



الجمهورية التونسية  
وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي  
جامعة صفاقس  
كلية الآداب و العلوم الإنسانية بصفاقس



République Tunisienne  
Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur  
et de la recherche scientifique  
Université de Sfax  
Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Sfax



# بحوث جامعيّة

RECHERCHES UNIVERSITAIRES  
ACADEMIC RESEARCH

مجلة في الآداب و العلوم الإنسانية

العدد 14 - 15  
جويلية 2020



صفاقس، تونس، 2020

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Revue de littérature et sciences humaines

N° 14 - 15  
Juillet 2020

I.S.S.N: 1737-1007



صفاقس، تونس، 2020



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**I.S.S.N.1007-1737**



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# De-foreignizing English in the Expanding Circle: the Case of Tunisia

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## **Abstract**

Among the three orthodox pedagogical models (native, nativized, lingua franca), EFL learners are often exposed to the native model to the exclusion of other competing models. The reason has always been to prepare learners to function in an English-speaking community within the confines of the Inner Circle (Kachru, 1985). The sociolinguistics of globalization, however, defines communities beyond the conventionally demarcated homogeneous speech groups and perceives learners as constantly shuttling back and forth across liminal spaces oblivious to rigid linguistic and cultural frontiers. This paper is set to problematize the status of English as a foreign language in the Tunisian EFL curriculum and to contest the paradigm of exonormativity, which binds English language teaching in the Expanding Circle to a Standard pedagogical model produced by the Inner Circle. The corpus consists of selected texts from the English Programs (EPs) and samples of audio-clips designed to teach listening comprehension in Basic and Secondary Education. Critical Discourse Analysis is employed to unveil biased discursive construction and “naturalization” of any covertly imposed model. The findings demonstrate an exclusive reliance on a Standard pedagogical model through conceptualizing English as a system that resists synchronic variation and diachronic change in the EPs, and through promoting Anglo-American accents in instructional listening materials. Drawing on the sociolinguistics of “contact” (Blommaert, 2010), the paper discusses a viable pedagogical model in an Expanding Circle that is becoming less foreign.

## Abstrait

Parmi les trois modèles pédagogiques orthodoxes (natif, nativisé, lingua franca), les apprenants de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère sont souvent exposés au modèle natif à l'exclusion d'autres modèles concurrents. La raison a toujours été de préparer les apprenants à fonctionner dans une communauté anglophone dans les limites du cercle intérieur – Inner Circle – (Kachru, 1985). Cependant, la sociolinguistique de la mondialisation définit les communautés au-delà des groupes de discours homogènes conventionnellement délimités et perçoit les apprenants comme des camionneurs en permanence dans les espaces liminaires, inconscients des frontières linguistiques et culturelles rigides. Cet article est destiné à problématiser le statut de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère dans le programme tunisien et à contester le paradigme de l'exonormativité, qui lie l'enseignement de l'anglais dans le cercle en expansion (Expanding Circle) à un modèle pédagogique standard produit par le cercle intérieur (Inner Circle). Le corpus se compose de textes sélectionnés des programmes d'anglais (PA) et des échantillons d'audio-clips conçus pour enseigner la compréhension auditive en éducation de base et secondaire. L'analyse du discours critique est utilisée pour dévoiler une construction discursive biaisée et une «naturalisation» de tout modèle pédagogique. Les résultats démontrent une dépendance exclusive à un modèle pédagogique standard en conceptualisant l'anglais en tant que système qui résiste à la variation synchrone et au changement diachronique dans les PA et à la promotion des accents anglo-américains dans les matériels d'écoute pédagogiques. En s'appuyant sur la sociolinguistique du «contact» (Blommaert, 2010), cet article discute un modèle pédagogique viable dans le cercle en expansion.

## نبذة مختصرة

من بين النماذج التربوية الثلاثة المتداولة (lingua, nativized, native franca) لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية غالباً ما يعتمد النموذج native على حساب النماذج الأخرى المنافسة بتعلة إعداد المتعلمين للاندماج في المجتمعات الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية داخل حدود الدائرة الداخلية (Inner Circle) (كاشرو، 1985). مع ظهور علم اللسانيات الاجتماعية المتعلمة (sociolinguistics of globalization) التي تعرف المجموعات اللغوية بعيداً عن التجانس التقليدي، والتي تقر بحقيقة عبور المتعلمين اليوم للحدود المنصهرة متجاوزين إكراهات الحدود اللغوية والثقافية التقليدية. في هذا الاطار تطرح هذه الورقة إشكالية وضع اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المناهج التونسية، وتشكك في النموذج إكسونورماتيفتي (exonormative) الذي



يضبط تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في الدائرة الموسعة (Expanding Circle) بالنموذج التربوي الذي تنتجه الدائرة الداخلية (Inner Circle). تتألف المجامع (corpus) المعتمدة في هذا البحث من نصوص مختارة من البرامج الانكليزية وعينات من المقاطع الصوتية المصممة لتدريس مهارة الاستماع في التعليم الأساسي والثانوي. تم استخدام تحليل الخطاب النقدي لكشف النقاب عن البناء الخطابي المنحاز لتسويق نموذج تربوي معين وكأنه أمر طبيعي يتقبل بدهاءة. أظهرت نتائج البحث اعتمادا حصريا على النموذج التربوي (native) من خلال تصور اللغة الإنجليزية كهيكل لغوي يمنع الاختلاف المتزامن (synchronic change) والتغير عبر الأزمنة (diachronic variation) ومن خلال تعزيز اللهجات الأنجلوأمريكية في المواد السمعية. وعليه، واستنادا على اللسانيات الاجتماعية المبنية على مفهوم "التواصل" (sociolinguistics of "contact" (بلومايرت، 2010)، يطرح هذا البحث نموذجا بيداغوجيا جديدا يراعي متغيرات الدائرة الموسعة (Expanding Circle).

## 1. Introduction

Kachru (1985) claims that in Outer Circle (OC) countries English has been institutionalized and nativized acquiring an endonormative status, i.e., varieties which have developed local features (phonological, morphological and syntactic) through time. This development, Kachru contends, is a natural result of heavy intra-national use of English in the OC. English in the Expanding Circle (EC), however, and because of its very limited intra-national use, remains exonormative, i.e., dependent on Inner Circle (IC) Standard varieties and unable to acquire a legitimate nativized status. Concurring with the same view, Yoo (2014) argues that of the two paradigms (endonormative / exonormative), the EC has always been assumed to depend on the former. Critical linguists (Canagarajah, 2006; Jenkins, 2006a; Seidlhofer, 2001; McKay, 2003; Rajadurai, 2005; Bruthiaux, 2010) reject the unfair tying of the EC to exonormativity arguing that it has become archaic. They posit that globalization, social networks, immigration and endemic youth Hip Hop culture have expanded the use of English both intra-nationally and internationally. Matsuda (2002) contends that "the worldwide spread of English has changed the demographics of the population of English users." Orthodox sociolinguistics literature endorses a rigid taxonomy of the status of English across Kachru's three Circles (Park & Wee, 2009; Bruthiaux, 2003; Michieka, 2009; Rajadurai, 2005; Rajagopalan, 2012). The Expanding Circle seems the least privileged inasmuch as EC countries are still deemed

unfit for endonormative varieties despite empirical studies proving otherwise. Countries belonging to the EC are destined to endure the “foreignness” of English; they are not entitled to linguistic autonomy, and thus cannot sever the Inner Circle umbilical cord. *Lingua franca* scholarship, however, advocates the view that English in the EC is worth considering as a variety /variet (ies) in its /their own right. Scholars such as Jenkins (2000) and Seidlhofer (2004) have made significant contributions to substantiate the form-oriented nature of ELF. Jenkins (2000) has analyzed the types of pronunciation errors that may impede intelligibility among non-native speakers in international communication. She has provided core phonological features of ELF. Matsuda & Friedrich (2011, p. 336) agree that the academic community is not responsive to how EC users appropriate English in a way that both reflects their identities and allows them to express their indigenous values. Accordingly, EFL teaching needs to fundamentally shift “from correctness to appropriateness, from parochial domesticity and exclusive native-speaker norms to global inclusiveness and egalitarian license to speak in ways that meet diverse local needs” (Seidlhofer, 2001). Honna (2008, cited in D’Angelo, 2012, p. 299) finds fault with the use of the modifier “foreign” which “implies ‘out of the system’ socially and ‘undesirable’ psychologically” and advocates de-foreignizing English in the EC. Graddol (2006) illustrates how foreign language speakers are nowadays more drawn to OC norms than to IC norms; students hailing from the OC and the EC choose to pursue their graduate and postgraduate studies in countries like India, Malaysia and Singapore and consequently end up acquiring the nativized varieties of these countries. The new sociolinguistic reality of globalization requires revisiting the question of which pedagogical model to adopt in the EC.

## **2. Pedagogical Models and the Shifting Sands of the Expanding Circle**

An extensive review of literature reveals three major models that EC countries can adopt or adapt: native speaker model, nativized model, and *lingua franca* model. The warring models have left foreign language education at a crossroads (Álvarez, 2007, p. 126). In SLA literature, however, non-native models are still denigrated; they are often “evaluated

negatively against a backdrop of discourse of falling English standards” (Groves, 2010, p. 109). However, the truth is that among the three major pedagogical models in ELT (native, nativized, lingua franca), the native or Standard model is still the preferred one in the EC. The nativized model is yet to gain wider recognition because its parochiality works against its international propagation. As for the lingua franca model, it is the least accepted and scholarship is still divided on its reception or rejection. With endemic migration, physical or virtual, with the prosperous social networks, international cable stations broadcasting from the three circles, and with the increasing trend of young people joining reputed universities in the Outer Circle, the notion of foreignness is becoming hard to pinpoint. Because the Standard model requires conformity to native speaker norms presupposing the native speaker as the sole interlocutor; it may be appropriate for a minor fraction of English users only. The choice of which model to adopt in the EC is fraught with conflicts of interests (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

## ***2.1. Defining a model***

Kachru (1992, p. 49) explains that the term model is closely linked to a codified Standard or norm and it provides a proficiency scale which is defined statistically and entails prescriptivism and conformity. Such a definition of a model stipulates the existence of an “organized agency which undertakes the job of providing direction toward a standardized model and toward controlling language change” (Ibid.) as is the case of the French Academy. Graddol (2006) opposes such a definition and argues that a model needs to be operationalized in terms of its suitability to the context and practice of learning. It is neither to be defined statistically (number-wise), nor to be predicated upon the language common among educated speakers of a particular variety (Petzold, 2002, p. 423). In the same vein, and although Matsuda and Friedrich (2011) consider a model necessary to guide instructional choices, they advise that “various factors such as students’ goals and needs, teachers’ expertise, and availability of materials and resources” (p. 334) should be taken into consideration when picking up one. To leave such a choice to “agencies of control” or gatekeepers, Rajudarai (2007) expounds, would exacerbate the “power of mythology” prompted by purists and self-appointed custodians (Widdowson, 1994)

who require uniformity and conformity.

## 2.2. *A Standard (Native-Speaker) Model*

The native speaker (NS) model is still considered as the most prestigious and widely adopted. It is a codified model, i.e., it has got its grammars and dictionaries which make it teachable and against which the English of other learners can be evaluated and tested. It also wields a valuable corpus of canonical texts (Kirkpatrick, 2006: 72). ELT industry and ELT publishing corporations and educational decision-makers are more likely to advocate a native-speaker model because it has a very well-established instructional guide and is deemed not to interfere with international intelligibility. To forfeit all that for an uncertain deal, a model other than the Standard, would be risky. The adoption of a NS model has led to the emergence and perpetuation of “a culture of the standard” (Silverstein, 1996a) that naturalizes the standard model and gradually erases “inherent complex hybrid and heteroglossic nature of language” (Collins, 1999, p. 214). Naturalization leads to “commodification” which “objectifies language ... and attaches a market value to it” (Kramer-Dahl, 2003, p. 181). This valorization of the standard model becomes closely tied to social mobility (Blommaert, 2010, p. 96). As such “[m]odels that are perceived to be ‘reduced’ in some way will be rejected for being unable to provide this mobility potential” (Sewell, 2013, p. 8). Extreme views may arise as a corollary; Quirk (1990), for one, unequivocally argues that the NS model is the sole pedagogically suitable model for teaching English all over the world.

Contesting the NS model, Álvarez (2007) claims that it is constructed around the myth of “an individual who uses language consistently and perfectly, i.e., as someone who would not mix varieties or shuttle from one variety to another in normal speech, and would not make linguistic errors (p. 129). This is but an idealization that is constructed around the ideal monolingual native-speaker (Paikeday, 1985). Reifying the native-speaker for his exemplary linguistic and cultural consistency is “utopian, unrealistic, and constraining” (Alptekin, 2002, p. 57); it is also patronizing (Saraceni, 2008) and engenders a conception of the EFL learner as a handicapped case (Paikeday, 1985). This is so because

foreign language teachers become obsessed with transgressions and deviations from native-speaker norms highlighting the disparity between the native system and the intermediate system of the learner (Corder, 1967) termed interlanguage by Selinker (1972). Pennycook (1990) attributes “the creation and definition of standards” to linguists’ schizophrenic attitude. He contends that “linguistics has been engaged as much in the creation and definition of standards as was the case in the supposedly prescriptive era...which reached its most powerful form in the generativists’ attempt to locate language as a biologically determined construct in each isolated individual (p. 11). Alternative models conceptualized around variability rather than idealization are needed.

### ***2.3. A Nativized (World Englishes) Model***

According to Kachru (1992, p. 55), a nativized model is essentially based on institutionalized varieties, which enjoy some “ontological status,” i.e., they have an extended range of users and a body of nativized English literature. Acceptance of institutionalized varieties go through several stages the last of which is *recognition* (Ibid.). During this stage, the new nativized variety is attitudinally accepted and starts to appear in teaching materials. In Widdowson’s (1994, p. 377) terms, it is both seeded among other people and also ceded to them. English is not a native-speaker possession which native speakers “lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it” (Ibid.). It is, however, the prestige factor that usually hinders a nativized model from acquiring a legitimate status. Kachru (1983b, p. 124) confesses that “even when the nonnative models of English are linguistically identifiable, geographically definable, and functionally valuable, they are still not necessarily attitudinally acceptable” and this explains ambivalent attitudes which manifest when linguistic behavior in practice is endonormative, but the linguistic attitudes are rather obstinately exonormative, that is “there is greater tolerance for pragmatic and creative nativization and less for linguistic nativization” (Bamgbose, 1998, p. 5). Assuming a variationist stance, Álvarez (2007) defends a nativized model as an attempt to liberate “educational programs and materials from the tyranny of linguistic uniformity and perfection” (p. 128).

There are, however, some caveats about nativized models. They are likely to be less intelligible internationally than native-speaker models, and thus considered inferior (Kirkpatrick, 2006) because of their parochial confinement. They do not wield Silverstein's (1996a) language-as-commodity or Bourdieu's (1991) cultural capital and thus lack the mobility potential (Sewell, 2013). The mobility potential is actually contingent upon military prowess, technological advancement, and economic supremacy, factors that Inner Circle countries uncontestedly enjoy (Ibid.). According to Tupas (2006, p. 180) adopting a nativized model remains a political choice. It is also a psychological preference. Kachru's (1992) "*brown sahib*" metaphor, meaning the "brown elite's" mimicry of subjugation, is deep-seated in SLA. A "brown sahib" "is more English than the Englishman; he identifies with the "*white sahib*" in manners, speech, and attitude, and feels that his brown or black color is a burden" (p. 56, italics in the original). Kumaravadivelu (2016) laments this sense of self-marginalization and mortifying consent to hegemony and commands that the subaltern be empowered to act, not just to speak. Echoing this rebellious stance, Kirkpatrick (2006, p. 76) analogously qualifies "the choice of a nativized model over a native-speaker model" as "the choice of democracy over imperialism." It is within such a pedagogical schism that EFL learners are either baptized into complicity or initiated into criticality (Apple, 1992).

#### ***2.4. A Lingua Franca Model***

Kubota (2012) likens ELF to World Englishes as both challenge the traditional emphasis on instructional models based on the IC. ELF differs, however, from World Englishes in that its users come from different L1 backgrounds. Both native and nativized models' exponents assume that the EC cannot develop endonormative norms. ELF scholars like Jenkins (2007; 2006; 2005), Seidlhofer (2011; 2010; 2009), Kirkpatrick (2006), McKay (2010; 2004; 2003), to name but a few, express their disgruntlement with the alleged mandatory dependence on IC norms to teach English in the EC. Anne Pakir (2009), for one, maintains that ELF paradigm takes into consideration modern-day connectivity more than any other paradigm; that is why ELF scholars expect English in the EC to



develop into “pluricentric Englishes but with an ELF core” (p. 233). One of the most distinguishing features of a lingua franca model is its focus on the FL classroom as a place where the target of instruction is placed more on communication than on the acquisition of some idealized norms (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Unlike native and nativized models, a lingua franca model is congruent with recent sociolinguistic scholarship (Blommaert, 2010); ELF is not confined territorially and thus reflects varied individual linguistic and cultural norms conducive to the global reality. Within a functionally-oriented SLA, a lingua franca model qualifies as the most eligible (De Costa, 2012); it is very flexible in appropriating L1 pragmatic norms; it is also pluricentric and context-dependent (Bamgbose, 1998). It redresses the blind spots prevalent in the cognitively-oriented mainstream SLA (Firth and Wagner, 1997; Jenkins, 2006a). Kirkpatrick (2003) elaborates this anti-mainstream SLA trend by asserting that the classroom focus has to move “from the acquisition of an externally imposed norm to one of using LFE to communicate intelligibly with people from different cultural backgrounds” and “[I]nstead of seeing themselves as perennial outsiders, both teachers and learners alike become part of the LFE community (p. 89). Bruthiaux (2010, p. 367) expresses sympathy with EFL learners who are caught up between intolerable EFL learning conditions and teachers’ “unreasonable” expectations.

Within an EFL setting characterized with dearth of materials, limited instructional time, inherent difficulties in learning a foreign language beyond early adolescence, and teachers’ “mediocre” proficiency level, coupled with very limited “quota” of acquiring “*some*” English (*italics in the original*), a lingua franca model would be more teachable (Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2006). Kirkpatrick (2006, p. 81) maintains that because of its fluid, *posteriori* nature, ELF does not impose “rigid correct norms, nor adherence to a single model.” Since *apriority* in the native-speaker model targets accuracy, and given that accuracy is irrelevant in communicating in ELF, “instructional focus can be shifted to intelligibility and communication strategies, such as asking for clarification and repetition, rephrasing, allowing wait time, expressing agreement and disagreement, managing turn-taking” (Kubota, 2012, p. 57).

With the proliferation of pedagogical models and given that English in Tunisia is taught as a foreign language, picking up a particular model should neither be random, nor taken for granted.

### **3. Methodology**

This paper is set to answer the following research question:

How is a native-speaker pedagogical model of competence discursively constructed in the Tunisian EFL curriculum?

To answer the question, written and oral discourses have been analyzed. Sections from the English Programs (writing) and sample clips from the instructional audio-materials (speech) have been selected for the purpose.

#### ***3.1. Corpus***

The varied corpus set is meant to unveil the discursive construction of linguistic normativity and the promotion of a single pedagogical model to the exclusion of other competing models across curricular texts.

##### ***3.1.1. The English Programs***

The English Programs (henceforth EPs) consist of three official manuals emanating from the Tunisian Ministry of Education and designed to outline the objectives of English language teaching for Primary Education, Basic Education, and Secondary Education. The EPs explicitly delineate principles and assumptions about language and language teaching, the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, themes, grammar, and communicative functions for each education level. Sixth Year Basic Education EPs manual was developed in 2006 and consists of 15 pages; Basic Education EPs manual was published in the same year and comprises 19 pages; and Secondary Education EPs manual was released in 2008 and counts 78 pages. The EPs are selected because they contain sections on assumptions about language and language learning. They make up a rich source for unveiling discourses of linguistic normativity.

### **3.1.2. EFL Listening Materials (Audio-Clips)**

The six CDs which accompany the EFL textbooks contain recorded materials for Basic Education (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> forms) and Secondary Education (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> forms). The aim of the analysis of such corpus is to profile English users' nationalities in Basic and Secondary Education audio-clips in order to find out which of the three Kachruvian Circle(s) is / are represented, and whose model(s) of linguistic competence (native, nativized, lingua franca) is / are prevalent. Because the accompanying audio materials are poor in cultural content, given that most of the recordings feature characters reading glossaries of vocabulary items, or narrators engaged in relating events, exploiting the listening materials to profile characters' nationalities helps identify whose English is represented and whose is not. The aim is to substantiate the discursive construction of the native model.

## **3.2. Methods of Analysis**

As the objective of this paper is to unveil an unjustified bias towards a native-speaker pedagogical model of competence, a methodology of criticality is deemed appropriate to problematize such a bias.

### **3.2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical Discourse Analysis is grounded in theories of language that define it as a social phenomenon (e.g., Halliday, 1978) as opposed to theories that define language as primarily biological (e.g., Chomsky, 1959). Since language is defined as a means for the realization of the social phenomenon of discourse, and since discourse is institutionally produced knowledge, then it is a social category rather than a linguistic category. Fairclough (cited in Bloome & Talwalkar, 1997, p. 105) "assumes that people use language to accomplish a variety of social goals; he also assumes that any analysis of language must be wedded to a social theory that encompasses both everyday social practices." Fairclough builds upon the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971), other social theorists (e.g., Foucault, 1972) and linguists and literary theorists (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Halliday, 1978) and others (Bloome &

Talwalkar, 1997, p. 105). Blommaert & Bulcaen (2000) advocate CDA for its renunciation of prescriptivism and conformity and its “strong commitments to change, empowerment, and practice-orientedness” (p. 449). CDA, thus, is a conducive method to problematize linguistic normativity in the Tunisian EFL curriculum in order to bring about change in the reconceptualization of language and language learning. CDA urges educators “to cease to operate with modes of intellectual inquiry that are asocial, apolitical or ahistorical” (Pennycook, 1990, pp. 25-26).

As CDA “focuses on the role of discourse in the (re) production and challenge of dominance” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 249), its purpose is to penetrate “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 1995, p.204). As a methodological tool, CDA helps to deconstruct “dominant discourses as well as counter-discourses by posing questions at the boundaries of ideology, power, knowledge, class, race, and gender” (Kumaravadivelu, 1999, p. 476). It serves to expose social institutions’ intent to normalize mainstream ideologies and present them as “commonsense knowledge” (Ibid.). Official educational discourse, just like other discourses, inheres with power and structural relationships of dominance. Analysis of such discourse requires mobilizing linguistic items like lexicalization, syntactic structures and clausal relationships. The aim is to unmask discursively constructed assumptions about language and language learning. This article employs CDA to critically analyze educational discourse in the Tunisian EFL curriculum in order to expose a seemingly naturalized native speaker pedagogical model.

### ***3.2.2. English User’s Nationality Analysis***

Following Matsuda’s (2002) model, analysis of the nationality of English users featuring in the listening materials designed for Basic and Secondary Education helps find out which Circle (Inner Circle, Outer Circle, Expanding Circle) the characters in the audio-clips come from. The prevalence of particular nationalities provides further evidence of the pedagogical model represented in the audio-clips. A biased representation of particular users of English implies a bias towards a particular

pedagogical model and, henceforth, its “naturalization” and legitimation. The current analysis scrutinizes audio materials and the researcher has to work out the nationality of users from the way they articulate English, a task that requires cross-examination for validation. A native speaker’s (American colleague) assistance is resorted to for the purpose. English users’ nationality analysis is rendered easier in some instances when the names of the users are explicitly mentioned in the audio-clips, as is the case each time Tunisians are the featuring characters.

#### **4. Analysis and Findings**

This part deals with unveiling the discursive construction of the native speaker model in EFL curricular materials.

##### ***4.1. On the Discursive Construction of a Native Speaker Pedagogical Model***

A critical discourse analysis of the EPs reveals an explicit bias towards the native speaker model by conceptualizing language from a purely structural view, thus endorsing language as a monolithic system that requires conformity and resist variation.

##### ***4.1.1. Language Conceptualized as a Static System in the EPs***

To find out how language is conceptualized across the three EPs’ levels, a careful scrutiny of the EPs’ rubric *Principles, Assumptions and Methodology* about language is conducted at each educational level. The scrutiny has yielded three views of language: they are the *structural view*, the *functional view* and the *transactional view* (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). According to the “structural view,” language is perceived as a *system* of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning. The “communicative view” conceptualizes language as *vehicle* for the expression of meaning while the “interactional view” perceives language as a *vehicle* for the realization of *interpersonal relations* and for the performance of social transactions between individuals (Ibid.). Table 1 reproduces how language is defined across the EPs’ levels.

EPs' Levels	<i>Principles, Assumptions and Methodology</i>	<i>Page #</i>
<b>Sixth year of Basic Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Language</b> is seen as a means of communication rather than a set of decontextualized grammatical structures, word lists and isolated language skills.</li> <li>- <b>Language</b> is seen as a system that has lexis, grammar as well as linguistic structures and patterns. Knowledge of grammar and how it functions contribute to effective language use.</li> </ul>	3
<b>Years 7, 8, and 9 of Basic Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Language</b> is seen as a means of communication (<i>interactional, transactional, and functional</i>) rather than a set of decontextualized grammatical structures, word lists and isolated language skills (emphasis in the original).</li> <li>- <b>Language</b> is seen as a system that has lexis, grammar as well as linguistic structures and patterns which can be used to create various discourse forms or text types. Knowledge of grammar and how it functions contribute to effective language use.</li> </ul>	3
<b>Years 1, 2, 3 &amp; 4 Secondary Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Language</b> is seen as a means of communication (<i>interactional, transactional, and functional</i>) rather than a set of decontextualized grammatical structures, word lists and isolated language skills (emphasis in the original).</li> <li>- <b>Language</b> is seen as a system that has lexis, grammar as well as linguistic structures and patterns which can be used to create various discourse forms or text types. Knowledge of grammar and how it functions contribute to effective language use.</li> </ul>	6

Table 1: Ambivalent conceptualization of language across the EPs' levels



Engaging critically with the discourse of language conceptualization in the EPs, three major comments could be raised.

- Language is first presented as “a means of communication” and then as a “system of lexis and grammar” only. Phonology as major component of language is missing.

- The structural aspect of language is blatantly predominant. The most frequent words when defining language are grammar and its derivatives, i.e., “grammar,” “grammatical,” “linguistic structures” and “patterns.

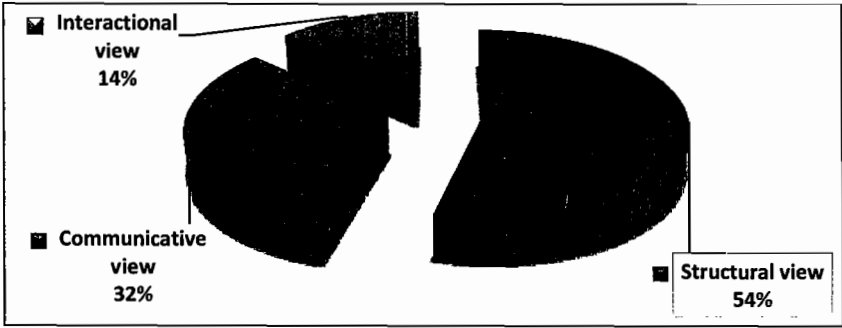
- The “interactional, transactional, and functional” aspects of language are characterized as age-bound and not inherent features of language; only in Basic and Secondary Education do these aspects apply; in 6<sup>th</sup> Year Primary Education they do not.

The prevalence of the structural view of language is made evident through the linguistic tools employed to normalize it. In the following sentences “*Language is seen as a system that has lexis, grammar as well as linguistic structures and patterns*” and “*Knowledge of grammar and how it functions contribute to effective language use,*” the use of hypotactic devices in these complex sentences describing language as a system binds independent and dependent clauses into a relationship of subordination, that is, in a logical and coherent flow of thought. The sense of plausibility afforded by subordination serves to present assumptions about language as factual. To further naturalize the structural view, the noun phrase (NP) “*knowledge of grammar*” in “*Knowledge of grammar and how it functions contribute to effective language use*” is always placed as a subject of the sentence, whereas the NP *language use* is placed as the object. Knowledge of grammar or grammatical competence is therefore assumed to precede language use or performance; language use is only possible when competence has already been built. Language acquisition does not emerge as a result of use of language as stipulated in the communicative approach. Binary oppositions are typical of the Saussurean view of language and of structuralism. The notion of *apriority* trivializes *posteriority*.

As is evident in Table 1, each time language is defined, it is first presented as “a means of communication” (EPs, 2006, p. 3). The

recurrent use of this noun phrase (NP) across the EPs' levels with no further elaboration on who is communicating with whom, implies a utilitarian view of language. The choice of nominalization in "communication" illustrates a grammatical metaphor revealing the incongruence between the natural state of affairs in the real world and the grammatical choice (Halliday, 1985), i.e., transforming an otherwise statement with an agent into an agentless one to convey less information about who the communicators might be. The nominalization "communication" is used to turn a process (verb) into an entity (noun), thus neutralizing agency (Halliday, 1985). Such a linguistic device is "often ideologically charged" (Billig, 2008, 785). Fowler et al., (cited in Billig, 2008, p. 785) expound that nominalization is actually a "process of *syntactic* reduction" (p. 41, italics in the original), that is to say "nominalization is a transformation which reduces a whole clause to its nucleus, the verb, and turns that into a noun" (Ibid.). The process of syntactic reduction entails underestimation of who the interactants could be. Within the EC context, where English is a foreign language, the presupposed interactants are Tunisian EFL learners and native-speakers of English, but that is a very unlikely scenario to encounter in reality.

The predominance of the structural view over the alleged subscription to the communicative approach in the EPs is also evident through lexicalization. A frequency count of the words related to the three views of language is conducted. A word typology has been devised for the purpose: Words like "appropriate" and "grammar" are deemed to be compatible with the structural view while words like "communication" and "functions" match the communicative view. Related to the interactional view are words such as "interaction" and "transaction." The words "appropriate" and "grammar" are repeated 96 times in the EPs corpus data scoring the highest percentage (54%). The words "communication" and "function" are used 57 times in the corpus at a rate of (32%). As for the words "interaction(al)" and "transaction(al)" they feature 24 times in the corpus marking the lowest percentage (14%). Figure 1 displays the representation of the three views of language in the EPs corpus.



**Figure 1: Predominance of the structural view of language in the EPs through over-lexicalization**

It is clearly discernable that the use of vocabulary pertaining to the structural view is twice as frequent as the words pertaining to the communicative view and almost four times as frequent as the words related to the interactional view. This lexical distribution provides further evidence of the preponderance of the structural view of language in the EPs. The sentence “Knowledge of grammar and how it functions contribute to effective language use” (EPs, 2006, p. 3) demonstrates the EPs’ formalist orientation despite the alleged affiliation to the Communicative Approach. This apparent ambivalence in language conceptualization prioritizes the system and subordinates communication; linguistic ability is a prerequisite to communicative ability, i.e., language competence precedes language performance.

#### ***4.1.2. The Nationalities of English Users in EFL Audio-Materials***

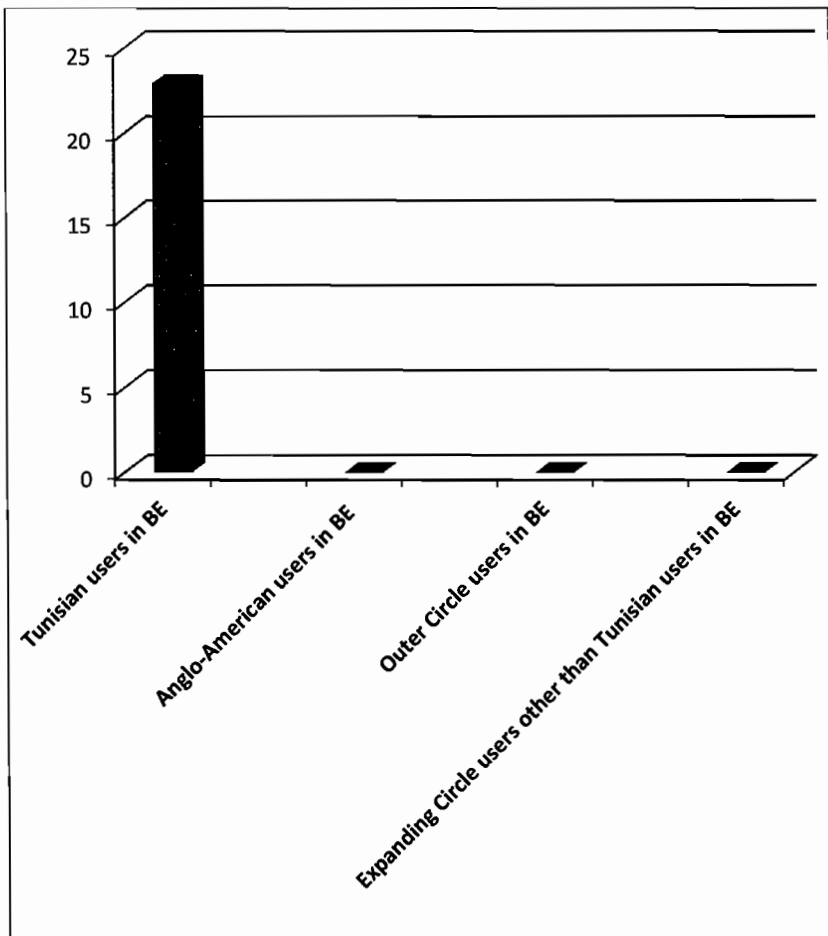
The main objective of this part of the article is to examine which users of English (IC, OC, EC users) are represented in the EFL listening materials and, thus, which pedagogical model(s) (native, nativized, Lingua Franca) is / are promoted. To achieve this objective, the nationalities of characters in the audio clips have been profiled following Matsuda’s (2002) empirical study on representation of users of English in Beginning Japanese EFL Textbooks. The accompanying audio-clips recorded in six CDs for Basic Education and Secondary Education levels have been scrutinized for users’ nationalities identification. Analysis of the audio clips reveals exclusive use

of Standard varieties (Anglo-American) by both native speaker characters and non-native speaker characters, who tend to favor American English in particular. Table 2 profiles users of English nationalities in the audio-clips according to accent. An American native speaker has cross-checked the analysis and has validated the results.

Education level	Audio clips	User Nationality			
		Tunisian	American	British	Other Circle = Expanding Circle users other than Tunisians
<b>Basic Education</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> form	15	0	0	0
	8 <sup>th</sup> form	4	0	0	0
	9 <sup>th</sup> form	4	0	0	0
<b>Secondary Education</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> year	0	0	4	0
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	0	6	0	0
	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	0	4	0	0
	4 <sup>th</sup> year				

**Table 2: Profiling users' nationalities in Basic and Secondary Education audio-clips**

It is evidently clear that Tunisians make up the majority of English users in the audio clips with twenty three (23) characters followed by the Americans, who count ten (10). Last come the British users with only four (4) characters. Two major comments merit attention: the first is that only Tunisian users feature in Basic Education audio clips, and only native speaker users feature in Secondary Education audio clips. The native-non-native dichotomy is strictly observed in the audio materials; native-non-native should not mix as each group belongs to a demarcated territory. A possible interpretation for such a seemingly irrational “division of labor” is that the more proficient EFL learners get, the more they are likely to understand native speaker accent; the less proficient, the less likely. A naïve correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility is insinuated. The second is that the representation of other users of English from Kachru’s (1985) circles is deficient. Outer Circle users of English and Expanding Circle users, other than Tunisians, do not feature in the audio materials. Figure 2 illustrates the representation of Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle users in EFL listening materials designed for Basic Education. The figure displays total absence of representation of Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle users, except for Tunisian users, who engage in faithful imitation of American accent and thus lose a chance to present themselves as fluent bilinguals retaining a national identity in terms of accent (Graddol, 2006).

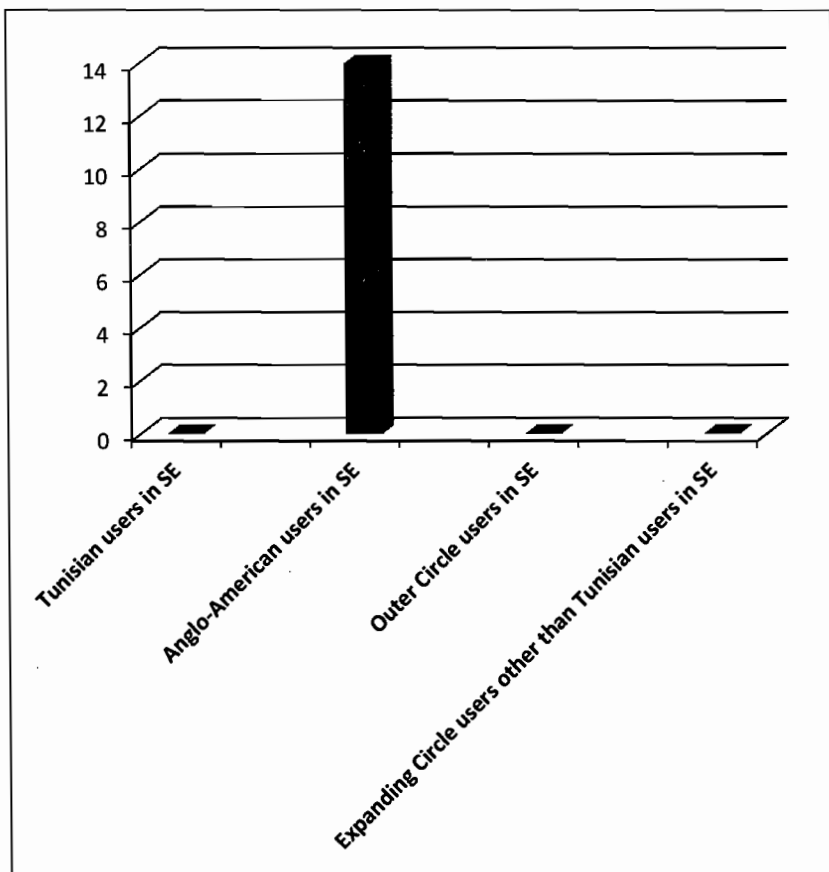


**Figure 2: Exclusive representation of Tunisian users in EFL audio materials in Basic Education (BE)**

The twenty three (23) Tunisian users, female and male, young and grown-ups seem to be carefully selected for the purpose as their quasi standard way of articulating English does not reflect the accented Tunisian learners' use of English. The aim is to speak "good" English by mimicking American native speakers. The reliance on Tunisian users at this level of education, despite claims to authenticity, implies that Tunisian EFL learners may find authentic General American (GA) or Received Pronunciation (RP) less intelligible. It could be construed that a language threshold is a requisite for the rightful exposure to native speaker accent.



Figure 3 deals with the representation of Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle users in Secondary Education (SE) listening materials. The figure displays a total disregard to Outer Circle and Expanding Circle users. All the characters in the audio-clips sound like Americans or British, fourteen (14) female and male users engage in monologues and dialogues about general topics, and mostly social and environmental issues. Exposing EFL learners to native speaker accent at this stage may leave them with the impression that Outer and Expanding Circles' users are not worthy of representation. This may lead to the stigmatization of non-standard varieties and as a corollary their users (Matsuda, 2002).



**Figure 3: Exclusive representation of Anglo-American users in EFL audio materials in Secondary Education (SE)**

It is evident that Kachru's three circles are not proportionately represented in the audio materials, which implies that Tunisian EFL learners are exposed to exonormative varieties only. Endonormative varieties and their speakers are not granted a space in Tunisian EFL classrooms. Even Tunisian users are not well-positioned as they only feature in Basic Education audio clips. The fact that the Standard model predominates through Anglo-American users and also through Tunisian users' mimicry of native speakers entails that English is yet to be conceptualized as an international language or as a lingua franca in the Tunisian EFL curriculum. It is a language that is still wrongly assumed to belong solely to the Inner Circle and its appropriation or right to ownership by other Circles is institutionally aborted (Widdowson, 1994). "This view of learning English may sound inconvenient," Sharifian (2013b, p 9) contends, since learners are not "exposed to the sociolinguistic reality of the use of English in today's globalized world." Sharifian goes on to argue that exposing EFL learners to a standardized variety would ultimately limit their exposure to diverse cultural conceptualizations typical of a world currently turning into a global village.

## 5. Discussion

The analysis of sections of the EPs reveal a conceptualization of language inspired by structural linguistics whereby language is defined as a monolithic system and acquiring the system entails competence in phonology, morphology and syntax. The findings corroborate with the focus on native-speaker users' representation in the audio-clips. Corpora analysis displays exclusive focus on the native speaker model. EFL learners need to master the language system to be able to produce it "appropriately," that is they need to observe a prescribed way of using the English language, which is the native speaker's way. Within the sociolinguistics of globalization whereby English plays a primordial role at the international arena, exposing EFL learners to a single pedagogical model misses how English is used for international and intercultural communication.

### 5.1. Problematizing “Appropriateness” in the Expanding Circle

As a form of Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Language Awareness (CLA) (Fairclough, 1992b) questions the rhetoric of “appropriateness.” Critical Language Awareness examines the specific relationship between language, power and ideology (Taylor, 2008, p. 312). Such awareness reveals how the EPs couch a regulative and normative discourse under the guise of “appropriateness,” a construct which means observing language norms to fit a competence-based model of literacy development. Fairclough (cited in Bloome & Talwalkar, 1997, p. 106) cautions educators not to take the notion of appropriateness for granted lest it obscure “how those power relations are embedded in broader social contexts (e.g., the institutional context).” The implications of the innocent-sounding notion of appropriateness are two-fold: first, the legitimation of a Standard model of teaching English positioning the native speaker as the sole arbiter of correctness, and second, destining the Expanding Circle to perpetual dependency on Inner Circle conception of competence, i.e., bound to an exonormative (norm-dependent) model in pedagogy. Appropriateness-based approaches are likely to disguise “linguistic prescription” as “innocent description” (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Proponents of appropriateness, Flores & Rosa explain, propagate a false type of consciousness such as that of “speaking appropriately” as opposed to the implicitly discouraged notion of “speaking defectively.” That is why “reframing language diversity in education away from a discourse of appropriateness toward one that seeks to denaturalize standardized linguistic categories” (p. 149) is no longer an option.

One way of deconstructing appropriateness is by absolving the English language in Expanding Circle countries from its endemic foreignness. According to Jenkins (2007), English in the Expanding Circle is neither English as a Second Language (ESL), nor English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Jenkins argues tenaciously for a centrifugal lingua franca type of English in the EC since “[u]nlike ESL varieties, it is not primarily a local or contact language *within* national groups but *between* them. And unlike EFL, whose goal is in reality ENL, it is not primarily a language of

communication between its NSs and NNSs, but among its NNSs” (p. 4, italics in the original).

SLA scholarship is still reluctant to cede the foreignness position (Jenkins, 2006b). Within traditional EFL methodology, there is an inbuilt ideological positioning of the EFL learner as an outsider and failure no matter how proficient she/he becomes (Graddol, 2006, p. 83). According to this logic, any potentially varying development in the EFL learner’s English is deemed a violation that has to be swiftly straightened. This deficit perspective inherent in EFL further reinforces constructs like fossilization (foreign language development halted), and interlanguage (foreign language system never coming of age) (Selinker 1972). If the goal of English language learning in the Expanding Circle is for learners to be able to use the language for international and intercultural communication, then their interlocutors may most likely be NNSs, who could be bilinguals or multilinguals. This makes of the Expanding Circle an amenable setting for prosperous English as a Lingua Franca. The target model in ELF framework is not a monolingual native speaker but a fluent bilingual user, who retains a national identity in terms of accent, and who also has the special skills required to negotiate understanding with another non-native speaker. ELF focuses also on pragmatic strategies required in intercultural communication (Graddol, 2006, p. 87).

Problematizing appropriateness and conformity to native speaker norms would naturally entail problematizing the construct of competence.

## ***5.2. Reconciling the Competence - Performance Contradiction***

Chomsky distinguishes between *competence* (the ideal speaker-listener’s abstract knowledge of grammar of her / his own language), and *performance* (language as actual utterance), and favors the former over the latter to advance his theory of language. According to Chomsky (1965), speaking a language is the ability to use an abstract set of rules which the speaker has internalized with the help of a language acquisition device (LAD), an innate endowment (Rajagopalan, 2004). Obviously, the study of *competence* to the exclusion of *performance* is a

“methodological necessity of studying language through idealized abstractions and ignoring what seem to be irrelevant details of language behavior” (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 3). That is why Chomsky’s theory “gives preeminence to the research practice of coding, quantifying data, and replicating results” (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 288). It, thus, seeks to find out universal features of language processes responsible for language acquisition. The idealization of language, i.e., treating it as regularized, decontextualized and standardized, is commensurate with the scientific study of language that seeks to generate adequate linguistic theories. The adequacy accounts for rules applicable to well-formedness not only in authentic data, but also in fabricated ones (Sellami-Baklouti, 2016). Paradoxically, idealization discards authentic utterances expressed in the vernacular since they do not comply with the postulation of the idealization triad (Ibid). The idealization of language is epitomized in the Chomskyan magnum opus (1959, 1965, 1968), which has led to an obsession with linguistic competence “to the utter neglect of what the speakers actually do when they put such knowledge to real use” (Rajagopalan, 2004, p. 404). Halliday (1978) reproaches Chomskyan linguistics for its exclusive emphasis on cognitive psychology while extricating the language system from its natural social repository. Halliday hypothesizes that man’s brain

has evolved in a certain way – *ergo*, he can talk. But truly speaking man does not talk; *men* talk (italics in the original). People talk to each other; and it is this aspect of man’s humanity, largely neglected in the dominant linguistics of the sixties, that has emerged to claim attention once more (Halliday, 1978, p. 17).

The functional view of language has reinstated the long-discarded *parole* exonerating it from Suassurean and Chomskyan messy “nature.” Hasan (2009) contends that “there can be no comprehensive scientific linguistics without parole, and no study of parole without context: a viable linguistics needs to incorporate both” (p. 168). With *parole* and context at the center of linguistic theory, it has become plausible to explain synchronic variation and diachronic change in language. Mikhail Bakhtin has shifted the attention from studying the abstract system of *langue* to the concrete utterances of individuals in particular social

contexts (Eagleton, 1996, pp. 101-2). Instead of focusing exclusively on *langue*, and thus binding SLA to normativity, dual focus on *langue* and *parole*, i.e., *competence* and *performance* would tolerate variation in language and give both linguists and language practitioners a broader and a more inclusive view of language. It is not the *either... or* that governs SLA, it is rather the *both ... and*, and *even more*.

Linguistic viability tolerates both *apriority* and *posteriority*, prioritizing *apriority* without proscribing *posteriority*. Put otherwise, if *apriority* presupposes acontextual and stable system; *posteriority* presupposes language as emergent from daily human experience. To ensure the de-foreignization of English in the Expanding Circle both *apriority* and *posteriority* need to be addressed in the EFL curriculum.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has tried to reveal a biased discourse of normativity in the Tunisian EFL curriculum which promotes a Standard pedagogical model. Nativized models and ELF models have been discursively delegitimized through absentia. The EPs conceptualize language rigidly as a structural entity despite their alleged affiliation to the communicative approach. Language competence entails mastery of language structures and patterns and competence is perceived to precede performance prioritizing *apriority* and proscribing *posteriority*. Listening materials provide further evidence of the obsession with the native-speaker model since the users in the audio-clips designed for Basic Education and Secondary Education promote Anglo-American accents. It is unfortunate that Tunisian users, the only non-native users represented in the listening materials, affect an American accent to sound like the “*brown sahibs*” who consider accented Tunisian English an unwanted burden and a stigmatizing deficiency. This is actually a vain pursuit because non-native speakers are halted by a “glass wall” that rhetorically deters most attempts to attain native speakerhood (Medgyes, 1992), so why the mimicry? Accordingly, adhering solely to a Standard pedagogical model can only exacerbate the agony of exornormativity in the Expanding Circle. The “sociolinguistics of contact” (Blommaert, 2010) stipulates that EFL needs “to make its own declaration of independence



from the linguistic past” (Fiedler, 2010, p. 207). The liberatory paradigm of English as a Lingua Franca may help English as a Foreign Language reach its goal by endorsing a multi-dialectal type of competence (Canagarajah, 2006). Proficiency in English is no longer confined to strictly observing native speaker norms; proficiency has become more complex. To be really proficient in English today, Canagarajah argues,

one has to be multidialectal. This does not mean that one needs production skills in all the varieties of English. One needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication. The passive competence to understand new varieties is part of this multidialectal competence ... in the postmodern context of communication (p. 233).

De-foreignizing English is an attempt in this direction, i.e., to permit creative linguistic ways of speaking across a “cooler” space of globalization that acknowledges native, nativized, and lingua franca varieties. “Cool,” according to Maher (2005), is the capacity to be innovative and tolerant. De-foreignization, as such, may make a necessary step to overcome the deficit perspective inherent in EFL, which ignores the volatile and unstable sociolinguistic reality of an Expanding Circle gradually “becoming less foreign” (Fiedler, 2010, p. 207), and less dependent on the Inner Circle.

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