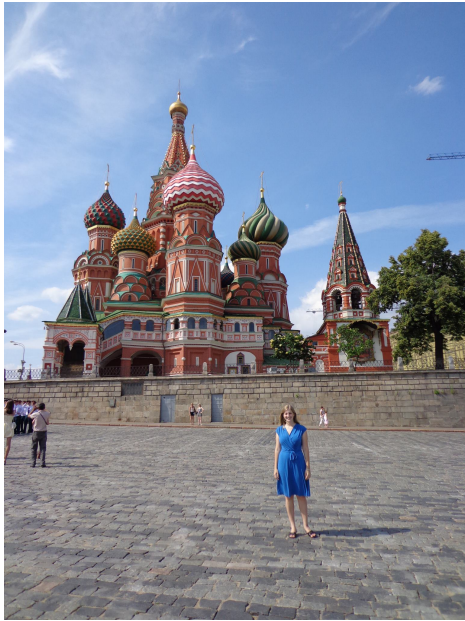




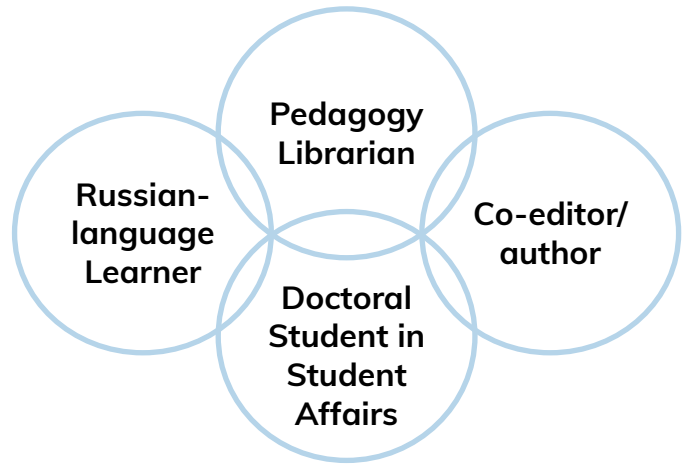
# LANGUAGES AND LIBRARIANS: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE LIBRARY CLASSROOM

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<https://go.umd.edu/MILEX19>



## WHO I AM (AND WHY I'M HERE)



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I think that part of culturally responsive teaching is acknowledging our own positionality; recognizing and understanding how our identities impact how we engage with course content and with our students. To that end, I'd like to begin with a brief overview of who I am and what I bring to this conversation.

Russian Language Learner

Pedagogy Librarian

Co-editor/author *Globalized Library: American Academic Libraries and International Students, Collections, and Practices*

## STARTING POINTS

- All undergraduate students are valuable members of our campus community, and English Language Learners constitute a special population worthy of our scholarly and professional attention
- English Language Learners are not a homogenous group
- Libraries (and librarianship) are not neutral
- As workers in higher education, we are subject to and complicit in neoliberal and capitalist systems

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The rest of my comments rest on the following shared understandings:

- All undergraduate students are valuable members of our campus community, and English Language Learners constitute a special population worthy of our scholarly and professional attention
- English Language Learners are not a homogenous group
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- As workers in higher education, we are subject to and complicit in neoliberal and capitalist systems

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Identify major themes in international education and language policy literature related to instruction in English, and its impact on students' educational experiences
2. Identify at least 3 strategies for providing culturally responsive instruction to English-language learners
3. Co-construct an open educational resource with strategies for providing culturally responsive instruction to English-language learners

# WHO DO WE MEAN BY “ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS”?



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To get us started, I'd like us to consider who we mean when we refer to “English language learners.” What does this mean at your institution or in your experiences?

[Time for audience contributions]

# 1.

## THEMES + INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT



I know that when I go to a conference, I want to walk away with concrete strategies and tools to implement in my own practice. And I promise we will get to that! But I also want to take this opportunity to share some literature from outside LIS. I have found that my teaching is enriched by engaging with scholarship on student affairs, education, and related fields. I feel strongly that we need to understand the impact of English as a mode of instruction through a variety of lenses (history, anthropology, sociology, education, etc.) in order to effectively serve English language learners in our classrooms. An hour is in no way sufficient to cover all of this ground. But I offer 4 overarching themes for us to consider and continue exploring as we reflect on how the work we do on the local level is intertwined with global history and processes.

# LANGUAGE AS POWER

“To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (Fanon, 1952)

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We cannot talk about English language learners in American universities without also addressing the legacy of colonialism and imperialism.

And if we're going to talk about colonialism and language, we have to talk about Frantz Fanon.

- Martinican scholar and psychiatrist
- Known for his work on anti-colonialism / post-colonialism and Marxism
- *Black Skin, White Masks*

How language works in imperialism:

- Educate colonial subjects in the colonial language: appoint them to positions of relative power (government, business). Thus creating a class that is committed to maintaining this status quo
- Ability to master the colonizer's language results in proximity to power

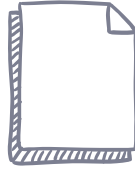
Language intersects with gender, race, class, etc. to either compound privilege or enact oppression.

There is tremendous privilege in being “the norm.” Just as whiteness is centered as the norm in our society, so too is English presented as the default.

Language is a site of oppression, but it is also a site of resistance and empowerment

# LANGUAGE AS POLICY

Policies  
vs.  
Practice



Research  
vs.  
Practice

Mode of Instruction  
vs.  
Subject of Instruction

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There's always a language-in-education policy...even if the policy is "no policy"

We voice our values...what does it mean if there's no policy?

At the national and local levels. Does your institution have a policy?

- Who is involved in decision-making? Who has a seat at a table? And who doesn't?
- Who has access to the policy? In multiple senses: is it available to the public? In print or online? In what language(s)?
- Opportunity: Find out if your institution or specific programs have a policy. If not, advocate for a policy that advocates for multilingual education, respect for languages beyond the dominant language (in our context, English)

What happens when local practice does not adhere to stated policies? Could be a good thing or a bad thing

What does the policy about the *mode* of instruction? What about subjects of instruction? What languages will be taught? What will not be taught?

Research demonstrates that mother-tongue instruction results in better school performance...so why don't our policies and practice reflect this?

- MEI example
- Opportunity: empower students to speak to each other in their mother-tongue languages
- And why might some parents want their children to be educated in English as opposed to their mother tongue?



# LANGUAGE AS COMMODITY



International  
Development



Transnational and  
Supranational  
Business and  
Government

Industries:  
Textbook  
Publishers, Testing  
Companies,  
Teacher Placement

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Quote from Pennycook's *Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*:

"Drifting on its lonely trajectory in search of other life-inhabited galaxies, the Voyager spacecraft carries recorded messages of greetings in fifty-five of the world's languages. But the principal message of greeting is delivered by the then UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, his Austrian-accented voice bidding anyone who may hear a welcome in the global, the universal, language: English: 'As the Secretary General of the United Nations ... I send greetings on behalf of the people of our planet.'" (p. 1).

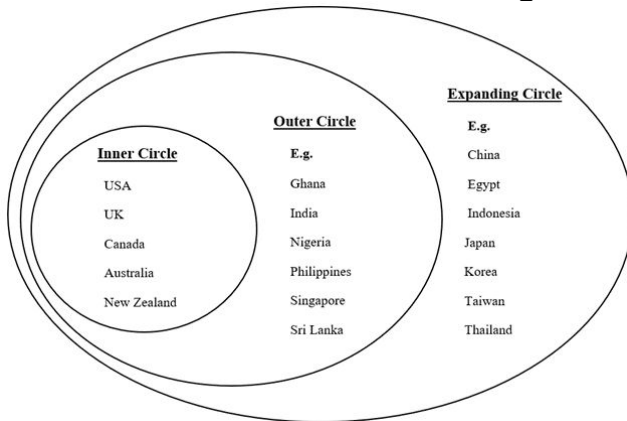
Impact of International Development

Transnational and Supranational Business and Gov.

Industries

# ENGLISHES

## Kachru's Concentric Circles of English



Spoken vs.  
Written English  
Academic English  
Discipline-specific  
language

Cultural Presentation in Thai Secondary School ELT Coursebooks: An Analysis  
From Intercultural Perspectives - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Kachrus-Concentric-Circles-of-English-Kachru-1992\\_fig1\\_327702842](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Kachrus-Concentric-Circles-of-English-Kachru-1992_fig1_327702842)

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Scholars have noted that it is inaccurate to speak of a single, homogenous English: instead, they have observed that there are multiple Englishes spoken around the world and even within a single country.

Kachru's Concentric Circles of English

TWO THINGS YOU LEARNED?  
ONE QUESTION YOU STILL HAVE?

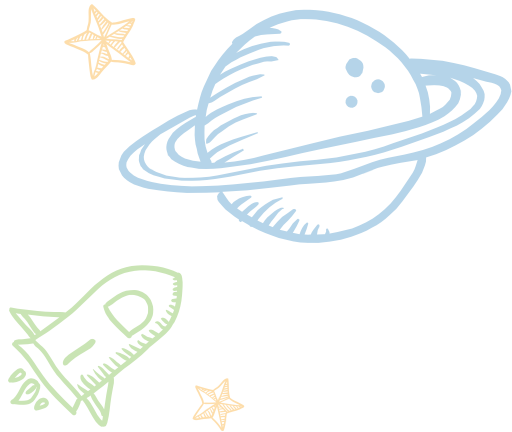


## 2. STRATEGIES FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING IN LIBRARY CLASSROOMS



Challenges and opportunities:

- We don't always know who our students will be: May not have access to information about students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, educational goals.
  - Use this as an opportunity to build relationship with faculty. Via email communication or instruction request form
- Responsibility of equipping students for success in a system that does not honor their experiences and identities
  - Create a space where students' experiences and identities are respected, and where students can ask questions without judgment



# UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Pedagogical strategies that  
can benefit all learners

## STRATEGIES

- Be aware of your own positionality
- Reduce jargon; spell out library terminology on the board
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Repeat directions (verbally and through modeling)
- When employing idioms or cultural references, consider whether they are accessible to everyone in the room
- Allow time for small group discussions before asking students to share in front of the entire group
- Empower students to lead portions of the session
- Ask your students what they need and want!

## MOVING FROM DEFICIT- TO ASSET-BASED TEACHING

“International students are notorious for plagiarizing. Can you teach them why it’s bad?”



“The concept of academic integrity is culturally constructed. Let’s build on students’ current understanding of authority and ethics to discuss this concept in an American context.”

“We should also inform students of specific campus policies and expectations regarding academic integrity”

## MOVING FROM DEFICIT- TO ASSET-BASED TEACHING

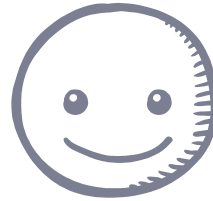
“Students don’t know anything about the library. Guess they don’t care about their education”



“English language learners have experience in navigating unfamiliar and hostile spaces. This ability is a strength and can be leveraged to help them learn how to use the library to their advantage.”



# MOVING FROM DEFICIT- TO ASSET-BASED TEACHING



3.

# CO-CREATING AN OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE



## RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- Personal Examples
- Institutional Resources
- [OER Commons](#)
- [Project CORA](#)
- [ACRL Framework Sandbox](#)





Any questions?  
You can find me at  
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## CREDITS

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