

## **Understanding language variation: Implications of the NNEST lens for TESOL teacher education programs**

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### **Abstract**

This chapter discusses the implications of the NNEST lens in the context of teacher education programs in TESOL. In particular, it focuses on a discussion of two key issues: avoiding the monolingual bias in describing languages and language variation; and, avoiding a monolingual bias in developing teaching methods. In discussing the first issue, the chapter identifies some of the limitations in how language and grammar are often described in limited ways and how this can be expanded by using an NNEST lens. The chapter describes the three dimensional framework of language variation in some detail and discusses its implications for language teaching. The chapter then discusses why local languages are not included in much of the theorisation and practice of TESOL and argues that there are historical as well as theoretical reasons why local languages have been excluded in TESOL. The chapter describes one way in which teachers can consider integrating local languages in their classrooms.

### **Introduction**

All NNESTs share one aspect about their linguistic repertoire: they all speak at least one other language in addition to English. This shared feature of the NNESTs has a number of implications and is the main argument for what Mahboob (2010) calls ‘The NNEST Lens’. The NNEST lens is defined as “a lens of multilingualism, multinationalism, and multiculturalism through which NNESTs – as classroom practitioners, researchers, and teacher educators – take diversity as a starting point, rather than as a result” (p. 1). The NNEST lens challenges the monolingual bias (Kachru 1994) in TESOL theory and practice and suggests that having a multilingual orientation in TESOL would be much better aligned with the needs and context of NNESTs. In this chapter, we will examine some of the implications of the NNEST lens for teacher education programs. In particular, we will consider the implications of the NNEST lens in developing an understanding of language and about the use of local languages in teaching.

### **Understanding language and language variation**

In numerous casual surveys – at conferences and in classes – I ask in-service and pre-service teachers how they would define the following terms: language and grammar. The responses that I get are almost always the same: language is a form of communication; and, grammar is a set of rules that tell us how language works. Both of these are common-sense understanding of the terms and are quite limited for language educators. Given that the key role of English language teachers (ELTs) is to teach ‘language’, it is essential that language teachers have a more technical understanding of what language and grammar are. And, more specifically, since NNESTs are teachers of English, teacher education programs

need to help pre- and in-service teachers develop an understanding of 'English' in today's world.

While it is true that language is used for communication, language *is not* communication. Language, as defined by Halliday (2009), is a semogenic system: a system that creates meaning. Language is not the only semogenic system - there are others such as music, colours, etc. - but language is arguably one of the most important ones and it plays a key role in how we learn to create and represent meaning. We are able to use language to create and communicate meaning because language is patterned. As humans, we notice, recognise, interpret and use a range of patterns to understand, to mean and to communicate. The study of these patterns of language is grammar. Grammar is not a set of rules; grammar is a way of understanding how language works. Language, we can say, is data and grammar is the way in which we make sense of the data. Thus, it is possible for us to have different grammars: each influenced by the limitation/extent of data and the purpose of explaining the data. Thus, depending on the corpus and our purpose, we can have different grammars. If we take 'native-speaker' language and describe it in terms of structural rules that can be taught to students, then we will develop traditional prescriptive grammars. If we take 'native-speaker' language and describe it in terms of its structural features, then we develop a traditional descriptive grammar. If we take 'native-speaker' language and describe it in terms of how the human mind transforms the deep structure of the language into surface structures, then we are developing a transformative grammar. If we take 'native-speaker' language and describe it in terms of what choices speakers have available and how they make specific choices in particular contexts, then we are moving towards a functional grammar. In each of the examples here, the end grammar that we develop is a response to the data that we have and the purpose of developing the grammar. Grammar itself, broadly speaking, is a theory of language – a theory that helps us organise, make sense of, describe, explain and predict language. The last element here, prediction, is a key aspect and worth some more discussion.

If we think of grammar as a theory of language, then, as a theory, a grammar should be able to predict language use. This means that a strong grammar should not only describe how language works in the corpus that it is based on, but it should be able to predict – with some level of certainty – how language can/will be used in instances not included in the corpus. This is an important test for a grammar and one that shows that most of the grammars that we learn and teach in teacher education programs are not strong grammars (in that they are unable to predict language use).

Traditional descriptive/prescriptive grammars are perhaps the most common type of grammars that teachers and students of English are familiar with in most parts of the world. These grammars have evolved out of earlier grammars of English (which, some argue, were not based on English data but modelled on Latin) and are based on written samples of English by monolingual speakers of the language. Most ELTs are familiar with such grammars and the rules associated with such grammars, even if they may not agree with some of them.

For example, while rules such as ‘do not split infinitives’ etc. are now considered myths, they were included in grammar books and taught as ‘rules’. These rules lost their validity (in some contexts) because they were not predictive: there were/are hundreds of examples that demonstrate that even monolingual speakers of English split infinitives (e.g. the introductory text from Star Trek, ‘to boldly go where no man has gone before’). However, there are many other rules that are not questioned and continue to be taught. For example, one of the key rules taught about English is that an English sentence must minimally have a subject and a verb. While this ‘rule’ is valid in many contexts, it does not apply to procedural texts where the subject is often elided and clauses start with a verb. Thus, traditional grammars are not always able to predict actual language use.

This issue becomes even more complex when we consider non-native varieties of English, also known as World Englishes, and contexts where English is not used as a local/community language. One reason for this is because these traditional grammars do not draw on data from non-native users of the language when abstracting grammatical principles. Thus, traditional grammars are not drawn on or explain non-native use of language. While this may not be an issue in itself, problems arise when the native-user based grammars are seen as “correct” or “standard” language and other uses of the language are measured against them (and found lacking). One might ask the question: if traditional grammars can’t even always predict language use within other native contexts, how valid or appropriate is it to use them for non-native contexts?

The problem of documenting and using native-user based grammar books as reference points becomes a bigger issue in contexts where English is not used as a community/local language. In such contexts, people don’t always have access to samples of language use that they can draw on or learn from. In these contexts, people depend on grammar books as a source of information about appropriate use of language. In many contexts, the books readily available are traditional grammar books. As we have noted above, these grammars have limitations. But, since there are no other recognised sources available locally, people (including local ELTs) use these reference books as ‘authority’ and prescribe the traditional descriptions of language in these books. Things can get even worse in situations where local publishers/authors republish or plagiarise a selection of the grammar ‘rules’ found in primary sources without fully realizing how the whole grammar works or the implications of picking-and-choosing some of the ‘rules’ from one book and combining them with those found in others. These locally produced books had considerable impact on learners who buy and use their books. Among other things, this creates problems in terms of peoples’ understanding of grammar – as a set of rules – and perpetuates myths about language. These myths need to be challenged in TESOL teacher education programs through focussed and informed discussions about the nature of language, grammar, and language variation (see Mahboob, 2014). Descriptions of language need to be based on data that reflects its use by both native and non-native users of the language (note that I’m not saying learners of the language – whether native or non-native – but users).

Research on World Englishes, which studies the spread of English worldwide, has challenged monolingual descriptions of English. World Englishes scholars (see, for example, Jenkins 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2010; and contributions to the journals such as *World Englishes*, *English Worldwide* and *English Today*) look at how English is used (and how it changes) in different contexts – including those where English is not a ‘native’-language. These scholars have demonstrated that the English language is not a monolithic entity and that it varies greatly based on who is using it, how, where, and for what purpose. These scholars have also shown that these variations exist across all strata of language: grapho-phonology, lexico-grammar, and discourse-semantics.

For example, at grapho-phonological strata, we notice differences between spellings in British and American English, as in ‘colour’ (British) and ‘color’ (American); we also hear phonological differences between speakers of English from differing parts of the world, as in the word ‘bar’: ‘/ba:/’ (British) ‘/ba:r/’ (American). At the lexico-grammatical strata, we observe how certain things are called by different names in different parts of the world, as in ‘boot of a car’ (British), ‘trunk of a car’ (American), and ‘dickie of a car’ (Pakistani); and how sentences and clauses are put together in different ways, as in ‘What time is it?’ (British) and ‘What is the time?’ (Pakistani). Finally, the way that information is put together and how and what things are said in different contexts can also be different across varieties of English; for example, letters to editors published in Pakistani English newspapers sometimes include a note of thanks to the editors as well as a praise of the newspaper – moves which are absent from editorials published in other parts of the world.

The World Englishes examples shared above show how Englishes can diverge in many contexts and how an NNEST lens, one that is not limited to monolingual native speaker data, can expand our gaze and show us other possibilities of explaining and describing language use. However, as has been discussed in Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998), Pennycook (2002), Bruthiaux (2003), Mahboob and Szenes (2010) and Mahboob and Liang (2014) using of national labels in describing languages and Englishes is quite problematic. As pointed out in Mahboob and Szenes (2010), this is problematic because it leads World Englishes researchers into describing discrete linguistic features that are used to contrast one national variety with another that do not necessarily contribute to a theory of language or of how meaning is construed or communicated in and across these varieties. In such cases, these researchers argue, linguistics becomes a tool for nationalistic agendas and loses focus on understanding language and how it works (without consideration to national borders).

While it is important for ELTs to understand language variation, using nation-state based understandings of language are not necessarily productive. Instead, we need to think of language variation across a range of continua (or dimensions). In previous work (Mahboob 2014), I have identified four continua: users, uses, mode, and time that help us understand how language varies based on who is using it, for what purposes, with what resources, and when. In this work, I have mapped three dimensions (users, uses, and mode) to develop a three dimensional (3D) framework of language variation (see Figure 1 below).

Below, I have included some of the relevant points from my previous work (Mahboob 2014, 2015) to explain the three dimensions.

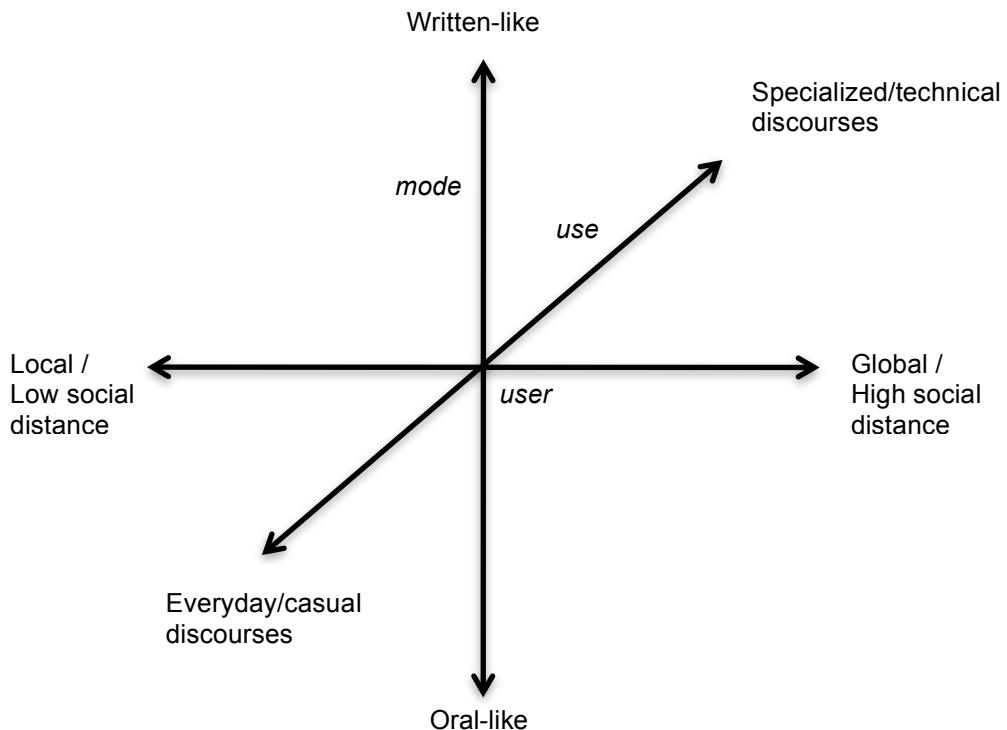


Figure 1: The 3D framework of language variation

The first dimension of variation in language in the framework relates to who we are as ‘users’ of the language and with whom we are interacting. The user cline of language variation can be based on ‘low’ vs. ‘high’ social distance. People who have low social distance (i.e. they have many shared social factors, e.g., age, gender, origin, location, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion, family, school, etc.) may have unique ways of using language that reflect their relationship and this language may not always be transparent to others (see, for example, Wolfram 2014). The indicator ‘low social distance’ helps us understand why people use ‘local’ forms of language, with their local denotations and connotations. On the other hand, when interacting with people with whom one has a higher social distance, one tends to use a more ‘standard’ or ‘global’ language – one that minimizes ‘local’ idioms, forms, and features and is thus less prone to miscommunication. The indicator ‘high social distance’ helps us explain why people use ‘global’ forms of language, minimizing local forms and features, and facilitating communication with people who speak a different ‘local’ variety of the language.

The second dimension of variation in language is related to the purpose or ‘use’ of the language. To understand this dimension of language variation, we consider whether the language being used is about ‘everyday/casual’ discourses or about ‘specialised/technical’ discourses. For example, one could talk about music using specialised/technical language; or one could talk about music in everyday/casual

language. In both cases, the topic remains the same; however, the specific linguistic choices vary based on the purpose of the exchange. In linguistic terms, this variation is understood as register variation, a concept used extensively in literature in genre and ESP studies.

The third dimension of language variation is ‘mode’ (Martin 1985; Derewianka 2015). Modes of communication include aural, visual, and mixed channels of communication. The way we use language varies based on whether we are speaking, writing, or – as is becoming common today – combining these two modalities (for example, in online chats, blogs, etc.). Note that the framework uses ‘written-like’ and ‘oral-like’ as the two end points. These labels acknowledge that language may be transcribed through a writing system, but may be more similar to oral language in terms of its linguistic characteristics than to written language, e.g. a dialogue included in a textbook or a novel, or a personal travel blog that includes images and texts. Similarly, language can be more written-like even when it is spoken, e.g. a plenary talk at a conference. It also needs to be noted that texts can be multimodal, i.e., they can draw on various modalities simultaneously (e.g. a talk which uses a PowerPoint that includes images and text).

These three dimensions are plotted together in Figure 1 to provide the basic framework of language variation. The framework helps identify eight domains (Table 1 below), with each domain including a range of variations, based on varying combinations of users, uses, and mode. Table 1 below lists the eight domains<sup>1</sup>, identifies areas of linguistic study that focus their research on that domain, and examples of where one would find such language.

Table 1: Eight domains of language variation based on the 3D Framework

	<b>Domains</b>	<b>Study in linguistics</b>	<b>Example</b>
1	Local, oral, everyday	Dialectology, World Englishes	Family members planning their vacation
2	Local, written, everyday	Dialectology, World Englishes	Old school friends exchanging e-mails with each other
3	Local, oral, specialized	Need more attention	Members of an Aboriginal community talking about the local weather system
4	Local, written, specialized	Need more attention	Newsletter produced by and for a rural community of farmers in rural Australia
5	Global, oral, everyday	ELF (English as a Lingua Franca)	Casual conversations amongst people from different parts of the world
6	Global, written, everyday	Genre studies; traditional grammar	International news agencies reporting on events

<sup>1</sup> The ordering of the domains here is different than in earlier publications on this framework (Mahboob 2014, 2015). The mode dimension has been reversed here to reflect the primacy of oral language over written language.

7	Global, oral, specialized	ELF; Language for specific purposes; genre studies	Conference presentations
8	Global, written, specialized	Language for specific purposes; genre studies	Academic papers

The fourth dimension, time, is not plotted in Figure 1 above nor represented in Table 1. This is because time relates to each of the other three dimensions and every one of eight domains that emerge from the framework. Thus, for example, language varies across time on the user dimension: language in all communities shift and change over time. While the impact of time is acknowledged in this model, we will not focus on it in this chapter.

The model of language variation presented above has a number of implications for educational contexts. It shows us how language varies based on who the participants are, what the purpose of language use is, and what modality(/ies) is(/are) being used. Thus, it predicts what type of language we might find in what context and also puts into perspective the various areas of studies that prioritize different types of variations in language (e.g. ‘use’ based for genre pedagogy; ‘user’ based for dialect studies and World Englishes). The framework also contextualizes language in terms of how we may use it in our everyday lives and how it relates to educational dimensions. The 3D framework draws significantly on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) in that it uses the three register variables to develop the three dimensions of language variation. So, *field* is projected as *use*; *tenor* as *users* and *mode* as *mode*. However, this is where the similarity ends. The fourth dimension, time, while it is not mapped onto the framework (Figure 1) is also very relevant in understanding language variation but is not a register variable in SFL. Furthermore, the actual language within each domain does not vary only in terms of one of the three field variables, but all three. So, within a particular domain, e.g. domain 1, actual language samples would still be analysed based on the three register variables: how they realise field, tenor, and mode through a metafunctional analysis.

As individuals – whether we are native speakers of a language or non-native speakers – our use of language for everyday purposes typically falls in domains 1 and 2 – we use language orally or in writing with people that we are familiar with and about every day topics. The ‘local’ language that we use in such contexts reflects the norms of our local communities. When we shift our context and use language with people that we don’t know well or about things that are technical/specialized then our language shifts too. While most of us develop the language that we use in domains 1 and 2 naturally in our contexts, the language we need to communicate successfully in domains 5 & 6, or 7 & 8 does not come naturally. We need to learn this language – and, typically, we do this at schools. Thus, the job of (English language) teachers is to help students develop an ability to understand and use language which can be used in globally oriented and/or specialized contexts. This is an important observation and has implications for ELTs. As ELTs, we need to help our students use language that allows them

mobility and an ability to use language successfully beyond their immediate surroundings, with people that they do not know, and for specialized and technicalised purposes.

The language that students bring to school from their home – language in domains 1 (and, perhaps, 2) – may or may not share features with globally oriented language (domains 5 and 6). In some cases, for various historical and sociolinguistic reasons, students who come from urban middle-class Anglo families, have a higher chance that the local language that they speak and write shares features with the language in domains 5 and 6 (note that they have a higher chance, but that it is not a given). For all other students – including monolingual speakers of other dialects/varieties of English – access to domains 5 and 6 is through education. This is true for whether the local dialect spoken by a child is Aboriginal English, Afro-American English, Anglo-American English from a working class or regional background, Chicano English, Jamaican English, or Pakistani English, etc. In all such cases, kids have to be taught global ways of using language (domains 5 & 6). When teachers are aware and attuned to the differences between 1 & 2 and 5 & 6 (see, for example, Martin & Mathhiesen, 2015; Derewianka, 2015), they are better able to help students understand these differences and give them resources that will enable them to develop proficiency in using language in new domains. If the teachers (or the curriculum) are not aware of or recognize these differences, or if teachers do not succeed in teaching the students globalized ways of using language (for everyday as well as technical/specialized uses), then the students are left on their own devices to learn about and use appropriate language. In such cases, while a few students may be able to understand and learn appropriate ways of using the language of domains 5 & 6 (and even fewer the language of domains 7 & 8), a large number fail to do so and are thus unable to succeed in and through education.

While domains 5 & 6 allow us to use language for a range of everyday purposes with people who come from all parts of the world, the language of domains 7 & 8 is highly specialized and/or technicalised and is something that needs to be learnt by everyone. One can perhaps even argue that the global orientation of the language of domains 7 & 8 come through their specialization/technicalisation. No one is a ‘native-speaker’ of domains 7 & 8. The language of domains 7 & 8 evolves as people come together to focus on a particular specialised/technicalised issues; the backgrounds of the people who come together is not important here, but rather the focus is on what needs to be done through language. The language of domains 7 & 8 is first introduced to children in schools (most commonly in subject areas, such as science, math, etc.) and then expanded and developed in college (through specialized degrees in subject areas). As teachers – whether NESTs or NNESTs – we need to note that none of us are ‘native speaker’ of the language in domains 7 & 8 and that we need to learn (about) it ourselves before we are able to teach (about) it. Access to knowledge production typically happens through language in domains 7 & 8 and this knowledge is then recontextualised for the wider audience through domains 5 & 6 and/or 1 & 2.

To understand this better, let us consider the following example. Expert knowledge in medicine is published in highly technical medical journals (domain 8) or presented at professional conferences (domain 7). This knowledge, even though it is in English, is not accessible to an average user of the English language (regardless of whether they are native or nonnative users of English). Medical practitioners (who may be native or nonnative users of English), who specialize and understand medical discourse, make sense of this expert knowledge and use it to communicate with other medical practitioners (domain 7 & 8). However, when doctors talk to patients, they avoid this highly technical language and explain things in ways that are accessible to their patients. Typically doctors translate the technical work into language of domains 1 or 5, depending on where and with whom they are interacting. When doctors translate from domain 7/8 to domain 1 or 5, a lot of the technicality is lost. This is a compromise that has to be made for the doctors to communicate successfully with their patients; however, when communicating with other doctors, they maintain domain 7 & 8. This shows how important these variations/domains are and how they work across the society. For most ELTs, again, regardless of whether they are NESTs or NNESTs, their goal is to help students develop language that is more appropriate for domains 5 & 6; and then, if they are teaching specialized courses, then help students develop language that they will need to participate in domains 7 & 8. Being a native speaker does not help in any of this; but knowing how language works makes a big difference.

Before proceeding, it is useful to look at the nature of language in domain 1, the domain that children develop naturally at home (if they do not have any learning disabilities). Children, as they develop language, do not develop 'a particular language', i.e., they don't develop what adults see and categorize as languages, such as Arabic, English, French, or Urdu, etc. These languages/labels are adult categories and separated out in complex ways (such as location, group identity, mutual intelligibility, nationalism etc.). For children developing language, language labels do not matter. Matthiessen (2009) points out that "language has evolved as a learnable system: its adaptiveness and inherent variability make it easier to learn because we do not have to learn it in one fell swoop; we learn it in a cumulative way, building up the complexity gradually from texts instantiating different registers" (p. 214). As children develop language, they are not concerned by variations etc., but by learning how to mean. As Halliday (1975/2004; p. 55) describes it, once a child "learns how to mean", they continue to develop language by making meanings in, or negotiating, more and different contexts over time. Importantly, this process happens for all users of languages; children do not differentiate between languages, they learn how to mean. Garcia (2009) refers to the use of multiple languages in different contexts as *translanguaging*. According to Garcia, translanguaging goes beyond code-switching to include the range of "...discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*" (p. 45, emphasis original). Translanguaging is an important aspect of language (specially in domain 1 & 2) and will be discussed again in the section on using local language later.

The 3D model of language variation presented above uses the NNEST lens to develop a multilingual perspective on understanding language and language variation. This work relates to, draws from, and contributes to a growing body of research in this area. For example, the 3D model relates strongly with work on complex adaptive dynamic system which points out: "(1) The system consists of multiple agents (the speakers in the speech community) interacting with one another. (2) The system is adaptive, that is, speakers' behavior is based on their past interactions, and current and past interactions together feed forward into future behavior. (3) A speaker's behavior is the consequence of competing factors ranging from perceptual mechanics to social motivations. (4) The structures of language emerge from interrelated patterns of experience, social interaction, and cognitive processes" (Beckner *et al* 2009, p. 2) (see also, Hensley 2010; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008; Matthiessen 2009).

This model, as discussed earlier, also closely aligns with research on translanguaging (see, for example, Cangarajah 2014, Garcia & Wei 2013) and transculturalism (see, for example, Motha, Jain, and Tecle 2012) that questions the traditional static models of and boundaries between languages. These works have also led to the questioning of the notion of 'language proficiency' in recent years; for example, Mahboob & Dutcher (2014) argue that models of language proficiency need to respond to criticisms of the static nature of language and engage with dynamic models. Presenting their Dynamic Approach to Language Proficiency (DALP), they posit that "being proficient in a language implies that we are sensitive to the setting of the communicative event, and have the ability to select, adapt, negotiate, and use a range of linguistic resources that are appropriate in the context" (p. 117).

This discussion of language has numerous implications for applied linguistics and TESOL research and practice in general. For example, rethinking the nature of language and language policy has implications for work in the area of language assessment, identity research, and second language development studies. Canagarajah (2006) argues that static models of language proficiency are anachronistic and that we need a new generation of tests which "should be performance based; they should feature social negotiation; and they should demonstrate pragmatic competence. We need tests that are interactive, collaborative, and performative" (p. 240). Extending this work, Mahboob and Dutcher (2014) discuss the implications of DALP on language assessment. They suggest that tests of language proficiency should investigate an individual's (both native and non-native speakers) ability to negotiate meaning in diverse context rather than responding to discrete test items based on a static model of language.

All these aspects of language, language variation, and grammar along with the implications of this work in different aspects of research and theory in TESOL and applied linguistics need to be integrated in teacher education programs. This work, which adopts an NNEST lens, avoids a monolingual orientation and is therefore more reflective of the needs and practices of teachers (both NESTs and NNESTs). Below, we will look at one particular area where this work can help classroom teaching practices.

## Using local languages

One of the most consistent findings in the NNEST literature is that students and teachers find proficiency in the students' local language as a positive and useful resource (see, for example, Braine, 2010; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford, 2004; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Selvi, 2014). Given these findings, it is striking that TESOL and applied linguistics programs do not explicitly train teachers in judicious and pedagogically appropriate uses of local languages (domain 1 & 2) in the classrooms. Mahboob & Lin (in press) discuss a number of issues that has led to the current situation. They point out that one of the key reason that led to a development of negative attitudes towards the use of local languages in English language classes is related to the history of English language teaching and teacher education. English language teaching evolved from practices in foreign language teaching. In early days, the dominant approach to language teaching was the grammar translation approach. This approach gave primary position to a (dominant) local language and used it extensively in building knowledge of and about the target language. Many of the teachers of languages in these contexts were non-native speakers of the target language and shared the dominant local language with the students. The grammar-translation approach was used to teach not only English but also a range of other foreign languages. However, over time, the demographics of who was involved in teaching and learning of English (and where) changed and these changes had a major effect on the development of theory and practice in TESOL and applied linguistics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During the British colonial period, a large number of people from the colonies moved to the UK. In this context, the ESL student population came from a number of different countries and language backgrounds, and the teachers as well as teacher educators/researchers did not share languages with students. Given these contextual factors, the role of local languages was not really considered as a factor in the development of pedagogical material or training of teachers. Howatt and Smith (2014) in reviewing the history of ELT, state:

... translation into the language being learnt was, in general, firmly rejected within the Reform Movement as well as by Berlitz. With hindsight, it is a pity that this distinction between L2 to L1 and L1 to L2 translation did not survive the adoption of 'Direct Method' as a blanket term and that the many techniques and procedures developed by non-native speaker school teachers ('Reform Methods') have remained under-acknowledged. The Direct Method — in all its forms — was set, however, to strongly influence the subsequent era. (p. 84).

In addition to being the context of development of some of the major approaches to language teaching in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, academics and researchers in inner-circle countries also published key textbooks for preparing English language teachers. These textbooks, which excluded and/or critiqued the use of local languages in English language teaching, were not only used in the inner-circle countries, but also in outer and expanding circle countries. Thus, methods and approaches that were designed for particular contexts were marketed as being

'global' and used to train teachers around the world. One result of this has been a negative attitude towards the use of local languages in schooling.

Another major factor that has resulted in the non-use and non-recognition of local languages in ELT is the monolingual bias associated with describing and theorizing languages – as discussed in detail in the previous section. Language, as was pointed out earlier, has traditionally been taught as a set of rules that are abstracted from monolingual native speaker intuitions about language. In doing this, language is seen as a discrete entity and separated from other languages and meaning making systems and modalities. Recent literature (Canagarajah, 2007) has critiqued the essentialist views of language as discrete systems that are pervasive in the language policy and TESOL methodology discourses. The official discourses of language-in-education policy makers in many postcolonial societies, however, still tend to project and assert the view of languages as stable, monolithic (uniform), reified (concrete) entities with clear-cut boundaries. The job of the language planner is seen as lying in the prescription and standardization of linguistic systems culminating in the production of authoritative dictionaries, grammars, and teaching manuals of the national and official languages to be spread among the population. These standard languages are put forward as educational targets, and the state's acquisition planning aiming at designing the most effective approaches for achieving these targets usually results in the recommendation of monolingual immersion approaches: total use of the target language is supposed to be the best way to achieve target language proficiency.

However, such thinking and theorisation of language has been questioned in recent times – as discussed in the previous section. Recent work on language has questioned the limitation of studies based on their focus on a single semiotic (meaning-making) mode and ignoring how meanings are construed and represented multimodally (using more than one mode, e.g., by using images and text together, as in children's story books) (see Canagarajah, 2005; Bezemer & Kress, 2014) in different contexts. The 3D model of language variation described in the previous section is also a response to this gap. Similarly, work on translanguaging (Garcia, 2009) and language as a complex adaptive dynamic system (Beckner *et al*, 2009) also looks into this issue. This body of work can help us theorise and develop ways that can be used by classroom teachers to help their students develop the language of domains 5 & 6 and eventually 7 & 8.

Mahboob and Lin (in press) drawing from Lin (2010) discuss the *Multimodalities/Entextualization Cycle* as one way in which classroom teachers can draw on and use students' existing language knowledge (domains 1 and 2) and help them to develop domains 5 & 6. Mahboob and Lin (in press) identify three stages in the *Multimodalities/Entextualization Cycle*:

Stage 1: Create a rich experiential context to arouse students' interest, and immerse the students in the topic field (e.g., festivals in the students' country) using multimodalities such as visuals, images, Youtube videos, diagrams, demonstrations, actions, inquiry/discovery activities, etc. In this stage, the familiar local languages of students (e.g., domains 1 and 2

as well as everyday language from domains 5 & 6) can be used to help the students to grasp the main gist of the experience.

Stage 2: Engage students in reading a coherent piece of TL (target language) text on the topic introduced in Stage 1, and then engage students in note-making or mind-mapping tasks that require some systematic ‘sorting out’ or re-/presentation of the target language textual meaning using different kinds/combinations of *everyday local/target language spoken/written genres and multimodalities* (e.g., bilingual notes, graphic organizers, mind maps, visuals, diagrams, pictures, oral description, story-boards, comics); these activities help students to *unpack* the target language academic text using local/target everyday language and multimodalities.

Stage 3: Engage students in *entextualizing* (putting experience in text) the experience using target language spoken/written genres (e.g., poems, short stories, descriptive reports) with language scaffolds provided (e.g., key vocab, sentence frames, writing / speaking prompts, etc.)

These three stages form a curriculum genre, which Lin (2010; forthcoming) calls the Multimodalities/Entextualization Cycle (MEC). The MEC (see Figure 1 below) can be reiterated until the target language learning goals have been achieved. The key principle is to use students' local languages (domains 1 and 2) to scaffold students into TL everyday languages (domains 5 & 6) and genres together with multimodalities.

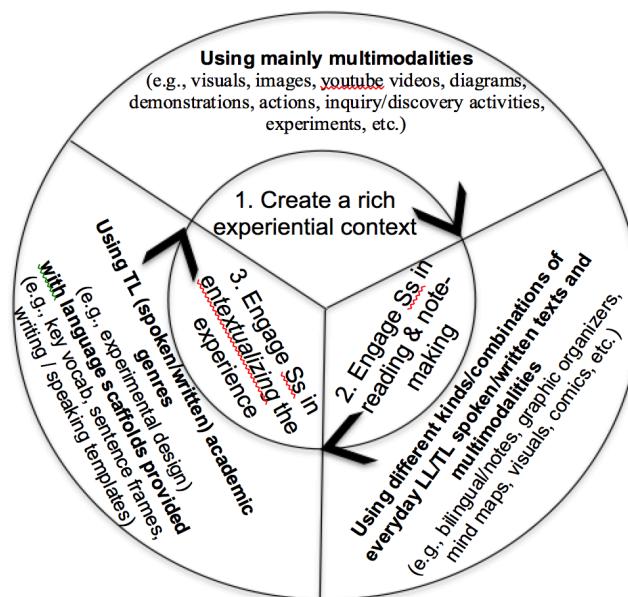


Figure 1: *The Multimodalities/Entextualization Cycle (MEC)*  
Adapted from Lin (2010) (Key: Ss = students; LL = local language; TL = target language)

Mahboob and Lin (in press) argue that when we adopt a balanced and open-minded stance towards the potential role of local languages in English language classrooms, there is a lot of systematic planning and research that we can do to figure out how and when we can use language of domains 1 & 2 to help students develop the language needed to successfully participate in domains 5 & 6 and then eventually domains 7 & 8. We need additional research to explore these areas and to provide us with guidelines that can be used to train and empower teachers and students in the future.

## Conclusions

This chapter aimed to discuss the implications of the NNEST lens in the context of teacher education programs in TESOL by looking at two issues: avoiding the monolingual bias in describing languages and language variation; and, avoiding a monolingual bias in developing teaching methods. In discussing the first issue, the chapter identified some of the limitations in how many ELTs (and others) see language and grammar in limited ways and how this can be expanded by using an NNEST lens. The chapter described the 3D framework of language variation in some detail and discussed its implications for language teaching. In the following section, the chapter discussed why local languages are not included in much of the theorisation and practice of TESOL. The chapter argued that there are historical as well as theoretical reasons why local languages have been excluded in TESOL. The chapter then shared Lin's (2010) *Multimodalities/Entextualization Cycle* as one way in which teachers can consider integrating local languages in their classrooms. The section ended with suggesting that teachers and researchers need to experiment and try out different ways in which they can integrate local languages in their classrooms and share notes on what combinations work best.

In concluding, this chapter provides a discussion of some of the directions that TESOL teacher education programs can develop in if they use the NNEST lens in developing their programs. Programs that draw on the NNEST lens will challenge the monolingual bias in the field and provide ways to move our research and practice forward in a responsible manner.

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## Annotated bibliography

Mahboob, A. (in press) Understanding language variation: Implications of the NNEST lens for TESOL teacher education programs. In Juan de Dios Martínez Agudo (Ed) Native and non-native speakers in English language teaching: Implications and challenges for teacher education. Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Braine, G. (2010). *Nonnative speaker English teachers: Research, pedagogy, and professional growth*. New York: Routledge.

This book traces the origins and growth of the NNEST movement and summarizes the research that has been conducted on the issue. It highlights challenges faced by NNESTs as well as promote NNESTs professional development.

Mahboob, A. (2015) Identity Management, Language Variation, and English Language Textbooks. In Djenar, D., Mahboob, A. & Cruickshank, K. (Eds.) *Language and Identity Across Modes of Communication*. Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.

This paper introduces the Identity Management framework and discusses how using inappropriate models of local language in educational context can impacts students semiotic development and their identities.

Mahboob, A. & Barratt, L. (2014.). Englishes in multilingual contexts: Language variation and education. London: Springer.

This contributions to this edited volume first look at the importance of studying English language variation in the context of education and then identify pedagogical possibilities that respect language variation and empower English language learners in diverse contexts.

Selvi, A. F. (2014). Myths and misconceptions about nonnative English speakers in the TESOL (NNEST) movement. *TESOL Journal*, 5.3, 573-611.

This paper provides a concise review of myths and misconceptions about NNTESS and discusses some of the key purposes and achievements of the NNEST movement.

### **Questions for reflection and discussion**

1. How does the definition of grammar presented in this paper differ from common sense understandings of the term? How is an understanding of grammar, as discussed in this paper, relevant to your context of language learning/teaching?
2. The 3D model presented in this paper argues that both native and non-native speakers develop their language in domains 1 and 2. How does this view differ from or is similar to traditional approaches about nativeness? What are some of the implications of this in the context of education?
3. The paper states, “No one is a ‘native-speaker’ of domains 7 & 8.” What are some of the reasons behind this claim?
4. The paper argues that there is a role for local languages (domain 1 and 2) in language teaching/learning. Do you agree with this suggestion? Provide evidence/arguments to support your position?