Metaphors the English language lives by

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A discussion of the centrality of imagery in the promotion and
use of English worldwide

Metaphor is traditionally considered a "figure of speech", describing one thing by stating another with which it can be compared, as discussed by rhetoricians and grammarians, from Aristotle in his *Poetics and Rhetoric* to I. A. Richards in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936) and Kenneth Burke in *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), a growing number of recent linguists have been trying to establish metaphor at a cognitive, conceptual level (such as Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 1994).

They hold that metaphor is a central tool of our cognitive apparatus and therefore "the study or pursuit of metaphor is a means of questioning the assumptions, descriptions and definitions of a literalistic and constricting outlook on reality" (Gwyn, 1999: 219). Lakoff and Johnson (1980:5), for example, define metaphor as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another". Since the beginning of 1980s, metaphors in various areas have been explored as a product and/or process of cognition: in treating illness (Sontag, 1991), in psychology (Soyland, 1994), in physics (Jones, 1983), in teacher training (Bullough, 1991; Grant, 1992), and in language policy-making (Eggington, 1997), to name just a few.

Scholars have come to an understanding that metaphors have a crucial role to play in both education in general (e.g. Taylor, 1984) and English language teaching (ELT) in particular (e.g. Thornbury, 1991; Cameron and Low, 1999; Littlemore, 2001). They believe that "one particular possibility for future research [in applied linguistics] is to explore whether and how patterns of thought may be changed through deliberate changes in metaphor use"

(Cameron & Low, 1999: xiii). Metaphors can, as it were, be bridges as well as barriers. Indeed, some writers have discovered that some metaphors of language, teacher and learner are so 'degenerate' that they affect our teaching and learning practice:

> …if the metaphor of *language as a commodity* is an obsolete one, its metaphorical corollary—that teaching language is *the conveyance of commodities* from teacher to learner—persists (despite attempts to identify a communicative metaphor, for example Nattinger 1984); this must be equally degenerate, especially in its implication that learners are receptors or consumers, hence intrinsically passive (Thornbury, 1999: 196).

As a result, new metaphors are needed, if the situation is to be improved. As Lakoff and Johnson say, "new metaphors have the power to create a new reality" (1980:145). Or "language makes reality", as Robin Tolmach Lakoff tells us (2000:20). This is where this paper takes its

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initial inspiration. I will explore the notion that societies in which the English language plays different roles during different historical periods of time hold different sets of common metaphors for the language and changes in English language metaphors, as a result of the "growth" or "spreading" of the language, necessarily influence English learners' and users' attitudes toward the language and bear upon national English-teaching policy-making, both as a first and a second language. This is an important power behind the miraculous spread of English as a world lingua franca.

Language metaphors

Language is seldom "just words". Matters such as identity, status, class, goals and quality of life are never far way. This makes available to speakers and writers the two domains that a metaphor requires: a *topic domain* and a *vehicle domain*, or simply a *tenor* and a *vehicle,* as the literary critic I. A. Richards called it in 1936. Views from different vehicle domains result in different language metaphors. Some define language as an inanimate 'made' object that we use, like a knife or a pencil, resulting in the LANGUAGE IS A TOOL metaphor; some "think of language as an object, as helpless, as a victim, as something preyed upon, as having, at some point, a phase in which it is 'pure'," with a resulting LANGUAGE IS A WOMAN metaphor (Penelope, 1985:81). We speak of the "death" of minority languages because English "spreads" so quickly that it is coming to "dominate" or "invade" as a "killer language". Dwight Bolinger entitled one of his books *Language – The Loaded Weapon* (1980), and recently Robin Lakoff published *The Language War*. We "pick up" a foreign language while it is "chunked" or "segmented" in classroom. Language can also be "blocked" or "filtered"; it "fossilizes" or "transfers" or "mixes" sometimes. In linguists' eyes, LANGUAGE IS A GAME OF CHESS (Saussure, 1960: 110); LANGUAGE IS AN ORGAN (Chomsky, 1978: 205); LANGUAGE IS AN INSTINCT (Pinker, 1994: 18); LANGUAGE IS A RESOURCE (Halliday, 1978: 17); language also forms "families" and it has "branches". I can go on and on with this list, but one sentence will suffice here: clearly, most of the time language can be anything but language itself.

If we consider metaphors along the line taken by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1987), a study of these language metaphors helps to tell us something about human perceptions of language or languages on the one hand and reactions of these metaphors upon our social practice and human behavior on the other hand. For example, in many societies, if not in all, people have long had the pervasive notion that there is a connection between "correct" or "standard" language use with morality. This STANDARD LANGUAGE IS MORALITY metaphor has been so pervasive that it has been helping to shape our education system. Children of the upper classes began to be sent to "grammar school" to help them to be educated, to be moral members of the society. Ability to read and write was regarded as a defining characteristic of "civilizedness". Illiterates are still called *zhengyan xiazi*, "the seeing blind", in China. Dictionaries and grammars have been compiled to help us use "correct" language. This is why even in his first effort to compile the *English Pronouncing Dictionary* Daniel Jones took the accent of "the majority of educated Southern speakers" as the criterion. In 1933, Bloomfield (1933: 48) observed:

> Children who are born into homes of privilege, in the way of wealth, tradition, or education, become native speakers of what is popularly known as "good" English; the linguist prefers to give the non-committal name of Standard English. Less fortunate children become native speakers of "bad" or "vulgar" or, as the linguist prefer to call it, non-standard English.

The STANDARD LANGUAGE IS MORALITY metaphor is so deep-rooted in societies that moral people speak "standard" or "correct", hence, "good" language and "bad eggs" speak non-standard language or social/regional dialect becomes a standard practice for writers and filmmakers. Standard Chinese, *putonghua*, has been strongly promoted in China and film directors are criticized for allowing characters to speak regional dialects, but negative roles are always an exception. Arnet *et al.* (1994: 3) show that misconceptions about language enjoy "an unusual degree of consensus across social and geographic boundaries" and in some animated films

> …characters with strongly positive actions and motivations are overwhelmingly speakers of unmarked varieties of English. Conversely, characters with strong negative actions and motivations often speak varieties of English linked to specific geographic regions and marginal social groups. Perhaps even more importantly, the characters with unmarked or

"mainstream" accents have available an entire spectrum of possibilities; they may be heroes or villains, human or animal, attractive or unattractive. However, characters who speak any kind of non-mainstream language are relegated to more limited range of roles and experiences.

Scholars such as John Simon and Edwin Newman who claim English is dying believe that "abuse of language … leads … to a deterioration of moral values and standards and standards of living" (Simon, 1980: 59) and that "language … does not belong to the illiterate or bodies of people forming tendentious and propagandistic interest groups, determined to use it for what they (usually mistakenly) believe to be their advantage (ibid: 24)".

If we think of some uses or changes in our language as "abusive", it is a virtue to defend the language from its "abusers". Penelope (1985: 80) puts it this way:

> Our descriptions of language both define and limit the ways in which we perceive uses of language. If we believe that there are "abuses" of language, it is possible to define other people as "enemies" of language, and ourselves as "protectors" of language. Having adopted such a metaphorical approach to language, it is but a small step to elevating our own views and seeing our selves as noble, courageous, and involved in a battle against evil people who seeks only the degeneration of "our" language. The result is war, and what might have been reasoned argument degenerates into a test of verbal brutality.

So your accent and grammar tell who you are and even what your personality is. Robin Lakoff (2000: 172–173) interestingly shows us that Bill Clinton, the former US President, "is, generally, *soft*", "in many ways more traditionally 'feminine'", because

> he is intuitive, he "feels your pain", he is warm and caring, he worries about his weight….All too often he exercises the famous female prerogative of changing his mind. He needs discipline: he eats junk food, he pursues trailer trash…. He *speaks in a southern accent, which Americans often associate with a feminine speaking (and thinking) style* [italics mine].

Hillary Clinton, the former First Lady, on the other hand, "is *hard*", sharing "many traits with the stereotypical male", because

> She is direct and precise…. She plans (or schemes), she is carefully controlled and seeks to control her environment. She is often

perceived as cold or even icy…. Her clothes tend to conceal and cover, to shield her and define her boundaries precisely. Her hair, too, is a bit helmetlike…. *She has no discernable regional accent* [italics mine].

It is been argued that women tend to use (over-)correct grammar (Labov, 1972; Cameron and Coates, 1988), and Lakoff herself (1975) agrees with this argument. Here, however, she attributes "no discernable regional accent" to "traits with the stereotypical male". Maybe, as what she does in her 1975 book, this claim about the First Lady is "based solely on her own intuitions" (Freeman, 1996: 233). Anyway, it can be seen here that the accents of the Clintons tell Lakoff more than they are supposed to do. Or "words mirror the speaker", to adapt a Chinese saying.

English-language metaphors

Throughout history, there are different sets of commonly accepted metaphors dealing with the English language. These metaphors are so pervasive that they influence many socio-cultural constructs such as teacher and student attitude toward the language and, hence, language planning making. As English grows and spreads, new metaphors are created. These metaphors, in return, influence English learners and users. Eggington (1997) groups the English language metaphors in "three broad historic categories": foundation metaphors (5th–17th centuries), expansion metaphors (17th–mid-20th centuries) and contemporary metaphors (mid-20th century–) and he shows how some of these metaphors influence language-planning policies in English-speaking countries. In the remainder of this paper, I will focus on the STANDARD ENGLISH IS MORALITY (SEIM) metaphor, which appears in Eggington's list, and another two that are becoming more and more important for native as well as non-native speakers both as individuals and groups, namely ENGLISH IS LANGUAGE OF POWER (EILP), and ENGLISH IS AN ASSET/A RESOURCE (EIA/R).

The SEIM metaphor and Standard English

We have seen that SEIM metaphor played an important role in forming the British education system. If we accept SEIM metaphor, we accept, probably unconsciously, the INCORRECT/NON-STANDARD ENGLISH IS IMMORALITY/

LAZY metaphor. Linguistically, both Britain and the United States were and are no democracy. Eggington (1997: 32) finds that

> For example, Received Pronunciation (RP) is generally regarded as the international prestige (or pompous) variety of English; French is the language of romance; non-native English speakers can understand English only if English speakers engage them in loud, stilted, reduced English (foreigner talk), and foreigners with certain accents cannot be trusted, or are lazy, or unintelligent.

Simon (1980: 111) puts it, eloquently, the following way:

> Bad grammar is rather like bad manners; someone picking his nose at a party will still be recognized as a minimal human being and not a literal four-footed pig; but there are cases where the minimal is not enough.

Such remarks might sound a bit radical as English is becoming a world language and native speakers are losing "the exclusive prerogative to control its standardization" (Kachru, 1985: 29). The SEIM metaphor and its reverse form, however, did play their crucial role in forming and maintaining what we call "Standard English" and they are doubtless one of the most important strengths in preserving national standards of the language and their speakers' identities. McArthur (1997:6) has discovered the metaphor that "since its beginnings Standard English has unarguably been 'up' in social and educational terms." As regards the origin of the term "Standard English", McArthur (1997: 13–14) says,

> This term [standard] as it applies to language is not very old. It is the present-day version of a medieval Latin-cum-French-cum-English word which at first referred to such things as flags and weights and measures and later, in the 18th century, to language. The phrase *standard English* (with or without an initial capital s) dates from the Industrial Revolution (c.1830), when "good" language began to be compared to such things as the regularized gauges of railway tracks, yardsticks, industrial and scientific units, and the like, as in *standard gauge, standard yard*, and *standard atmosphere*.

The Oxford English Dictionary suggests that *Standard English* appeared in print first in 1836 in a review by an anonymous writer. The term, however, "did not become common until the early 20th century" (McArthur, 1997:14). It should be noted here that Standard English had long existed before the term *Standard English* became common. During the several hundred years before the establishment of the term, various terms were employed. What is common to all those terms is that they are all associated with morality or the social elite. There was no Standard English in the Middle English period (1100–1500), but a number of "equal" dialects were spoken by lower social classes while the Anglo-Norman aristocracy spoke French. There is evidence earlier in the sixteenth century in books on spelling and grammar that "diversity" in the language worried writers and scholars as to which variety to choose. Freeborn (1992: 134) notes:

> The implication of this point of view are, however, more serious, because it is not limited simply to specifying a choice of language for writers:
> ● Varieties of the language are marked by social class and education. Social classes speak differently and can be recognised by their speech. Written and spoken English have *prestige varieties*.
> ● Once a written standard language becomes the norm for speech in the educated class, the division between that class and regional dialect speakers is complete.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the educated language of London was established as the written norm in England. There is even "little evidence of contemporary regional dialect in Shakespeare's plays" (Freeborn; 1992: 137). The eighteenth century belonged to language "defenders", such as Jonathan Swift, who tried to bring to the language a state of perfection. The dominant class spoke *the* English language, the *refined, polite, elegant, noble, tasteful*, and *pure* language, while the common people such as shopkeepers spoke *vulgar, barbarous, contemptible, low, degenerate, mean*, and *depraved* language. It was believed that this difference mirrored equal differences in intellect and in virtue or morality. Social and regional dialects were viewed as inferior varieties and the status of their speakers devalued as deficient. Freeborn (1992: 192) shows how a series of petitions to Parliament were dismissed on the ground of *vulgarity of language*: "If the language of the 'labouring classes' was by definition inferior, incapable of expressing coherent thought, and also of dubious moral value, then it was impossible for them to use language properly in order to argue their own case."

The SEIM metaphor continued into the nineteenth century. "It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman despise him," George Bernard Shaw wrote in 1913 in his preface to *Pygmalion*. He made it clear that the reason for despising someone was based on class rather than region or even characteristics. Daniel Jones first connected his "Public School English" and "Received Pronunciation" with the "educated", and then he saw a connection between standards of speech and standards of conduct. In 1937, he declared: "you cannot produce a uniform high standard of social life in a community without producing a uniform high standard of speech" (quoted by Bailey, 1992:7). Henry Wyld, an important historian of English and lexicographer, was a proponent of a single, received variety of English, and he says:

> As regards its name, it may be called Good English, Well-bred English, Upper-class English, and it is sometimes, too vaguely, referred to as Standard English. For reasons which will soon appear, it is proposed here to call it Received Standard English (Wyld, 1936: 2).

Wyld suggests that "this [Received Standard English] is the best kind of English, not only because it is spoken by those very often properly called 'best people'", but because, as he tries to prove on the grounds of sonority and distinctness, it is "intrinsically superior to very other type of English speech" (Wyld, 1934, reprinted in Crowley, 1991: 211).

The twentieth century was a century of change for English-speaking countries. On the one hand, there were major changes in Britain on economic and social levels and, on the other hand, America became an important world power, economically, militarily and linguistically. The SEIM metaphor, though not as strong as before, persisted. In a 1985 article, Whitcut (162) observed,

> The British are extremely conscious of accent and dialect, and tend to judge a whole personality by speech alone, not distinguishing what is individual from what is regional.

In 1988, Andersen (237) wrote, "though class accents may not be quite as strong or as fixed as they were when Bernard Shaw wrote his play, class still counts in Britain today." Freeborn (1992: 191) noted that although the differences between Standard English and regional dialects are viewed as linguistically unimportant, "we cannot, in everyday life, ignore the social connotations of regional and non-standard speech, which are still powerful in conveying and maintaining attitudes." Basil Bernstein, a controversial sociologist, shows (1972) there are serious consequences for the children of lower working class when they come to school because *elaborated code* is the medium of instruction in schooling while they are born to use *restricted code*.

Class-consciousness is weaker in America, but "Americans have been slow to give up their traditional Puritanism in matters linguistic" (Hill, 1986: 36). Fred Newton Scott, a contemporary of Jones and Wyld, used his position as president of the National Council of Teachers of English to promote tolerance for speech variety at the beginning of the twentieth century, but evidence shows the until 1970s the impact was still slight (Bailey, 1992: 15). William Labov (1972) has shown us just how detailed the language pecking-order can be. Americans are still committed to the principle of "correctness", as derived from the speech and writing of the educated upper classes. Until recently, Black English was interpreted as deficient and it was believed the black children were deficient in language ability and hence in cognitive ability. Some educators even tried to find ways to help them to be bilingual in the late 1960s (Wardhaugh, 1986: 327). In a 2001 article, Birch (2001: 535) wonders why grammar standards in American seem firmly rooted in the past while Americans expect constant innovation in fashion, technology and media. She complains that "changes in the way that people speak are generally viewed as problems or errors, or as being signs of degeneration and immorality, symptoms of a diseased society, and threats to cultural icons and our English-speaking identity" (ibid, 537).

The social and educational consequences of the SEIM metaphor have continued to the present day in English-speaking countries and in countries where English is used as a second or foreign language. Birch (2001) says that many people in America believe there is one "proper" English out there that other people speak, but that they themselves do not; according to a survey conducted in an American university, many students believe that they speak and write English poorly. This is what Gere (1985) calls the general public's *alienation* from the language. Gere believes this situation can lead to dangerous results, such as what Hitler did to

German people before and during the Second World War. In American colleges, many language arts teachers are ill-trained in Standard English and the students are not motivated in learning it. Those who have succeeded in acquiring Standard English often have negative attitudes toward those who haven't and some of them believe that "people who use double negatives, mistaken auxiliaries, or object pronouns for subject position are less intelligent life-forms than those who don't" (Birch: 2001: 539).

Standardization of English allows people from different places to communicate with one another, but Standard English tends to refuse changes and people often have the idea that earlier versions of English were somehow purer and better than the present colloquial speech we hear in the street. Just as Swift thought the century from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign in 1558 to the Civil Wars in 1642 was a Golden Age in English (Freeborn, 1992: 185), so the 'English Mafia', to use Gere's term, think there has been continual corruption in the English heard in the street. English employed in textbooks and dictionaries is Standard English, not the general public's English. The usage panel of the *American Heritage Dictionary* provides guidance to users about questionable words in the dictionary, but the panel has tended to consist only of prominent writers such as Isaac Asimov and language arbiters such as Theodore Bernstein; professionals in language study submit their usage lists to "the more powerful people in society": linguists, business executives, attorneys and employers (Gere, 1992: 74).

On an international scale, Received Pronunciation (RP) is still the norm used in English teaching in countries like China. The problem is that this accent is "used natively by only 3–5% per cent of the population of England", and "students arriving in England for the first time may have difficulty – sometimes a great deal of difficulty – understanding the other 95–97% per cent of the population" (Trudgill and Hannah, 1994: 9). Daniel Jones insisted on RP in the *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, perhaps the only pronunciation guide before Longman produced its pronunciation dictionary for learners of English as a second or foreign language, for more than half a century, although English has never ceased to change. Editors of the fifteenth edition of the dictionary think that "the time has come to abandon the archaic name *Received Pronunciation*" in favor of *BBC English*, which has long been a synonym of RP. The model presented in the dictionary "is the pronunciation of professional speakers employed by the BBC newsreaders and announcers on BBC1 and BBC2 television, the World Service and BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4, as well as many commercial broadcasting organizations such as ITN." (Roach and Hartman, 1991: v). Gere (1985: 74) is absolutely right when saying "where language is concerned, then, public opinion, the responses of men and women representing all areas of our society, has not been given attention." As long as the STANDARD ENGLISH IS MORALITY or PRESTIGE metaphor remains unchanged, this will be the case.

The EILP Metaphor

English is now an international language. It is the main language of books, newspapers, science and technology, TV programs, films, advertising, sports, diplomacy, international trade and academic conferences. This makes English the language of power. Just like the SEIM metaphor, the EILP metaphor is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, non-native English speakers communicate with one another in English easily since it is the most widely used language in the world and, most importantly, only by means of English can non-English-speaking countries gain access to new technologies in the English-dominated world of science. Ninety-five percent of the 925,000 scientific articles published in thousands of major periodicals in 1997 were written in English, according to Eugene Garfield, founder of the Science Citation Index, known as SCI, which tracks science publications (Bollag, 2000). Proficiency in English, therefore, has become crucial both for national economic development and for individual career. Burchfield (1985: 160), the editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, describes the importance of English as follows:

English has also become a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person is in a very real sense deprived if he does not know English. Poverty, famine, and disease are instantly recognized as the cruelest and least excusable forms of deprivation. Linguistic deprivation is a less easily noticed condition, but one nevertheless of great significance.

This is why the Danish Minister of Education

declared that English has become Denmark's "second mother tongue" (Phillipson, 1992: 9) and why Japan may yet make English its "second public language" (Shi, 2000). On the other hand, the EILP metaphor excludes those who haven't acquired the language. English, therefore, has become a gatekeeper to social and economic progress and to access to many professional domains; it regulates the international flow of people and influences global relations (Pennycook, 1994: 13).

Burchfield says linguistic deprivation is less noticeable. As a matter of fact, the idea of English as power has been so overwhelming that English learners often ignore the other side of the sword: the spread of English is considered to be only beneficial and, hence, neutral or even natural. People believe that language and culture are interrelated and that one cannot learn a language without learning the related culture. To many people, however, English is an exception.

> [English] was originally the foreign (alien) ruler's language, but that drawback is often overshadowed by what it can do for its users. True, English is associated with a small and elite group; but it is in their role that the neutrality of a language becomes vital (Kachru, 1986: 9).

So, the "drawback" is out there, only "overshadowed" by its uses, and, therefore, invisible to many learners of English. Love is blind, as the saying goes. A clear manifestation of this blindness is that non-native speakers are trying to make the English language their own. Ridjanovic (1983:11) wonders, "If there is Pakistani English, why not have Yugoslav English?" Some believe the "form" of English can be borrowed and then they can fill it with their native "contents" (Kachru, 1990:14).

More and more scholars claim that English is now "an Asian language" (Lam, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2001). If it is so, to many English learners the so-called "Asian Englishes" will be equal with other Asian languages and it will, of course, be neutral and beneficial. But in what way is English an Asian language? Because "there is enough evidence to support… the argument that the Asianization of English shows a variety of shared features", as Kachru said in an interview (Lam, 2000:21)? However, "a variety of shared features" tells us nothing about the ownership of a language. English is a British language, an American language or an Australian language genetically; it

is an Indian language, a Singaporean language, or a Nigerian language historically, functionally and, most importantly, officially. It is the EILP metaphor that makes English an Asian language. English learners and English education policy-makers need to know there is a crucial difference between English as, say, a British or American language and English as an Asian language. Unfortunately, this difference is now and then invisible in their eyes because of English as power.

Another metaphor related to the EILP metaphor is ENGLISH IS THE LANGUAGE OF PRESTIGE in non-English-speaking countries: that is, English is "up", to use McArthur's metaphor, in these countries. This metaphor also contributes to the blindness to the use and spread of English as an international language. Wang (2001: 50) tells us that many people in China wonder why "proficiency in English is viewed as a criterion by which a person's taste and knowledge are valued." Studies of social information conveyed by English to Afrikaans show English is "a passport to higher education which carries implication of economic advantage and political power" (Lanham, 1985: 246); the English stereotype is "of a 'nice' person, whereas the Afrikaans stereotype could be of a 'strong' person." This nice/strong dichotomy is becoming universally true in non-English-speaking countries. Proficiency in English has become an emblem of moving in "higher" social circles with enough success.

The EIA/R metaphor

The critic and novelist Malcolm Bradbury once wittily observed, English is an ideal British product, "needing no workers and no work, no assembly lines and no assembly, no spare parts and very little servicing" (quoted by McCrum *et al.*, 1986: 39). Today, we need to add on the list all the "inner circle" English-speaking countries. The English language is now one of the most reliable exports of these countries. Thousands of British, American, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand teachers are enjoying exciting careers in teaching English abroad, and millions of books, videos, films and computerized instruction are sold every year.

The British English teaching industry brings "some 700 million a year in visible and invisible exports to Britain" (*English Today*, 49: 23) and this is one of the reasons the British

Council's English 2000 program set out to ensure that the British English language teaching industry "maintains its reputation, its creativity and its global standing into the next century" (ibid). This of course includes the effort to preserve the popularity of British English as the standard or, at least, one of the two standards, in the world. It is ironical that most British people do not speak RP but this accent is taught in many countries in the world while many learners are not learning English to communicate with Britons. *Family Album USA*, a textbook with videotapes, part of a cooperative agreement between the Department of State and Prentice Hall Regents to promote American English, has been broadcast in more than 50 countries and has brought millions of dollars to the producer and local English-teaching industry. It bears the Chinese title *zoubian meiguo* ('walking around America'), and it really reached every corner of China overnight.

The home countries of the "new Englishes" are also involved in this international pollution-free business. More and more Chinese students go to Singapore to study. India, where as many as 90 million Indians speak English fluently, not only has Indianized English, but also is ready to "export" its own variety and compete with the likes of the United States, Britain and Australia as an ELT-exporting nation (Rai, 2001).

English teaching has also become an industry in countries where English is taught as a second or foreign language. Since English is seen as the gateway to a good career and social status, more and more primary schools have introduced English as a required course. China is promoting English in primary schools and various textbooks are available, some of which are compiled in co-operation with leading world publishers such as Cambridge and Oxford. In top colleges and universities, students are required to pass Band Four or even Band Six of "College English" before they get their diploma. No wonder, therefore, that English dictionaries and various English works of reference occupy the largest section in bookstores, small and large.

The EIA/R metaphor is also demonstrated in the way that countries like the US use TOEFL as a "reaper" to "harvest the best and brightest of China's students" (Shi, 2001: 30). This happens to many countries.

English language metaphors and World English

The majority of scholars of the English language would now agree with the position advanced by McArthur (1992: xviii) in the preface to his *Oxford Companion to the English Language*:

> English is the possession of every individual and every community that in any way uses it, regardless of what any other individual or community may think about it.

There are, however, people who view English as their own private property. In 1988, Enoch Powell, a British politician, declared:

> Others may speak and read English – more or less – but it is our language not theirs. It was made in England by the English and it remains our distinctive property, however widely it is used and learned (quoted in Benson, 2001: 1).

The fact is, however,

> We may declare that English is the universal property of all of its users, but the ways in which we represent it within our disciplines may, nevertheless, be constrained by assumptions and practices that lead us to act as if it remained the property of its traditional linguistic centers (Benson, 2001:1).

This has very important educational consequences as to what English to teach in countries where English is a second or foreign language. The Singaporean Government has launched a movement to "speak good English", while a heated debate is going on regarding the position of what is normally called *Singlish*. Benson shows us the notion that British or US dictionaries are dictionaries of the language at home and dictionaries of international English overseas. British or US versions of English as an international language are still the "authorized" versions. "Oxford University Press (OUP) dictionaries, for example, can only benefit from the popular and widespread assumption overseas that 'good English' is 'Oxford English'" (Benson, 2001: 3).

It needs to be mentioned here that the ENGLISH AS ASSET metaphor often puts the native-speaker teacher in a more prestigious position. English is "their" language. An English teacher needs to be able to speak "good" English, but everyone knows that a "good" or native English speaker does not necessarily make a good English teacher. Widdowson (338) observes that "it is particularly ironical that Britain should be

exporting experts in the teaching of a foreign language, when its own record in this area is one of more or less abject failure". What I have in mind at this moment is what variety British teachers are teaching in a country where RP is the teaching standard if RP speakers constitute only 3–5% of the British population. Should we abandon the standard or dismiss the teachers?

Conclusion: English language metaphors and imagery

Metaphor is powerful because metaphor creates images. A metaphor from one generation may be accepted by the next without much thinking. Gwyn (1999:205) notes, "the power of the military metaphor lies in its ability to arouse people into a state of fear and preventive activity, to mobilize against an emergency." If English is viewed as a "killer language", people will try to prevent it from killing. English textbooks in China used to consist of texts written by Chinese professors or translated versions of Chinese stories. Original articles are now adopted or adapted because English has a much better image in China. English as power or prestige or resource is now universally accepted. These new metaphors are changing people's attitudes toward both the language and national English teaching decisions, and thus contribute to the spread of English as an international language.

English is developing within a whole set of English-language metaphors and I have discussed some essential ones in this paper. There are others which contribute to the use and spread of English as a national or international language and also need to be discussed. English-language planners and teachers and learners, in all countries where English is taught as a first or second or foreign language, need to know the strength of these metaphors. They may not accept them, but they cannot ignore them.

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