VM students, both teachers and students float seamlessly between languages, a practice that, like choral recitation, is formally codified in text-

books. The following excerpts (Figures 4 and 5) from the standard 10 English textbook (used in the Gujarati-medium) illustrate their frequent use as pedagogic tools. Both segments are drawn from the same textbook; in the first, the student is asked to translate from English into Gujarati, in the second from Gujarati into English. (Examples such as this occur throughout the textbook.)

Figure 4. Use of translations in ELT.

Translate the following into Gujarati:

1.When we reached the station, the train had arrived.

2. Come to my house before you go to school.

3. I asked the blind man where he wanted to go.

4. The principal told the chief guest how the World Environment Day was celebrated in school.

5. The woman continued to talk with the robbers until the police came.

(From: English, Standard 10, Kotak, Purani, & Dave, 1993, p. 95)

Most of the VM students and teachers I have observed, interviewed, followed and have had discussions with emphasize the value of two-way translations. As one teacher in the VM college put it:

> If I have them translate what I have said or what they read back into Gujarati, then I know they have understood. This helps a lot. I do think that if they understand what they are reading, they are less likely to simply parrot all the stuff. (FI, 15:2)

Two-way translations serve other purposes as well: by integrating Gujarati completely into English language teaching, teachers are not only drawing on resources students bring with them to class—thus validating their home identities and discourses—but also proactively working to reduce the pressure that students sometimes feel to engage in extensive memorizing.

Figure 5. Two-way translations .

Translate the following into English:

1. hun ek manas ne olkhu cho, je paanch bhasha jaane cheh.
2. pela table par padelu (lying) motu pustak gyankhosh cheh.
3. senkhdo ma banelu enchar ghanu sundar hoy cheh.
4. aaje savaare tame shu karta hata?
5. hun pariksha ne taiyaari karto hato.

(From Kotak, Joshi & Purani, 1993, p. 100)

What does such research mean for West-based TESOL?

Needless to say, this and other such explorations (Lin, 2001; Sahni, 2001; Stein, 2001) open up ways in which we can rethink aspects of west-based TESOL and while the ‘meanings’ of my points previous are only one set of pos-

sible meanings, they do challenge some of the very 'givens' in the field, including those relating to "effective" teaching, and developing 'communicative' pedagogical tools and practices. Indeed, extensive translation methods and choral recitations of the kind described previously have been precisely the kinds of learning practices that west-based TESOL has generally regarded as promoting 'rote learning," and as not developing communicative fluency. So a question I now turn to is: What relevance do such explorations have for west-based TESOL? What is the cross over between these divergent realities?

The kind of self-reflexive turn that the my points hinge on—where we as relative 'insiders' to different realms—myself as an insider to some communities in India and as an insider to parts of west-based TESOL teacher-education—is motivated by an ongoing understanding that we need, as much as possible, to have the tropes of our "divergent" realities inform each other. Variously positioned as we each are in the numerous pockets of our thought collectives (Ramanathan, 2002), we have to constantly pull back and critically reflect on and question the very grooves of our participation, including the meanings we collectively make of our TESOL-related texts/signs. Gaining meta-awareness about what is involved in the knowledge production (and consumption) of our disciplinary thought collectives is critical for all of us, but it is especially important for teachers and potential teachers because it allows us to see that our knowledges determine, in part, the social realities we inhabit by contributing to our sense of social order; to our creating, reproducing, and privileging some forms over others; and to our making sense of what is "natural" and "commonplace" in our discipline. These "taken-for-granted" ideologies, around a host of TESOL-related signs—individual teaching-education programs, genres, and pedagogic materials such as textbooks—get laminated in different ways when understood in the light of ELTL teaching explorations in non-western worlds (Sahni, 2001), and it is crucial that west-based TESOL engage in discussing such laminations since doing so will keep from embedding versions of "commonsensical" attitudes about ("effective", "communicative") language teaching and learning from settling into the disciplinary river-bed. The following points address some ways in which we can begin to address realms of cross-overs between the two realms:

1. How local cognitions of TESOLers—in both west-based TESOL and nonwestern TESOL are shaped by what is immediately available to and around them.

An extended exploration carried out by Mary Schleppegrell, Catherine Davies and myself of two different MA-TESOL programs in different parts of the United States (2001) showed us that these programs highlight different teaching skills, constrained and influenced as these programs are by local institutional and communal demands and needs. Enrolled TESOLers have their local cognitions shaped by what is available in their immediate environment, cognitions that are quite different from another set of potential TESOLers enrolled in another TESOL teacher-education program in a different part of the

country or world (Ramanathan, 2002). We realized that the two programs—housed as they are in different departments, one being in English, the other in Linguistics—have little option but to assume the ideological underpinnings of their larger departments: L2 teachers from the English department gain most of their practical experience teaching composition/writing skills to ESL students, whereas those in Linguistics gain more experience teaching listening and speaking skills. The potential TESOLers, thus, have their "knowledges"—cognitions, skills and expertise—shaped by what is immediately available to them.

Taken to international planes—especially postcolonial, non-Anglo-phone contexts where English has become vernacularized, adapting as it is to local languages, customs, pedagogic tools, practices and constraints—the local cognitions of teachers in such contexts are just as shaped by what is available and around them, as west-based TESOLers are. In multilingual environments such as India where there are at least 18 official languages, drawing on and integrating local ways of speaking, thinking, behaving, responding, including using the mother-tongue partially occurs because the cognitions of teachers in this context are partially shaped by availabilities and constraints in *their* mileu. The following excerpt from a primary textbook used in teacher-education programs in Gujarat partially illustrates how completely integrated the mother-tongue is in all domains of language teaching (see Figure 6).

While there are undoubtedly degrees to which mother-tongue use is/is not integrated into the ELTL curriculum in Gujarat, the point I am trying to underscore is that it is very much a part of the larger language learning scene, both at levels of classroom practice and in teacher-education. Heightening awareness among (potential) west-based L2 teachers of such divergence will hopefully enable them to ask the next set of critical questions: What does the incorporation of such divergence in learning practices mean for the larger (international) TESOL discipline? In what ways do realities about English and vernacular language teaching in non-western, (postcolonial) communities impact ELTL in the west and what can west-based TESOLers do to address, incorporate and learn from such research? While scholars have long since debated issues around home/heritage languages (Hornberger, 2003; Ricento, 2000; Skuttnab-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995; Wiley & Wright, 2004), little of this research makes its way into average MA-TESOL programs in the west, and it seems imperative that we seriously do so.

Figure 6. Advocating the use of the mother-tongue in teacher-education textbooks.

*The teacher may use the mother-tongue to explain the peculiarity of certain sounds in English and to compare them with sounds in the mother tongue.

*He may use the mother-tongue to explain unfamiliar words when the explanation of those words in English is more difficult than the words themselves. E.g. abstract nouns, ideas, etc.

*He may use the mother-tongue to explain abstract words,

phrases, and idioms.

*He may explain some particular grammatical points of the English language in the mother-tongue to make those points easy for the pupils to learn. At times the teacher may compare and contrast the grammatical points in English and in the mother-tongue.

*He may use the mother-tongue to help pupils to collect ideas

and then to organize them when they prepare to write compositions.

*He may use the mother-tongue in the classroom to test pupils' comprehension.

*He may use the mother-tongue to help pupils to learn to use

the dictionary.

*He may use the mother-tongue when giving instructions to pupils.

(Raval & Nakum, 1996, pp. 103–104)

2. Alerting west-based TESOLers to how the very language they are going on to teach falls along the lines of serious social stratifications in non-western, post-colonial contexts: encouraging them to find ways of mitigating social divides.

By building in situated analyses of the ELTL in non-western contexts, west-based TESOLers are likely to see their own ELTL practices more clearly and are likely to have a clearer sense of those disciplinary practices that need reconceptualizing. In an article on tertiary-level writing in India (Ramanathan, 2003), I attempted to show how writing instruction in both English and vernacular tracks of education falls along class-based social stratifications with divergent literacy practices for each. My efforts at attempting to understand why vernacular-medium students struggle in English-medium colleges led me to examine some of the divergent writing instruction requirements and practices in K-12 settings. Called "Minimal levels of writing," these writing requirements

are mandated by the Gujarat State Board of Education, and are partially presented in the table below:

Figure 7. Divergent MLLS for Gujarati-and English-medium students.

	Excerpts from MLL from English textbooks used in the Gujarati-medium:	Excerpts from MLL from English textbooks used in the English-medium:
Grade 5	Writing: Gains control of the basic mechanics of writing in English like capital letters, small letters, punctuation, writing neatly on a line with proper spacing Transcribes words, phrases and sentences in English Writes cardinals upto fifty, telephone numbers, road signs Produces words and spells them correctly Writes numbers up to 50, telephone numbers, road signs	Reading and writing: Reading textual material and writing answers to questions based on and related to the text Reading and interpreting and offering comments on maps and charts Reading children's literature and talking about it Writing paragraphs on given topics Reading and writing simple recipes Reading and interpreting labels on wrappers
Grade 6	Reading: Reads aloud simple sentences, poems, dialogues and short passages with proper pauses Reads and follows given directions Reads numbers upto a hundred Writing: Writes with proper punctuation marks Writes words and sentences neatly on a line with proper spacing, punctuation marks, and capitalization Writes answers to questions based on text material Writes simple guided compositions in 4–5 sentences on people, objects, or places Translates words and sentences from English into Gujarati and Gujarati into English	Reading and writing: Reading textual material and writing answers to questions based on the text Reading and interpreting simple abbreviations Reading narrative prose and adventure stories and talking about them Writing/building stories based on given questions/points Reading and using the telephone directory Writing captions for given photographs, pictures, maps, charts, diagrams and graphs Writing messages for telegrams Reading and interpreting labels on bottles

Grade 7	Reading: Reads aloud simple sentences Finds key words and phrases from a text Writing: Writes words and sentences and paragraphs dictated with correct spellings, proper punctuation marks Learns to write words and sentences neatly on a line with proper spacing and punctuation Writes answers to questions based on the text Writes simple guided compositions Writes informal chits [notes]—thank-you notes and invitations From: Purani, Salat, Soni, & Joshi (for grades 5, 6 and 7 respectively) 1998, pp. 1–3.	Reading and writing: Reading textual material and writing answers based on the text Writing essays based on the text Reading literary stories and prose lessons Reading simple passages of reflective prose Reading and interpreting common instructions such as railway timetables Reading and interpreting maps, labels Reading short plays/passages/ writing summaries From: Purani, Nityanandan, & Patel, 1998, p. 2 (for grades 5, 6, 7 respectively)

Two noticeable writing-related differences shown previously are: 1) writing for vernacular-medium students is presented as a discrete skill and is addressed separately from reading, a feature that contrasts with writing and reading being presented as conjoined entities for EM students, and 2) that writing for EM students is essayist in orientation from early on: "writing paragraphs on given topics" vs. "gaining the basic mechanics of English writing. . .with proper spacing" (English and vernacular medium textbooks respectively, grade 5), or learning to write words and sentences neatly vs. writing essays based on the texts [vernacular vs. English-medium texts, respectively, grade 7). Making all TESOLers aware of how their profession falls along socially stratifying lines puts them in a better position to envisage their next steps: What can they do mitigate gulfs? To what extent are these gulfs tied to language policies (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004) and what can they, as teachers, do to side-step these policies and counter them both inside and outside classrooms?

3. *Building in a thick strain of "globalization and English" into average TESOL programs: Alerting (west-based) TESOLers to global and local discourses regarding ELTL.*

Recent debates on globalization have raised several nuanced arguments about what the role of English is in its surge (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2004). Block and Cameron's volume (2002), for instance, attempts to raise awareness of both local and global aspects around English language teaching, issues that

have direct relevance for west-based MA-TESOL programs. One key strain they isolate is the market-based one where languages tend to get viewed as economic commodities because of hastening technological cross currents across very different parts of the planet leading to a blurring of ethnic and national identities. However, they are careful to point out that this blurring of identities may perhaps apply only to 10 or 15% of the world's population who are able to "wander through a cultural supermarket, choosing. . ..the identities they perform in their social worlds" (Block & Cameron, 2002, p. 4). Local realities and stratifications still do exist and access to technology and English in very many parts of the world fall along socially stratifying lines (Ramanathan, 2005a). An excessive emphasis on globalization and English runs the risk of imposing a homogenizing blanket on languages (Cameron, 2002).

Both orientations—the market-based proclivities and the homogenizing dangers—around globalization and English ring true, and because each seems to be part of and in symbiotic relationship with the other, west-based TESOL needs to find ways of speaking of local and global concerns around English in integrated, non-polarized ways, while still respecting differences. Certainly much of my ongoing work with Gujarati-medium teachers reveals versions of these tensions, with many teachers voicing both anxieties and ambiguities about the general surge toward all things English ("*Angrezi Paagalpan*" that, among other things, has been propelled by the country's growing computer industry Ramanathan 2005a, 2005b), while recognizing its commercial value. The following quote by one Gujarati-medium teacher poignantly captures his confusion and fears:

> You see, we are now at a stage where we have become completely mad about English. Our children see it on cable TV, the programs are all American or British, our chief minister now wants to start English from grade 1—they have already started that in Delhi—there are English language classes all over the city. And the craze is seen more among VM students; you EM people are familiar with this from the beginning *(tum EM vaalo ko tho pehle se hi in sab baatho ke bare mein pehchaan hai)*. It is us Gujarati-medium people who have to now figure it out. You ask me what I feel about it; I would have to say I am confused. My son who was himself schooled in the Gujarati medium is now thinking of putting his child in an EM school. Somewhere deep down that is troubling me. What is wrong with our Gujarati-medium that he has to think about enrolling Amrish in English-medium schools? You tell me . . .(*Iske bare mein mujhe thoda dukh hain. Hamaare Gujarati-medium mein kya kharaabi hai, ki voh Amrish ko EM mein dale? Tum hi bataao mujhe…* And yet, almost all the tech-based jobs need English. (FI 19:5).

As I have pointed out elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2004), the numerous English-language classes mushrooming in Ahmedabad, the explicit specification in job ads that applicants need to be fluent English speakers, the recognition by

VM students that they run the risk of being left out of the country's growing computer industry can all be seen to bear out the previous teacher's views. There is, then, ambivalence and self-questioning on the part of (both EM and VM) teachers about the divisiveness between English and the vernacular languages on the one hand and a pull towards English on the other since the search and drive for English occurs simultaneously with a serious questioning and resistance of the same. Such complexities around English and local languages now needs to be part of west-based TESOL.

What am I doing about it?

Having made these ponderous statements about 'redressing" west-based TESOL, I turn now to briefly addressing the following crucial question: What am *I* doing to integrate non-western, postcolonial realities into the west-based MA-TESOL program I am a part of? There are at least the following realms that I am actively trying to create space for in all my teacher-education courses:

1. fronting issues of other languages (the OL in the acronym), especially those around home and heritage languages and ways in which they are contained, reproduced, and countered by prevailing language policies and ideologies, many of which are reified in pedagogic materials, institutional norms, and existing curricula;
2. incorporating situated readings regarding English, local languages and pedagogic practices in non-western parts of the world;
3. sensitizing teachers to discursive images around 'other languages": how pedagogic practices associated with them have been historically devalued, how these images stretch deep into local and global oppressions and subordinations, how 'ethical' choices/decisions teachers make in the classroom vis-à-vis their students and with their curricular materials need to emerge from a historicized awareness their present positionings.
4. encouraging teachers to be sensitive and open-eared to voices of ambiguity and conflict about (west-based) English, to explore and create spaces where by their students can speak easily about tensions they may feel between their home languages and English.
5. building in thick strains of uncertainty regarding the 'meanings' of most things in the discipline; actively creating contexts where student-teachers begin to recognize the constructed nature of all "meaning-making" they engage in.

All realms of current west-based TESOL—teacher-observations, teaching skills, methods and materials, assessment and placement, second language acquisition, research methods—invite readings and interpretations that run counter to sedimentizing strains so that these domains are not presented or assumed to be established 'standards,'/univeralist models, but ones that are have to be understood as shifting, localized domains (Bhatt, 2005; Toohey &

Waterstone, 2003) that take very different forms in diverse contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). And it isn't just the discipline and its numerous signs that invite such reading; it is also that because each of us participants in TESOL—western and non-western—is a 'text,' manufactured, created, and put together by the very signs and symbols we study/research/utilize, we each need to be self-critical and questioning of how our participation constructs the discipline. So questions for all of us to wrestle with, then, are: how are each of us in our different TESOL realities being constructed by the discipline and how are we constructing it in turn? Raising such questions helps us view all TESOL 'texts,' including ourselves, as fissured and split. Posing everything we 'know' in the discipline as questions instead of stated givens and viewing all and everything in the discipline as incomplete opens up the possibility of not only having the discipline reflect the larger uneven, uncertain world (Radhakrishnan, 2003), but of also reconstituting some of the discursive images around west-based English/TESOL so as to make room for the speakers of OL who are appropriating it as their additional code.

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