

**LANGUAGE, IDEOLOGY AND WORLD ENGLISHES: AN
ANALYSIS OF 8TH GRADE ELT MATERIALS IN FINLAND**

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Abstract <p>Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet (POPS2014) ohjaa oppilaita tutustumaan englanninkielisen maailman kielivariantteihin ja kulttuureihin. Englanninopetus Suomessa on kuitenkin pitkään keskittynyt brittienglannin ja niin sanotun 'standardikielen' ympärille. Tämä tutkielma keskittyy kahteen yläkoulun englannin oppimateriaaliin ja niissä esiintyviin kieli-ideologioihin. Tavoitteena on selvittää, miten englannin variantit tuodaan esille äänitiedostoissa, teksteissä ja kuvissa. Englannin varianteilla viitataan tässä työssä kielelliseen monimuotoisuuteen, sekä kieliyhteisöjen että yksilöiden välillä. Tutkimus on laadullinen ja soveltaa kriittistä diskurssianalyysia, keskiössä ollen multimodaalisuus.</p> <p>Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että 91,3 prosenttia materiaalien äänitiedostoista koostuu britti-, australian- ja amerikanenglannista. Brittienglannilla on erityisen suuri painotus ääntämisen opetuksessa. Vaikka materiaaleja läpileikkaa länsimainen kulttuuri ja 'standardi' englannin normatiivisuus, on myös pyrkimyksiä kulttuurien väliseen keskusteluun ja valta-asetelmien avaamiseen. Materiaalien heterogeenisuus viittaa siihen, että oppimateriaalien laatijoilla on hyvin moninaisia tulkintoja opetussuunnitelman tavoitteista. Tämä herättää kysymyksiä kirjoitusprosessia ohjaavien dokumenttien riittävydestä sekä ennen kaikkea, opettajien kriittisestä roolista luokkahuonetodellisuuden rakentajina.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The term “varieties of English” was first added to the Finnish National Core Curriculum in 2014 (Peterson 2019:6, Opetushallitus 2016) and today, Finnish students are exposed to a wide array of world Englishes. However, Peterson (2022a) points out that regardless of the reforms made, the ideologies of native-speakerism and ‘standard English’ are still very much alive in Finnish society. For instance, American and British English are the most prevailing and sought after varieties among Finnish students (Peterson 2022a:278) and, according to Carrie (2017), it is specifically British English that European students associate with formal classroom situations. Thus, it could be argued that there is a conflict between the educational aims stated in the Core Curriculum and students’ social reality.

Given the contrast between educational policies and language classrooms, it is necessary to shift our focus to ELT materials. As highlighted by Curdt-Christiansen and Weninger (2015), language teaching is by no means free of surrounding ideologies. On the contrary, textbooks can carry political, cultural and pedagogical implications about what it means to be a ‘proficient’ language user or what can be considered as ‘good language’. As textbooks can communicate ideas of power, prestige and what language variations are prioritised over others, they have tremendous power on shaping language education. Thus, teaching materials are not only reflecting the social reality of our world but rather, influencing and changing it (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger 2015:2).

One such case would be the dominance of white, ‘inner-circle’ English in Finnish ELT materials. In a Finnish study conducted over ten years ago, it was found that only three percent of the ELT audio material under analysis consisted of non-inner-circle variations (Kopperoinen 2011). As the Core Curriculum of the time has since expired, it is perhaps more topical than ever to critically examine how recently published ELT materials fulfil the more up-to-date pedagogical

aims. Can teaching materials present English in a way that values the representation of world Englishes but, at the same time, does not promote exclusion or inequality?

This study sets out to see how world Englishes are represented in Finnish ELT materials. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, this will be done by classifying the audio recordings of two ELT material packages by prominent textbooks publishers in Finland. In addition to relative frequencies of English varieties, it is the combinations of audio, context and other elements that are of interest. In particular, this study aims to explore how multimodal resources of language textbooks (such as pictures and written text) communicate meaning and ideological aims. How are societal discourses of Finnish society recontextualised in ELT materials and, most importantly, how have the materials adapted to the new aims of the National Core Curriculum?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Perceptions of world Englishes

English has undergone a tremendous change from a language of 4 million to a global lingua franca spoken by an estimated 1 billion people around the world (Pennycook 2017:7). The spread of English was achieved by colonialism, soon to be followed by linguistic imperialism. As a result, the English language now has multiple varieties that differ greatly in their spelling, phonology and in other linguistic features. All these varieties combined are what we call ‘world Englishes’ or ‘English varieties’. While challenging to define, I will be using these two terms when referring to linguistic diversity within the English language, borrowing the ideas of Kubota & Ward (2000).

English varieties have relative value and prestige placed on them. For instance, the well-known Three Circles Model by Kachru (1985) classifies Englishes into three domains based on the colonial expansion of English: the ‘inner circle’ consisting of ‘native speakers’ of English, the ‘outer circle’ consisting of former exploited colonies where English is spoken as a second language and the ‘expanding circle’ representing the rest of the world where English has a foreign language status. The model has later been criticised for failing to capture the issues of inequality and power (Pennycook 2017:9) and for not answering to the complexities of how English is used in postcolonial contexts (Schneider 2007). Most notably, however, the model makes a division between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers of English. While deemed illegitimate by many scholars, this categorisation is a very real theme in ELT discourse. ‘Native-speakerism’ includes an idea of a ‘native speaker’ that represents the English-speaking West, excluding those that are non-western and non-white (Holliday 2006). In other words, while ‘native’ speakers are largely associated with inner circle norms, ‘non-native’ speakers are associated with the outer and expanding circles (Peterson 2022a:271).

In addition to geographical location, what seems to differentiate a ‘native speaker’ is, unsurprisingly, ethnicity and race. Namely, while ‘native’ speakers are associated with whiteness, ‘non-native’ speakers are associated with brownness (Rosa 2019). In a British study by Levon et al. (2021), it was discovered that ‘Multicultural London English’ (MLE) was rated the lowest in hireability by employers. Thus, it could be argued that negative attitudes towards certain varieties are connected to negative attitudes towards race. Another factor seems to be social class. As spotted by Edwards and Seargeant (2017), English has a strong role in reproducing social hierarchies and indicating the social class of the speaker. In particular, language varieties perceived as ‘non-native’ or accented may be viewed as unsophisticated and low-class (pp. 353-354).

Based on these observations, the English language is certainly not free of social biases. What is worth noticing is that these ideas of English or, language ideologies, do not exist in a vacuum or solely in English speaking communities. More often than not, they are transferred to foreign language settings.

2.2 Language ideologies in Finland

Like in many other non-colonial settings, the English language in Finland is exonormative in nature. In other words, rules of correctness are constructed according to an external model (Schneider 2007). In the Finnish context, this model has historically been Great Britain. Due to the efforts of institutions such as the British Council, as well as Finland’s endeavours to meet the demands of globalisation, English secured its spot as the number one foreign language in Finland. What was also transferred during this process are language ideologies (Peterson 2022a:276-277). *Ideology* refers to ideas, practices and beliefs that are pervasive on a societal level, often including the question of power. As defined by Chiapello & Fairclough (2002:187), ideologies exist for “explaining a given political order, legitimising existing hierarchies and power relations and preserving group identities”. Despite their salience and influence on individuals’ attitudes toward language, ideologies can be quite invisible and challenging to identify

(Milroy 2006:133). Regardless, I will attempt to briefly discuss some of the ideological stances salient in the Finnish context.

According to Peterson (2022a), Finnish attitudes towards English varieties are deeply rooted in classism, elitism and perceptions of race. In their study, Leppänen & Pahta (2012) identified at least four ideological positions on ‘good’ and ‘bad’ English. According to them, ‘good English’ is spoken by ‘native’ speakers or, alternatively, by ‘non-native’ speakers who wish to highlight their identity by speaking in a non-native accent. ‘Bad English’, on the other hand, is spoken by low-class ‘non-native’ speakers. Another view on ‘bad English’ is the kind of English that dominates the Finnish language, culture and nation state: in other words, English as a threat (p. 163). Based on these observations, it is quite safe to say that ‘native-like’ English holds a high social value in Finnish society. That being said, it seems like this prestige only applies to inner-circle varieties of English. In a questionnaire by Leppänen et al. (2009), the respondents showed positive attitudes towards British and American English. Indian English, on the other hand, received negative evaluations (pp. 56-58). These intersections of language and race are also reported by many immigrant professionals who come to Finland. Indeed, immigrants from Western, inner-circle countries (especially those who are white) are stereotyped as representing ‘positive internationalisation’, while immigrants of other ethnicities struggle to integrate into Finnish society that is predominantly white (Koskela 2020:5). Overall, it seems that there are negative social biases towards Englishes that do not fall into the category of being inner-circle, Western and white. Interestingly, this sometimes includes local varieties of English as well.

Finland’s relationship to its local varieties is a multifaceted one. By local varieties, I am referring to Finnish English and/or ‘rally English’, a variety described as having a strong Finnish accent. As explained by Peterson (2022a), there is a discourse in Finnish media (and in Finnish society at large) where ‘rally English’ is treated as unrefined or shameful. This is contrasted with idealisation of inner-circle English, especially varieties associated with upper-class speakers (pp. 268-269). While observations of such discourses are many, it also appears that Finnish English is sometimes placed in an equal, if not even higher position with inner-circle Englishes. For instance, some companies seem to prefer Finnish speakers of English over native speakers (Peterson 2022b:7). This same phenomenon of treating local varieties on par with inner-circle Englishes is also manifested in university language policies all over the Nordic countries.

According to Peterson & Hall (to be published in 2023), English language requirements for potential students favour applicants from a narrow set of inner-circle countries, such as Great Britain, Ireland or Australia. In addition, students who have completed upper secondary school in a Nordic country are assumed to have an English proficiency equal to inner-circle speakers. Prospective students from any other setting, however, are required to take a standardised English test (such as TOEFL) to demonstrate their English skills (p. 22).

These practices show that in Finland, English varieties are placed in very different positions, the varieties associated with ‘native speakers’ being superior. How are these practices, then, recontextualised in ELT materials?

2.3 ELT, teaching materials and materials development

While often mistaken for their neutrality, teaching materials are directly linked to questions of power and world politics (Curdt-Christiansen and Weninger 2015:3-4). Pennycook (2014) sees ELT materials as a way of transferring cultural practices and ultimately, benefitting international superpowers such as Great Britain and the US. On the other hand, Canagarajah (2005) criticises ELT for promoting a western, capitalistic worldview. The spread of English in the form of ELT has also landed in Finland where, today, English is the most widely taught foreign language (Taavitsainen & Pahta 2003:6). Pupils start learning English as early as seven years of age (Hahl & Pietarila 2021), often even earlier through preschool language immersion activities (Inha & Kähärä 2018). Outside school, Finnish pupils are exposed to English through popular culture and English-speaking media, making English have an extremely prominent role in pupils’ lives (Taavitsainen & Pahta 2003:5).

The Finnish educational system can be described as textbook-based (Moate 2021). According to Tarnanen et al. (2010), Finnish teachers place much trust on textbooks and utilise them routinely in their teaching. Given the power of language textbooks, it is quite relevant to discuss their contents. In particular, ELT materials usually follow the norms of ‘standard English’, a concept upheld by upper-class speakers and often associated with the inner-circle varieties (Peterson 2022b:6, Lippi-Green 2012:59). While little studied in Finland, the previous study on

English varieties by Kopperoinen (2011) discovered that the majority of ELT recordings under study consisted of inner-circle varieties. Similar attitudes can also be seen in Finnish students' learning goals. According to Carrie (2017), European students associate British English (BrE) with education and American English (AmE) with free time activities and popular culture. As students are exposed to mostly BrE in school and AmE in their free time, these two varieties are the most familiar and sought after among Finnish students (Peterson 2022a:278). It should be noted, however, that the question is more complex. In a study by Ranta (2010), it was found that Finnish students were quite tolerant towards English varieties and overall, had positive attitudes towards varieties outside the inner circle. This, of course, raises questions about the role of the media and above all, teachers' agency.

As teachers have much power in selecting the teaching materials they use as well as applying them into practice, their agency cannot be overlooked. In a study by Gray (2000), it was found that teachers were quite critical towards the materials they were given and actively reshaped them to fit their learners' needs. Ranta (2010) reports that Finnish teachers are quite aware of the role of English as a lingua franca and, similarly to their students, are exposed to English varieties daily through media. However, the teachers felt pressured to teach standard, 'native-like' English to their pupils in order to meet the requirements of educational authorities and test planners. This would suggest that despite the positive attitudes of pupils and teachers, English education in Finland is strongly shaped by educational policies (pp. 175-176).

Documents guiding the materials development

Finnish ELT materials are developed based on two documents: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the National Core Curriculum (NCC). The CEFR is used as a foundation for language teaching and learning all over Europe, and it also includes the 'common reference levels' for classifying and assessing language skills. While CEFR has been criticised for promoting native-speakerist ideas (Kopperoinen 2011:75), the document has undergone quite a drastic change from when it was first launched in 2001. In particular, the terms 'native speaker', 'non-standard' and 'accent' are no longer found in the new CEFR descriptors (Council of Europe 2020:257). The current document also stresses plurilingual competence which is defined as a skill to "express oneself in one language (or dialect, or variety)

and understand a person speaking another” (p. 30). Based on these changes and extensions, it could be said that there has been an ideological shift towards an approach that is more comfortable with the idea of language varieties.

In the Finnish Core Curriculum, English is included in the section of foreign languages. Similarly to CEFR, the NCC has also undergone quite a recent change as the idea of world Englishes was added in 2014 (Peterson 2019:6). Based on the document, it seems that English varieties are highlighted more in grades 7 and up. Although the term “English varieties” does appear for the first time in the *key content areas for foreign languages* for grades 3-6, the theme is not particularly emphasised and in regard to English education specifically, there is no mention of language varieties at all (Opetushallitus 2016). In comparison, the following points are mentioned in the A syllabus in English for grades 7-9:

1. “...to promote the pupil’s ability to reflect on phenomena related to the status and the variants of English....”
2. “They also study the development of English into a global lingua franca. The pupils explore cultures and ways of life in countries where English is the main language of the society.”
3. “The pupils acquire information about **some** varieties of English.”

(Opetushallitus 2016:376, my bold).

Overall, it can be said that the idea of world Englishes and language varieties is supported by both CEFR and NCC. What is especially interesting, however, is that the NCC does not specify which varieties of English should be included in the syllabus for grades 7-9. The ambiguity of the quote three leaves teachers with much room for interpretation. Above all, it gives textbook developers an ultimate power to decide which varieties to incorporate - and which to cut out completely. The subjective power of textbook developers is also called out by Singapore Wala, stating that a textbook is merely a “collection of choices” (2003:60). Thus, the rest of this paper will aim to examine how ELT materials navigate through policy documents, societal discourses and, inevitably, the personal views of materials developers.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research questions

Based on previous discussion, it can be concluded that Finnish ideas of English are following colonial and imperialist norms introduced by international forces such as Great Britain. In particular, language ideologies in Finland can be described as promoting the idea of ‘standard English’ which is present in all societal domains, including education. These ideas are contested by the two leading documents of ELT materials development, as both CEFR and NCC support the idea of world Englishes. Overall, ELT materials have some challenging ideological tensions to navigate. What kind of ‘choices’, then, do ELT material developers make in this space that is ideologically fractured, with guidelines that leave much room for speculation? To address this gap, this study aims to examine how world Englishes are represented in Finnish ELT materials. In order to do so, the following questions were studied:

1. To what extent are English varieties represented in ELT audio material?
2. How do ELT materials perceive
 - a. Roles, functions and status of English varieties?
 - b. Culture in English speaking settings?
 - c. The global spread of English?

3.2 Data

The data consist of two 8th grade ELT material packages: *On the Go 2* (Sanoma Pro) and *Scene 2* (Otava). The materials were selected based on four factors: 1) the emphasis on English variations in the National Core Curriculum, 2) prevalence, 3) the contents advertised by the publishers and 4) date of publication. Firstly, as English variations are not part of the syllabus for grades 1-6, it would not be reasonable to include those materials in the analysis. Secondly, the textbooks were selected from Sanoma Pro and Otava, two prominent textbook publishers in Finland. Thirdly, both publishers advertise varieties of English and multiculturalism as prominent themes in the materials. Finally, the teaching materials were first published in 2017, three years after the new Core Curriculum came into effect. As such, they can be expected to be uniform with the guidelines of the new curriculum.

The ELT materials were in a digital format and consisted of textbooks, workbooks and teacher's files. Testing materials and any additional materials (such as online tasks) were excluded from the analysis. This decision was made to limit the data to a manageable size. Furthermore, students only come in contact with testing materials a few times a year, making them less relevant than textbooks which are used daily. As pointed out by Weninger and Kiss (2015: 63), it is important to study not only the textbook content but also the pedagogical implications. Thus, teacher's files are included in the data for a more insightful analysis.

3.3 Methods

The first aim of this study is to find out the relative representation of English varieties. As varieties cannot be detected in written text, the data was limited to audio tracks only. *On the go* included 9 units and 176 audio tracks, whereas *Scene* included 6 sets and 118 audio tracks. All together, the data consisted of 294 recordings. First, as it would be quite tedious to measure recordings featuring multiple varieties in seconds, I made the decision to use one sentence as the unit of analysis. This proved to be relatively efficient, as transcriptions were provided for every track. However, it should be noted that there are clearly situations where an utterance does not begin with a capital letter and end in a full stop. A common example would be individual words with no context in, for instance, a vocabulary list. In cases like this, I have treated

individual words as one unit. Secondly, the recordings were classified as presented in the materials. In other words, if a variety was treated as Indian English in the materials, it was counted as Indian English regardless of how it could be perceived by listeners. In case there was no indication of a specific variety, the recording was classified according to its phonological features. There are some varieties I decided to combine, such as AmE/CanE and AE/NZE. This was done in order to reduce possible errors, as these varieties are phonologically quite close to each other. Lastly, there were cases where the recording was a) in some other language than English or b) impossible to identify reliably. For instance, it was not easy to distinguish between similar varieties in short passages. These recordings have been classified as ‘other’.

The second aim of this study is to investigate how English varieties, cultures and global spread of English are represented in the materials. To answer this, all visual and verbal elements in the materials were analysed including pictures, written text and the findings from question one. The goal was to identify the most salient discourses present in the materials, keeping in mind the three areas mentioned in the National Core Curriculum: 1) the roles, functions and status of English varieties, 2) culture in English speaking settings and 3) the global spread of English. This step utilises Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with a multimodal approach.

3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

This study is qualitative, although it does contain some quantitative elements in step one (analysing the relative amounts of English varieties in audio material). As a methodological background, the second section utilises Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The field of CDA is extremely diverse and consists of multiple approaches, each with its own emphasis and background (Blommaert 2005:21). One shared factor of all these approaches is, according to Wodak & Meyer (2009:32), the problem-oriented nature of research. In particular, CDA is interested in societal inequalities and systems of power and, instead of simply explaining these structures, it aims to critique and change them (Wodak & Meyer 2009:6). Thus, it could be said that what connects the field of CDA is the emphasis on the word “critical”.

Although CDA is not the only possibility when working with documentary data, it is a good option when studying multimodal elements and meaning-making (Ledin & Machin 2017:74). This study will be applying a multimodal approach to CDA. As described by Ledin and Machin (2017:74), MCDA is interested in combinations of semantic resources and how re-contextualising those resources can help uncover underlying ideological aims. As such, the key question of this study can be described as: how are societal practices recontextualised in a textbook and how do combinations of audio, text and visuals contribute to ideological work? The term “discourse” in this study is thus understood as a broader social practice and “critical” as in aiming to change and critique these practices instead of simply illustrating them.

Weninger and Kiss (2015:60) warn that for hermeneutic approaches such as CDA, researchers may face challenges with reliability. While some analysts choose to conduct their research with fixed categories as their base and some do not, both approaches have their problems. Namely, the process of naming categories before the textbook analysis can be guided by decisions that are purely subjective and, at the same time, not having any categories at all can make reliability quite challenging to achieve (Weninger & Kiss 2015:60-61). Another limitation to consider is the political nature of CDA. Interestingly, CDA has been criticised both for being ‘too political’ and for not being ‘political enough’. Wodak (2006) points out that CDA has potential to cross the line between research and political argumentation, and it is even argued by Weninger & Kiss (2015:63) that the only perspective in CDA is that of the analysts themselves. On the other hand, Kramsch & Vinall (2015:13) criticise CDA for its tendency to accommodate the commercial interests of textbook publishers and its inability to evoke any real change.

Keeping these considerations in mind, this study will not be utilising prior categories. In regard to argumentation and the political aspect of CDA, I will be following the version described by Fairclough (2015). Namely, as the aim of CDA is ‘transformative action’ towards changing and improving the current social reality, argumentation is an essential part of CDA (p. 19). That being said, this argumentation (as well as the position of the analyst) should not be exempted from critique.

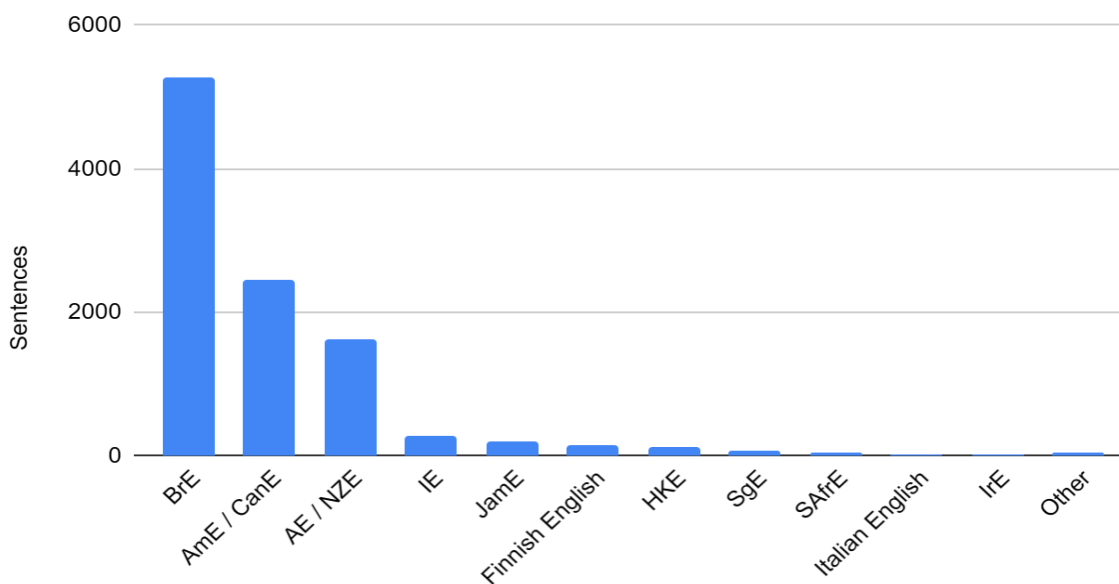
4 ANALYSIS

In what follows is an analysis of the materials in two sections. The first part of the analysis will present the relative quantities of English varieties in the audio material. The second part analyses the audio material together with other multimodal resources. For the sake of clarity, I will be referring to the material in the format of 1) series, 2) textbook/workbook, page number and 3) task.

4.1 Representation of English varieties in audio material

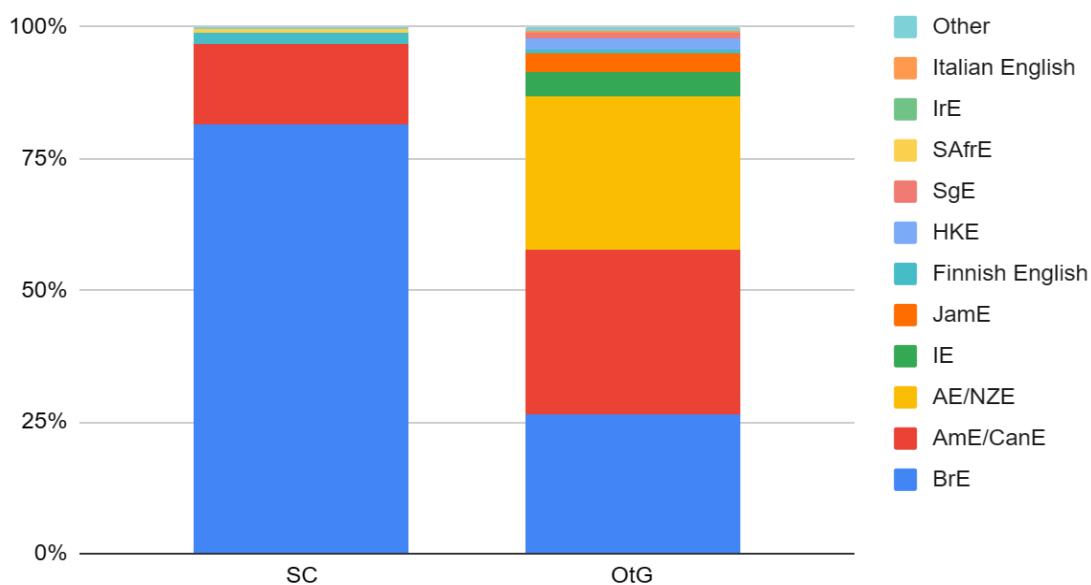
The most important finding of this study is the relative representation of English varieties in ELT audio tracks which, in both materials, consisted of 10200 sentences. In total, thirteen English varieties were found in both materials. These were: British English (BrE), American English (AmE), Canadian English (CanE), Australian English (AE), New Zealand English (NZE), Indian English (IE), Jamaican English (JamE), Finnish English, Hong Kong English (HKE), Singapore English (SgE), South African English (SAfrE), Italian English and Irish English (IrE). Figure 1 visualises the proportional representation of these varieties in both *On the Go* (OtG) and *Scene* (SC).

Figure 1: English varieties in both SC and OtG



The results are quite clear, as BrE is by far the most frequent variety in the materials. Other dominating varieties are AmE/CanE and AE/NZE with relatively similar amounts. Rest of the varieties are in a marginal position, making up 8,7 percent of all recordings. Among these varieties, Indian English is the most frequent, followed by Jamaican and Finnish English. Figure 2 below shows the proportional differences between *On the Go* and *Scene*.

Figure 2: English varieties in SC and OtG



In Figure 2, it can be seen that the two materials are extremely heterogeneous. While *On the Go* features all thirteen varieties, *Scene* features four: BrE, AmE/CanE, Finnish English and SAfrE. In addition, there are major differences between the representation of BrE, AmE/CanE and AE/NZE. While *Scene* mostly consists of British English, the most common varieties in *On the Go* are Australian and American English.

4.2 Representation of world Englishes in multimodal resources

The second section of this study focuses on multimodal elements of the ELT materials, also utilising the findings from question one. The analysis is based on the three domains found in the National Core Curriculum: 1) roles, functions and status of English varieties, 2) culture in English speaking settings and 3) the global spread of English.

Using CDA, four discourses that have to do with these three domains were identified:

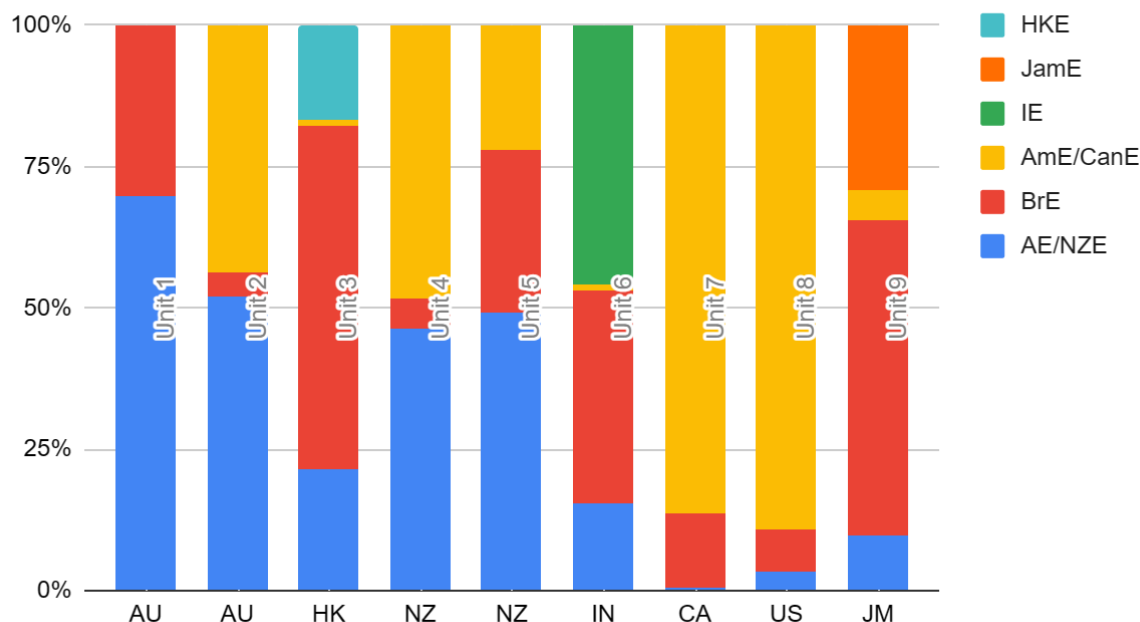
- Dominance of inner-circle varieties and cultures
- Absence of expanding-circle and ‘non-native’ varieties
- Outer-circle varieties as a tool for teaching culture
- Spread of English as beneficial/ intentional

Dominance of inner-circle varieties and cultures

In this study, it was found that most of the materials consist of a narrow set of inner-circle varieties. For instance, audio tracks in *Scene* are mostly in British English. Other varieties rarely occur and when they do, it is almost exclusively American English. In exercise 6, pupils are asked which variety (AmE or BrE) they use more, with the assumption that they use one or the other (SC, TB:60, T6). While *On the Go* does feature a more diverse array of varieties, there are three varieties that are clearly the most dominant: Australian English, American English and British English. It is relevant to note that *On the Go* consists of nine units, each of which are set in different contexts. Four out of nine units are set in Australia and New Zealand, while

the remaining units are set in Hong Kong, India, Canada, the US and Jamaica. Figure 3 shows the proportional amounts of the six target varieties in each unit.

Figure 3: Target varieties by unit in OtG



Firstly, it is apparent that AmE/CanE, AE/NZE and BrE are strongly present throughout the materials. The tendency to opt for these three Englishes is seen especially clearly in the OtG workbook, as they are the default varieties in exercises and tasks. In comparison, outer-circle varieties usually appear in texts and tasks that are directly linked to their respective areas or cultures. Secondly, outer-circle varieties have less relevance within units as seen in figure 3. In the units set in the US and Canada, the majority of the audio material is in the target variety (AmE or CanE). In units 3 and 9, however, the target variety is in a marginal position. Indian English has more representation, but not to the same extent as American English in a unit set in the US. Thirdly, there seems to be a preference for American and (especially) British English when it comes to pronunciation. This is supported by the fact that all vocabulary lists are read in either British or American English regardless of the target variety. What is especially interesting is that while the audio track may be in American English, the IPA transcriptions are always in Received Pronunciation.

Inner-circle cultures have a prevailing role in both *On the Go* and *Scene*. Firstly, it is worth noting that *Scene* is mostly set in Great Britain and the US. This is seen especially well in text topics that often feature literature, movies and famous people from these two countries. Thus, it could be said that *Scene* mostly depicts a world that is limited to Great Britain, the US and (to a lesser extent) Finland, accompanied by some other European countries. Secondly, the materials frequently feature topics that are, as could be seen by some, middle-class. For example, prominent themes include tourism and studying abroad (see OtG, TB:91, TB:50, TB:34-35, TB:29).

Absence of expanding-circle and ‘non-native’ varieties

Expanding-circle varieties are quite underrepresented in the materials, the only examples being Finnish and Italian English. Out of these two, Finnish English is the most featured. Both *On the Go* and *Scene* dedicate a few recordings for Finnish English alone, often featuring an actual Finnish person such as the actor Onni Tommila in *Scene* (TB:11-12). However, there are some instances where an opportunity to feature Finnish English (or any expanding-circle variety) is not realised. For example, we have the Finnish ‘Tomi’ and ‘Pia’ (OtG, TB:35, T210) who are both speaking in British English and another Finn, ‘Perttu’, using American English (OtG, WB:137, T518). The absence of expanding-circle varieties can also be seen in illustrations, as the map of the English speaking world in *Scene* (TB:243) only features the inner and outer circles.

Nearly all varieties featured in the materials can be said to be ‘standards’ in the sense that they are globally recognised varieties with a large number of speakers. In addition, most characters are presented as ‘native speakers’ of their respective variety. However, *On the Go* does include a few instances where a character is presented as being ‘non-native’. These ‘non-native’ speakers occur in short passages that all have to do with tourism, often featuring a dialog between a ‘non-native’ tourist (speaking in an unspecified variety) and a ‘native speaker’ (OtG, TB:56-57, T309, T310). The example 1 portrays a dialog between an Australian tourist, ‘Ann’, and a ‘Chinese vendor’ (C) whose speech is depicted as ‘non-native’ and accented:

- (1) Ann: That's a bit expensive. Hmm. How about 100 dollars?
 C: 100 dollars! No, no. But OK, I'll give you a special discount because you are

my first customer of the day. 200 dollars.
(OtG, TB:53, T304)

Outer-circle varieties as a tool for teaching culture

Unlike *Scene*, *On the Go* introduces a relatively wide range of outer-circle cultures including Hong Kong, India and Jamaica. These outer-circle cultures are often contrasted or compared with Finnish culture, requiring pupils to discuss complex cultural phenomena. For example, the texts often feature challenging themes such as cultural appropriation (OtG, TB:103, T513), gender inequality and arranged marriage (OtG, TB:113, T606B). An especially prominent topic is cultural encounters of East and West. For example, in unit 3 a character who has roots in both Australia and Hong Kong acts as a cultural translator, explaining Chinese culture to his Australian friend (OtG, TB:51, T303).

Outer-circle varieties usually occur in texts that have to do with cultural understanding, acting as a building block for teaching culture. In particular, outer-circle varieties appear in one of the two instances: the text features a character from an outer-circle setting (such as ‘Pavani’ from India) or the text directly has to do with the target culture. Examples of the latter category include ‘a traditional love story from China’ (OtG, TB:64-65, T315), tourist destinations in Hong Kong (OtG, TB:60, T313) and dance culture in the Caribbean (OtG, TB:172, T911). Both of these text types are often supported by multimodal elements such as ‘traditional music’, colourful illustrations and other visual elements inspired by the target culture or area. Referring back to the transcript from previous section (OtG, TB:53, T304), photographs from a night market in Hong Kong, sounds of people chattering in the background and the ‘Chinese vendor’ speaking in an ‘accented’ variety are all elements that create the ‘world’ in which the story takes place. As such, it could be said that outer-circle varieties always serve a specific purpose and are never featured ‘just because’.

Spread of English as beneficial/ intentional

Both *On the Go* and *Scene* see English as an international language. For instance, *On the Go* largely revolves around topics such as travel and cultural encounters (see OtG, TB:91, TB:50,

TB:34-35, TB:29). *Scene* features a ‘culture’ section called "English Around the World", where pupils are asked to name English speaking countries (SC, TB:46, T1). The idea of English as an international language is also supported by visual elements. For instance, the section features a picture of the globe accompanied by flags of some English-speaking countries. Other pictures present social domains such as travel, business, education and the internet (SC, TB:46-47). Overall, the materials see the spread of English as a beneficial resource.

Topics related to colonialism, exploitation and power, however, are treated in conflicting ways. In *On the Go*, colonialism is a relatively prominent theme and appears in all units set in the outer circle. For instance, the colonial past of Jamaica is discussed by a character and his grandmother in a listening task (OtG, WB:255, T919). What is worth noting in this task is that the Jamaican character adopts the role of someone who has no knowledge of colonialism or slavery, requiring the other person (in this case, his grandmother) to educate him. Interestingly, this is the kind of indifference one would expect from white pupils, not ‘Xavier’ who has lived in Jamaica for his whole life. Colonialism is also mentioned in relation to Hong Kong (OtG, TB:49, T301) and India (OtG, TB:119, T613). Other example is the passage below that deals with the exploitation of the Aboriginal people:

- (2) When the Europeans first came to Australia, they treated the local people very badly. They stole their land. When the Aboriginal people fought back, they put them in prison. Sometimes they killed them.
(OtG, TB:46, T216)

In contrast, *Scene* rarely addresses questions of exploitation or power. For the most part, these topics are limited to two tasks in the ‘English Around the World’ section. The first is a task where pupils are asked to define terms such as ‘colonisation’ or ‘British Empire’ (SC, TB:47, T3). Second, there is an additional exercise in the teacher’s materials where pupils are asked to discuss the pros and cons of the dominance of English (SC, TB:47, Tips: Culture). It is relevant to notice that these themes are mostly limited to one section and do not appear throughout the materials, and at no point is the colonial nature of English directly addressed. As such, it could be said that the topic of colonialism is more present in *On the Go* than it is in *Scene*.

5 DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to find out how the idea of world Englishes mentioned in the National Core Curriculum is represented in recent ELT materials in Finland. This was done by first studying the relative representation of English varieties in ELT audio tracks, followed by an analysis of these results together with other multimodal resources. The results show that while English varieties are represented in ELT materials to some extent, there is a prevailing preference for a narrow set of inner-circle varieties. In particular, General American and British English are seen as the best model of pronunciation for students. These findings are in line with previous research on English varieties that suggest that ELT materials tend to promote inner-circle varieties at the cost of outer- and expanding-circle Englishes (Kopperoinen 2011, Tajeddin & Pakzadian 2020). Furthermore, the ELT materials under study can be said to promote ‘standard English’, an idea salient in Finnish society (Peterson 2022a).

Compared to the previous study on ELT audio materials (Kopperoinen 2011), the recent materials dedicate more time for non-inner-circle varieties. As such, it can be said that the National Core Curriculum has guided the textbook authors’ work. However, while not to be generalised, the ELT materials in this study were quite heterogeneous and showed vastly different interpretations of the guidelines stated in the NCC. In particular, *On the Go* focuses on balancing five inner-circle varieties while featuring some standardised, outer-circle Englishes with a large number of speakers. It could also be speculated that the writers have specifically chosen to feature language communities where English has an official language status. On the other hand, *Scene* focuses on British and American English and is mostly interested in comparing these two

varieties. Furthermore, questions of exploitation and power were treated very differently in the materials, *On the Go* having a more colonial understanding of English than *Scene*.

It is not easy to determine what varieties should, ideally, be featured in ELT materials. Further, world Englishes can also be incorporated into exercises and are not necessarily limited to audio material. For instance, both textbooks in this study contained tasks that had to do with phenomena surrounding English varieties. However, Tergujeff (2023) points out that listening to variation within languages is an essential part of teaching pronunciation and, better, reducing negative attitudes the pupils may have towards certain varieties. Given the pedagogical implications and the heterogeneity of the materials, there might be a need for language policy documents that are clear about the target varieties that should be featured.

While Finnish English does not have much relevance compared to inner- and outer-circle varieties, it is prioritised over other expanding-circle Englishes. The same finding was also made by Kopperoinen (2011), who speculates that the purpose of incorporating Finnish English might be to encourage pupils to use their ‘own accent’ (p. 89). Looking at the contexts in which Finnish English appears, this seems like a probable conclusion. The characters speaking in Finnish English are often people that the students could potentially look up to, such as celebrities or young people living and travelling abroad (usually in inner-circle settings). Based on this, it seems that there are indeed attempts to ‘empower’ pupils into speaking in their local varieties. Taking this into account, however, it is quite strange that the materials feature so many Finnish characters who are speaking in a ‘native-like’, inner-circle variety. Thus, the role of Finnish English in ELT discourse is a topic for future research.

Aside from Finnish English, other expanding-circle varieties rarely occur. What could be concluded is that ELT materials mostly see Finnish pupils interacting with ‘native speakers’ from inner- and outer-circle settings, placing less importance on expanding-circle varieties. This is in stark contrast with reality, as the number of EFL speakers has long surpassed that of ‘native’ speakers (Schreier, Hundt & Schneider 2020:6). Finnish pupils are very likely to communicate with other ‘non-native’ speakers in their free time and even in their studies during, for instance, a student exchange. As such, it is quite clear that pupils would greatly benefit from exposure to other expanding-circle varieties.

Additionally, the analysis shows intriguing implications of how outer-circle varieties are used to teach culture. For one, the findings suggest that outer-circle varieties only appear in relation to their respective cultures and are often used to support the ‘narrative’ of the text. It could be speculated that the purpose of this is to make the text more engaging for students by featuring a less familiar variety. Secondly, it seems that texts that are set in the outer circle are more likely to cover societal problems than those that are set in the inner circle. It is quite curious that gender inequality, for instance, is discussed in relation to India and not Finland or the US. Overall, there seems to be a tendency to present outer-circle cultures from a Western standpoint, packaged in such a way that is easily approachable to Finnish students. Of course, this includes an assumption that Finnish students are able to identify with Western culture which, given the growing diversity of Finnish classrooms, may not be the case (Voipio-Huovinen & Martin 2012).

Further pedagogical observations can be made from the teacher’s files. Despite the ELT materials containing some information about English varieties and cultural phenomena, this does not carry across to the teacher’s materials. While the teacher’s files do include communicative tasks and answers, they do not give any instructions on ‘how’ certain themes should be taught in the classroom. Namely, there are almost no mentions of world Englishes or broader, societal themes in the teacher’s guides. As the materials rarely carry any additional information or pedagogical implications that cannot already be found from the textbook, teachers are left with little to no guidance on how to approach English varieties or complex themes. This, again, raises questions about the role of the teachers. Going forward, it would be extremely topical to study how ELT materials are implemented in the classroom. What language ideologies do Finnish teachers possess and, above all, how do they navigate teaching materials and policy documents that leave many pedagogical gaps to be filled?

Final reflections

This study has many limitations, one of them being that the varieties were classified as presented in the materials. In other words, a speaker of e.g. Singaporean English may not recognise the variety featured in the materials as Singaporean. As such, there is much more to cover in terms of authenticity and accuracy of ELT audio materials as well as the recording process itself.

Another limitation is that the varieties were classified according to general phonological features, ignoring the variation within varieties and individual traits of speakers. Furthermore, the results may have been different if word lists were not included in the analysis. Treating individual words as sentences resulted in BrE having a substantial portion of the final results, especially in OtG where BrE dominated the vocabulary sections. In future, there is a need for a more detailed analysis.

The examples above also relate to the question of power. While the field of CDA is connected by the term “critical”, it is oftentimes the analyst's position itself that is not included in this critique (Wodak & Meyer 2009:7). In this study, too, the only view represented is that of the analyst and not, for instance, the pupils experiencing and learning through these materials. On the same note, it should be mentioned that both students and teachers are more critical than often thought (Tomlinson 2012:165). Thus, while teaching materials may not be perfect, it does not mean they are unusable. Kramsch & Vinnal (2015:25) propose that teachers should approach ELT materials as the cultural and ideological artefacts they are, encouraging pupils to critically engage with the materials they are given. In other words, teaching materials can be an opportunity for implementing critical pedagogy in language classrooms.

Conclusion

In this study, it was found that the two ELT materials under analysis mostly consisted of ‘standard’, inner-circle varieties. Thus, the materials could be viewed as promoting ideologies of native-speakerism and ‘standard English’. Given the power of teaching materials, it could be argued that there is a need for ELT resources that can better capture the realities of how English is used in outer- and expanding-circle settings. In particular, Finnish pupils would greatly benefit from more exposure to other expanding-circle Englishes. The findings of this study also suggest that textbook authors may have contrastingly different interpretations of the aims set in the National Core Curriculum. This indicates that for English varieties to be better represented in ELT materials, additional guidelines and documents should be provided for textbook developers. Given the absence of pedagogical implications in both policy documents and teaching materials, the critical role of teachers is a topic for future research.

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