

Abstract

Introduction: Presently, there are more people who speak English as a second and foreign language than there are native speakers. This situation results, among others, in the fall of the native speaker model and subsequently in gradually changing attitudes to standard(s) and to language and teaching authorities in general. Present thesis reflects these current developments, which are sometimes referred to as ‘a paradigmatic shift’.

Objectives: The first goal of the thesis was to decipher the terminological pluralism pertinent to the domain. Next, this research set out to investigate, how familiar the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca (ELF) is in the Czech Republic, and consequently to raise awareness about it. Finally, it was our goal to conduct vast research exploring if and how the questions of language ideology are reflected in the teaching practice and in teacher training.

Methodology: Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have been applied throughout the research process. The quantitative research included nine originally devised questionnaires. Qualitative data were obtained via conducting semi-structured interviews. Altogether, data were collected from 595 respondents (298 teachers, 285 students and 12 scientists).

Results: First, the research results revealed the necessity of practical language courses at English departments. Regarding teaching standard(s), ‘codified’, ‘standard’ British English proved to be the most common and most respected model for teaching English in the Czech Republic. What has also been found, is that teachers, students and ELF users have a rather negative self-image as non-native speakers of English based on their ‘inability’ to emulate this model precisely. Generally, very low awareness of the function of English as a lingua franca has been detected. In spite of that, however, many teachers are increasingly open to the newly emerging paradigm that enables higher tolerance towards different varieties of English, especially when variation does not impede international intelligibility and comprehensibility. The newly acquired and evaluated research data and a thorough review of the globally available literature [which included: books (57), journal articles (159), etc.] resulted in the proposal of a new BA practical language course, MA course for students of English and of specialized seminars for Czech teachers of English on the topics of ELF and World Englishes.

Conclusions: The native speaker ideology is still deeply rooted in the Czech Republic. Both students and teachers show a high level of adherence to native speaker models and thus operate within the ‘traditional’ English as a foreign language (EFL) paradigm. A competing trend, however, can be also observed: attitudes are slowly changing in the favour of a more polymodel and/or ELF-open approach. In the future, the EFL and ELF models will highly probably coexist rather than compete, and will hence enrich the current teaching environment. Teacher training programmes will have to be modified and become more complex to stay up-to-date with recent changes and trends to enable future and practicing teachers to offer their students curricula that will truly meet their needs.

Key words: *English as a Lingua Franca, World Englishes, language attitudes, native-speaker ideology, teacher training, paradigmatic shift*