IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH IN REGIONAL ACADEMIC PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF ASIAN-PACIFIC COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The paper reviews the historical backdrop of English language with specific identification of its various roles in academic domain. The study is aimed at highlighting spread of English language that is encountered in history since eighteenth century and is still in pace of advancement within the Asia-Pacific region. The data have been collected from different textbooks, research studies and the video documentaries on YouTube channel. Second part of this study makes sense of the turn of events and qualities of English language academic strategies in Asian Pacific nations. The paper highlights those nations that have their place in the growing circle of Kachru's (1985) model, and in the extending circle. Additionally, paper attempts to review the formative qualities of academic techniques adopted for English language within the Asian-pacific nations. Further, paper highlights qualities of English that raises its standard as global language. It tends to underlie particular role for English that is devised between social correspondences all around the planet. The crucial role of educational practices in English is to train the youth to utilise their subtle capabilities in English and readily respond in the international forums with their own proficient capacities.

Keywords: Academic, Asia-Pacific, English, Historical review, Language, Nonnative

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INTRODUCTION

Historical picture of English emergence in Asian-Pacific region is set very interesting and significant to comprehend different characteristics within academic domain to teach and learn English. The position of English is compared to English native speaker consumers that are set within the inner part of circle in Kachru's (1985) model. Therefore, to view the background knowledge for varieties of English in Asian-Pacific countries, it is crucial to clarify variety of roles for education in English with this region. The study intends to demonstrate the significant contribution of English in academic domains of Asian-Pacific countries. It traced back the historical perspective of English spread in 18th century in countries, namely, the Philippines, China, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan with particular progressive changes in its characteristics.

Study is aimed to highlight spread of English language that is encountered in history since eighteenth century and is still in pace of advancement within the Asia-Pacific region. For addressing the research question: What is the importance and role of English in academic domain of Asian-Pacific countries? The paper focuses on three major aspects of English development in Asian-Pacific counties:

- It traces the historical perspective of English spread in 18th century within Asian-Pacific countries along with their developmental procedures;
- Paper will try to elucidate developmental stages covered by English in this region with particular progressive changes in its characteristics highlighted by educational lingual policies within Asian-Pacific countries; and
- Lastly, study intends to accentuate significant part of education in English with particular aspect to highlight its future in academic domain to learn and teach it within Asian-Pacific countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emergence of English within Asian-Pacific States: Historical Perspective

History of English emergence in Asian-Pacific countries has been associated to its spread in different phases. According to Adamson (2002), there are two main phases. First phase demonstrated individuals in ethnic group that migrated to eastern and then to southern regions of Britain. From the state of Britain, later they migrated to United States of America (USA) and Australia. The second phase shows the real emergent role of English in form of colonization in states of Africa, South Asia and Eastern part of the globe. It let to develop variety of English forms, known to be as World Englishes. Jenkins (2003) stated that the spread of English in South Asia and eastern Asian-Pacific states have been recorded in later 18th century.

The Asian-Pacific states that got mainly involved in verge of English were Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and the Hong Kong (Yano, 2009). Lim, Foley and J (2004), stated that in 1819, Singapore was found and initially became the part of British Empire with skilful contributions imparted by Stamford Raffles, who was the administrator ruling the Britain East Indian Company. Later, Britain contributed to found its centres in Malaysia in year 1842. Later, the state of Hong Kong was assimilated under British Empire. Bolton (2000) stated this colonization continued till the later part of 19th century, till then, after the devastating war of Spanish-America, the United States of America (USA) granted its sovereignty on state of Philippines. This historical image of English successful progress in these states grew stronger with influence on throughout the Asian-Pacific region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study is based on the contribution of different research studies, which have focused the developmental stages of English in Asian Pacific countries with specific notion to demonstrate its progressive changes on national level. Thus, the study is purely qualitative and based on secondary data. The lingual developmental policies of Asian Pacific countries, discussed in this paper, are: The Philippines, China, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan.

FINDINGS

The following sections present successful progress of English within academic domains of Asian-Pacific countries. The states included are; the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Korea. It is vital to know historical image of English development in lingual policies of the following Asian states in order to define its role in future academic zone.

Singaporean- English Variety: A Historical Perspective

The state of Singapore became colonized under British Empire with political skilful efforts taken by the then administrator of Britain (East Indian Company), Sir Stamford Raffles in year 1819. Later, became a separate state in 1965 from Malaysia. Taking the demographic statistics of Singaporean state, Gupta, (2006) and Lim and Foley (2004) stated that there is Malay - 14%, Chinese - 75%, Indians - 8%, with inclusion of other racial tribes which accounts to 3%. The Mandarin language has been frequently spoken as the native tongue by majority in this state and it is considered as powerful. The other two lingual codes are Tamil and Malay. Mandarin became powerful with launch of campaign, "Speak Mandarin" in year 1979 by the then Prime Minister of state Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. Lin (2002) marked three official lingual codes in Singapore. They are Tamil, Malay and Mandarin. According to Rubdy (2001), Singaporean state government, since its inception, tried to focus on bi-lingual academic reforms with

emphasis onto English usage in classroom settings. Since then, English is present in all academic levels from primary to tertiary in all kinds of schools. English is dealt as compulsory to all governmental sectors. They are academics, commerce, public admin, commerce, technology and the science (Lin, 2002).

The official documentation in governmental work places, contractual business forms, and signs of public are all in English. The course content of different subjects is in English other than classes of native languages. The research scholars in association (Platt, 1975; Platt & Weber, 1980) described two unique forms of English in use. H variety is formal and L is informal. Gupta (1991, 1994) further elaborated the following two forms of English. The formal is classified standard and known to be as "Singaporean Standard English Variety", the other is informal and known as "Singaporean Colloquial English Variety". The formal is utilized in formal settings (i.e., academic contexts). It is learnt in schools. The Standard variety is similar to American or the Britain variety. However, very few variations are observed in borrowings of lexis items with pronunciation. The substandard variety "L" is commonly utilized in vernacular context. It is usually a first lingual code of Singaporean child because it is learnt first in informal contexts.

Therefore, it is native code of majority of Singaporean citizens. Around 3.5 million of citizens use L variety of Singaporean English also known as *Singlish*. It is commonly observed to be used in shopping stalls, homes and on streets. The media superstars also enjoy this variety. However, it is commonly perceived as negative form of variety. Speak-(Good English) campaign in Singapore tried to discourage its use in media, academic settings and governmental offices with focus to eradicate this variety. Later, native Singaporeans argued to preserve this variety as it tends to identify them with multilingual cultural and racial background of various ethnic Singaporean tribes. It is form of identity for them (Rubdy, 2001).

Background of English Development in Hong-Kong

Historical record of English emergence in Hong-Kong dates back to early phase of 17th century. It is when Britain started trade with Asian-Pacific countries. In 1842, Hong Kong came under the privilege of British Empire soon with first phase of Opium-War between China and British. English got its emergent phase in Hong Kong, when it was taught as well utilized in academic settings. The result of following missionary movement was establishment of Hong Kong University in year 1911. English took its position as common medium to instruct and is still. In 1967, after success of Communist formed riots, Chinese was officially used along English in all academic levels in Hong Kong. Later, in 1970s- 90s, when Hong Kong officially became part of China, then the societal, academic and economic transformations were witnessed. Majority of affluent class tried to send children to overseas to acquire better educational opportunities. However, middle and below middle class individuals were given bilingual academic trainings.

As result, Bolton (2000) stated that majority of children can easily comprehend and learn English within Anglo-Chinese Schools. Universities had English in use with wider form of acceptance. According to the statistics on increased use of English was provided by Bacon-Shone and Bolton (1998), it was witnessed 7% in 1983 to 35% in year 1993 then to 40% in 1996. However, the Hong Kong variety of English have not yet achieved wider acceptance throughout community and worldwide. The reason was investigated and raised by Tsui and Bunton (2000). According to them, the instructors of Hong Kong variety of English that taught English had many lingual issues within their messages. In their study, they had 102 instructors that consisted for 85 non-native and 17 native consumers of English. They were observed to use authentic materials for correct usage of English that is acceptable. Majority had grammar books and dictionaries from the native English countries. Hong Kong instructors were badly criticized to use textbooks that have been published in

Hong Kong.

History of Developmental Phases of the Philippian English

State of Philippines has a high regard of large number of English speakers. It has been the third large in number, having English consumers (Bolton & Bautista, 2004; Gonzalez, 2004). English has become a major part of Filipinos within personal and public lives. According to Bolton and Bautista (2004), English has got the coofficial status. It is because of its usage in law, governmental functionaries and academic disciplines. In further, it also has major part within social media platforms, print-media and creative content writings. The Philippines have been under domination of Spain (1565-1898). Catholicism was introduced as state religion. Later, it came under the verge of USA (1898-1944). This state has been under control of Japan for very short period of time. Bolton and Bautista (2004) stated that this state have been under influence of USA even after its sole independence within political lives of Filipinos.

The Philippine variety of English is taught and taken as subject of research by World Englishes' scholars. This variety developed under colonization of USA, when America brought great academic developments in this state. In year 1900, the colonized state of Philippines witness "English-Only Policy" by USA to affirm all Filipinos on one page to teach and learn English effectively, irrespective to their various lingual backgrounds. This was backed for access towards modernization amongst Filipinos. Later in 1939, the government introduced Bi-lingual policy of education. Jorge Bocobo, the then educational secretary ordered English to be continued for medium to instruct, however, at primary stage, instructors were allowed for local lingual code usage as supplement to instruct (Bernardo, 2004). Later in 1948, study of Aguilar began that lasted till 1954. It reported Filipinos learnt English effectively, when combined to vernacular lingual codes for instruction. In 1957, the revised program of Philippine academics was introduced. Bernardo (2004) stated that it was declared for grades 1 and to 2. English is taught as compulsory in these grades, vernacular to be auxiliary form to instruct. In 1974, there was capitalization of anti-American and colonial feelings; therefore, educational department executed bilingual policy of education. This allowed Filipino and English used as instructional medium at elementary and the high grades (ibid.). English is widely utilized as medium to flourish communicative skills, mathematics, arts and science along with Filipinos. Filipino focuses more to learn history and social studies. Educational bilingual policies in year 1987 by educational, cultural and sports department, tended to revise lingual policies that stressed on Filipino for scholarly discussion on literary discussions, whereas, English for technological advancement and science (Bernardo, 2004). According to Gonzalez (2004), students with Filipino language have positive attitudes to English with its consideration to be the powerful language.

Malaysian English: The Historic-Outlook

The emergence of English had a vital position in Malaysia because of its past. Malaysia was once the part of Britain Empire and so, English was part of legal proceedings along with medium to instruct. According to Hashim (2003), in 1845, "The Strait-Times" and "Daily English Newspaper" were first to be published in English. English after its emergence in newspapers also became part of medium to instruct at primary and secondary grades. In 1957, after the independence of Malaysia from British colonization, it was first recognized to be official throughout country. It became second widely used authorized in National- Language Act (1967). (Bahasa) Malaysia followed to be used as medium to instruct within public academic contexts and higher levels of institutes. Though, English was still compulsorily taught at primary stage, however, later in 2003, this became to be utilized as medium to instruct mathematics as well science subjects within all public and private sector schools till the higher level grade classes.

Emergence of English in Taiwan: Heroic Passion of its Spread in Academic Domain

Educational Ministry clearly passed the order that neither of foreign lingual code was to be taught at primary level in 1922. The foreign-language education was to begin at secondary stage. Later, educational policies were revised in Taiwan, which basically turned to favour American variety of English as standard variety. English then required courses for students at secondary grades. Later, in 2001 English turned out to be compulsory at 5th as well 6th grades. English became necessary at 3rd grade and for upper grades from 2005 (Park, K-J., & Nakano, 2007).

English in Extreme East of World: State of Japan

English started its journey towards Japan, when Britain navigation officer under work of Dutch had first fleet at ashore of Bungo, (Kyusu Island) in year 1600 (Nakano 2003). In year 1808, British Empire attacked "Deijma- Trade Post of Dutches" at Nagasaki. As result of this attack, the government of Tokugawa passed an order for all interpreters of Dutch origin to compulsorily learn Russian along with English. English for the first time stepped into academic domain. The ships of Mathew Perry, the then United States Navy Commodore arrived at Uraga (Tokyo Bay). With this, an agreement was signed in shape of treaty named "American-Japanese of Amity". English replaced Dutch to be the only foreign lingual code in Japan. The era of Meiji witnessed strong position of English academically. The approaches to teach English were twofold. One of the approaches was to instruct through owners of English and other through translation of English from Japanese to English through Japanese instructors. The era of Taisho witnessed great opposition for English in academic domains because it was considered troublesome and useless in routine version.

Later, Educational ministry hired an educationist, Harold E. Palmer in Japan in year 1922, acting as advisor to education in English. Era

before the Second World War witnessed declination of English. However, at its end in 1945, it boomed to its peak. English became compulsory from 3-6 grade system as elective in year 1947. According to Jenkins (2003), English became compulsory part for entrance based examinations in public higher schools in 1956. Later, the oral part of communication was introduced in 1989 within higher grades curriculum of English. As result, English became compulsory for secondary academic programs. English introduced as integrative part and made compulsory for 5th and 6th grades in year 2008. According to Kanji Horiguchi (2010), number of lessons in English was seemed to increase two fold in year 2010.

Developmental Stages of English in the Cross-Borders of China

The developmental phases of English in China have been divided into three long periods (Adamson, 2002). These long periods are Qing dynastic phase, the era of Republicans and People's Republic of China. First period is entirely characterized to be aggressive and full of cultural clashes. First phase (1759-1860): English got status as language to trade between two nations. Canton (Guangzhou) was nominated by the government of China as focus of trade with foreign nations; the foreigners had allowance to reside near (Shamian) Island. Bolton (2002) mentioned that missionary practices to instruct English started from southern part of China, later schools were established in 1830s in state of Macau shortly after start of First Opium War. Second phase (1861-1911), witnessed official ground of English. It was considered language to learn technology and western sciences.

According to Adamson (2002), English was a powerful weapon for government of China to develop fruitful diplomatic terms at international forum. Bolton and Tong (2002) stated that English was readily taught in missionary academic domains (colleges and primary schools) after the end of Second Opium War (1856-60). Second period of era for republicans witnessed friendly terms of Chinese government with owners of English consumer states. First phase of republicans (1911-23) had great prestige of English with debates

concerning its favour in overall academic activities. It gained higher official form of status that was later utilized to explore philosophy of western origin and other related ideas. Some of the better opportunities were opened for Chinese to continue higher studies abroad. The second phase of Republicans (1924-49) served English as medium to construct valuable military, intellectual and diplomatic dynamics between East and West.

Third and the last period that initiated from 1949 up to now have various dimensions to follow. It has fluctuating course of political affairs at both domestic and international grounds. The first phase for third period (1949-60) accepted English with lower status on official grounds because of conservative political reigns that were unfavourable to instruct English. With capitalization development on cultural grounds, English again became the popular code. It became tool to modernize nation and promote comprehension of political environment at national and international levels for better promotion of diplomatic relations with westerners. Second stage of last period (1966-76) had cultural revolutionary practices that swept whole nation. It labelled users of English as the traitors of China Republic. It was condemnable to learn any foreign literature. The western literature and artifacts have been attacked; the curricula at secondary as well tertiary grades were set to abandonment. Lam (2002) stated that later in year 1971, China restored its relation with United States of America and in return. China got recognition as member for United Nations (UN).

In year 1972, the visit of ex-president of United States of America, Richard Nixon was fruitful. Both nations agreed to exchange views on various subjects that include, culture, commerce and education. Lam (2002) stated that slogan to learn and serve foreign people and matters was revived under nomenclature 'Red and the Expert'.

With the end of Mao Zedong era, the Chinese Cultural Revolution also ceased to exist. Era from (1976-82) English regained its position into better form and gained same public popularity. It became the

only foreign lingual code used at secondary stage in year 1982. This results into the first conference (International) to instruct English held in Guangzhou in 1985. People Republic of China (PRC) introduced lesson on EFL subject for third grade learners at all primary stages from 2001 (Yuhua, 2002). According to Qiang and Wolff (2003), educational ministry made further decisions to assist youth to better face novice challenges and tried to accept full membership of World Trade Organization (WTO) in year 2001. Beijing does host many Olympic athlete games as witnessed in 2008.

Korean English: Historical Parlance of English Journey in Korea

The trace of English in Korean academic context started from dynasty of Yi. Youth was encouraged to instruct foreign lingual code specifically English, if one possessed satisfactory qualities. During this period, the dynasty divided academic English in two sets to deliver educational English. They were missionary and the other public institutions. Public institutions started their educational English in Korea with establishment of *Dong MunHak* (同文學) in year 1883. It trained translators to become expert to translate and interpret Korean to other foreign lingual codes. Another institute, Yuk Young Gong Won(育英公院) established to cultivate youth towards adopting better education and modernize the overall society. Later, school to learn foreign dialect for public established for youth to handle different important tasks and modernize Korea in 1893. Differences of two of these institutes were based on instructors of Korea in 官立 外國語學校. Many other institutes that lead for education in English included BaeJae Boys High School(培材學), Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and others. The following missionary institutes played critical role to modernize dynasty of Yi not in terms of academic English, but for betterment of whole Korea.

Main motive behind missionary schools was to propagate Christianity amongst young Koreans. Holy book of Bible was utilized as textbook and instructors of English that taught it. Koreans later suffered in imperialistic era of Japanese; therefore, academically English was again declined. In this imperialistic phase, Koreans have to utilize Japanese in different life phases along with English through Japanese. Majority of instructors to instruct English were Japanese by origin. They had negative response on English pronunciation. Instruction method was grammar-translation.

It was followed by innovation in curriculum at national level. With independence of Korea from Japanese imperialistic impact, education of English was present in tentative course outline that was first established in nationwide curriculum in year 1955. It could be surveyed for 10 years. The tentative form of syllabus in period up to 2000 continued to instruct English through grammar-translation. Emphasis was paid to comprehend various cultural dogmas of foreign nations. English in academic domain was again introduced through Korean. Grammar translation as mode to instruct English continued in 1950s, however, practical role of psychology played vitally to develop textbooks of English. Curriculum of Nation later stressed on listening and the speaking abilities of English through use of audio-lingual technique to instruct with introduction of Korean cultural traits to various nations in 1960s.

Later in year 1970s, communicative stance was given importance that replaced grammar translation technique. Tests started to be conducted from four lingual skills of English in 1980s. 1990s witnessed great innovations in to instruct English with introduction of English as regular at elementary stage in year 1997 (Nakano, 2007). It became the part of people's basic interest. Second important innovation on part of Korean government was import of native users of English as instructors. This let a great influence on minds of teachers and general public. The students and instructors of English witnessed significance of communicative proficiency in real life situations. Third vital innovation was adoption of scholastic capability test in national colleges. Koreans that wished to take admission in universities were required to take clear scholastic test

that was administered by state government. It was initiated in year 1993.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

From the above findings of study, the following significant contributions can be accounted for English language in Asia-Pacific Region.

Different roles imparted by English in Asian-Pacific Region

Based on historical image of survey for advancement of English within Asian-Pacific countries, the specific academic role to learn and teach English can verily be stated into following three cases: it is crucial to identify significance of non-native consumers of English that uses English for purpose of communication throughout World. They usually encourage for interactions in international forums and state to create a situation that activates routinized communication throughout the globe. It is followed by highlighting bi-directional communicative action between native and non-native consumers of English around the World. The third and important aspect tends to acknowledge effective efforts of non-native consumers of English teachers to teach English within Asian-Pacific countries to train and present professional non-native consumers of English speaking teachers (NNESTs) that are qualified to teach English within each Asian-Pacific country.

Significance of Non-native Interactional Panel in Asian-Pacific Region

The overall region of Asian-Pacific region belonged to developing and expanding circles in model of Kachru (1985). The countries in outer level of circle are native consumers- norm independent, however, countries in expanding level of circle are native consumers-norm dependent. Therefore, it is very important to recognize benefits of non-native to non-native consumers of English with Asian-Pacific countries. However, there have been few individual variations based

on rates of speeches in citizens of Asian-Pacific countries. They are usually found to be slow compared to native consumers of English. It is one of the aspects to facilitate non-native learners of English for proper interactions. Yano (2009) tended to highlight beneficial effects for non-native to non-native interactions within Asian- Pacific countries. First, the use of English in this type of interaction assists Asian-Pacific students to overcome their psychological inferiority and liberate their personalities as free individuals from native consumers of English. Secondly, to use English for communicative purposes tend to reduce its learners for excessive personal consciousness for English. It results into positive and versatile response within international forums that demands communication in English only. Lastly, nonnative consumers of English present different complications to express fully in English and counter similar form of mistakes in grammar, however, learners of English within Asian-Pacific countries tend to realize its effect more importantly to participate within discussion forums.

Concept of Two-Way Communication in World

In present, the actual mark of difference between native and nonnative consumers of English is lessening. Therefore, in order to comprehend use of English by individuals of different ethnic backgrounds is in need of consideration. Speakers of various ethnic cultures need proper exposure. There is a crucial need for a global platform that initiates communication in English. This could benefit both non-native consumers of English and native consumers of English for compulsory training in worldwide communication.

English should be learnt and instructed in two-way direction. This creates relation of native and non-native speakers of English. It creates a proper awareness to highlight differences for usage of English in different aspects of life. The effective worldwide communication is achieved through overcoming different ethnic and national barriers to recognize identical level for native and non-native English consumers.

Non-native English Instructors: Non-native Consumers of English

Since decades, the profession to teach and learn English has assumed to be under verge of native consumers of English (NESTs) due to psychological superiority of oral production. It tends to state an ideal picture of English instructor. However, many researchers even proved non-native English consumers offer advantageous position to teach and learn English. Therefore, level of proficiency for English user must be kept in mind. Amongst the four lingual skills, the skill to speak may or may not deserve within all situations to get elevated to observe proficiency. The profession has been served well through proper consideration of proficiency in communication of individual within four lingual skills. Native consumers of English have been observed to unequivocal to non-native users of English due to being native English users. Training and past experience is significant qualification to teach English.

Therefore, being native user of English has been the solution that could be valid worldwide. With the education, the non-native users of English can get competence in English. Secondly, the instructors of English need competence for proper performance. The competence also includes basic knowledge for societal and psychological elements that are collectively known as para-lingual factors. Third most important factor that makes instructor more effective is based on application of various interest eliciting strategies that are equally innovative. Non-native users of English can also be effective instructors of English than native users of English to teach English from various ethnic perspectives.

CONCLUSION

Paper concludes with crucial part of English within academic domains of Asian-Pacific regions. The significant idea presented by following model is to demonstrate two-way roles of Asian varieties of English. The first act of English is to highlight the identity presented by each ethnic as well the cultural assemblage of people. It

is by use of English with specific native language within Asian-Pacific nations. The next step is to view role of English as opening gate to the rest of World. In order to fulfil this opportunity, Asian-Pacific variety of English does play significant part like: instruction of English speeds up development of nation, it tends to understand different cultures and other ethnic groupings, and to instruct English with respect to a weapon that assists to communicate internationally around the World.

Non-native consumers of English that tends to speak English have been outnumbered rapidly compared to native English users. Therefore, the significant part of English does have a crucial dignity in global context. Considering the above mentioned facts, it is crucial to have proper survey onto unique characteristics of Asian-Pacific varieties of English that could define various functionary domains of them to set clear mark to teach English in academic domain within Asian-Pacific region. Therefore, this little contribution of educational research to highlight emergence of English with its development tends to present critical part of academic status of English within Asian Pacific countries. It can further pave path to bring into discussion various other research based areas on education in English.

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