

When English Learners Speak “Non-Standard” English

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Abstract : In the past, when we complimented someone who had a good command of English, we would say ‘She/He speaks/writes standard English,’ or ‘His/Her English is standard.’ However, with English has becoming a ‘global language,’ many scholars and English users even create a plural form for English as ‘world Englishes,’ which indicates that national/racial varieties of English not only exist, but also are accepted to a certain degree. Now, a question will be raised when it comes to English teaching and learning: ‘What variety/varieties of English should be taught?’ This presentation will first explore Braj Kachru’s well-known categorization of the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle of English users, as well as inner circle varieties such as ‘Ebonics’ and ‘cockney’. The presentation then will discuss the purposes and contexts of English learning, and apply different approaches to different purposes and contexts. Three major purposes of English teaching/learning will be emphasized and considered: (1) communicative competence, (2) academic competence, and (3) intercultural competence. This presentation will complete with the strategies of ‘code switch’ and ‘register switch’ in teaching English to non-standard English speakers in both speaking and writing.

Keywords : world Englishes, standard and non-standard English, inner, outer, expanded circle communicative, academic, intercultural competence

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