

Global Englishes in the ELT Classroom: From Theory to Practice

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Introduction

This essay aims to provide a brief overview of how Global Englishes (GE) can be practically applied in the language classroom, with particular reference to the university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom with which the author is most familiar. A great deal has been written about the need to address the issue of GE, but it only seems to have been relatively recently that publications such as journal articles, edited books etc. are appearing that tackle the issue head-on and provide practical ways in which the design of English programs and classroom practice can better reflect the realities of how the English language is used around the world. Thus, the concept of GE is moving steadily from the area or theory to that of practice in English language classrooms, but perhaps not as quickly as some would desire. Before continuing, it may be useful to define what is actually meant by GE in the context of this paper: Rose and Galloway explain that it is an umbrella term that includes World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and English as an International Language (EIL) (ix). In recent years there has been more interest in GE particularly in response to the fact that so much English spoken around the world is not necessarily between native speakers, but rather non-native – native, and non-native – non-native interlocutors. However, the old paradigm of teaching EFL and English as a Second Language (ESL) has traditionally been aimed at communicating with Inner Circle native speakers. Perhaps it is time to address this paradigm.

Of course, it should be stated that there is little doubt that the traditional Inner Circle varieties will continue to be regarded as the norm for English teaching and learning and, for better or worse, maintain a certain privileged position. This is based on Kachru's Three Circle Model (qtd. in Galloway and Rose 17 – 23). It would therefore be naïve to assume that learners would necessarily prefer to study other varieties when so much prestige is still held by the traditional Inner Circle varieties. Having said that, in this ever-globalizing world, it is important that the teaching of English reflects more accurately the reality of English in the world today and how it is employed by its various speakers. When most teaching materials seem to assume that the learner will solely be engaging with native speakers there is clearly something amiss. As previously mentioned, it is well acknowledged that much English communication in the world occurs between non-native speakers, and this will undoubtedly

result in a deviation from the norms presented in most teaching materials. To not make an attempt to address this paradox in the classroom would appear to be increasingly unacceptable as the 21st century and globalization progresses.

Indeed, this ongoing trend calls for a paradigm shift in our thinking as English educators. There have been paradigm shifts throughout the history of English language teaching, more recently from the 1970s with the shift toward more communicative language methods of teaching such as Communication-Based Instruction (CBI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). This was prompted by “the growth in the importance of communicativeness, and the need to expose students to ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ language” (Galloway and Numajiri 119). While admitting that certain Inner Circle varieties of English are unlikely to be dethroned any time soon in the EFL/ESL classroom, the teaching of English should at least aim to become more globalized and reflect better the reality of how a great deal of English is used in the world today. More specifically, it should be better tailored to meet the needs of the students in the classroom. As noted by Rahal, “[t]he global status of English has led to questions about teaching pedagogy” (25).

This is a rather pertinent matter because in the Asia Pacific region in which the author teaches, it seems rather disadvantageous to be teaching exclusively a model of English that is seldom used in the immediate environment. However, teachers and students alike in this region readily teach and learn standard Inner Circle varieties of English with barely a thought of how well this is preparing them for communication in the real world outside of the classroom. This pattern is repeated in countries and regions all around the world. This essay is addressing some of the most recent research into GE teaching and attempts to distil it down into a suitable overview for those endeavoring to introduce elements of GE into their university courses. It is surely not impossible to tweak the current status quo with the noble aim of raising the status of GE in the eyes of teachers and students, so that they are at least aware of their existence, and can acknowledge the fact that there are more than just two or three varieties of English. The first area to be briefly addressed is that of curriculum development. The essay will then proceed to the area of raising awareness of GE, for both teachers and students alike. It will then conclude with some practical hands-on activities that can be adopted in the classroom as a way of introducing GE into the classroom. It is clearly acknowledged that this is a broad field, with a growing body of literature, and this essay can only hope to transmit a simple overview of some of the movements that are occurring at present.

Curriculum Development

There are a number of stubborn barriers to the implementation and promotion of different varieties of English in the classroom, and these have to be overcome if the teaching of English is ever to truly reflect the reality of the English language today and become what has been termed 'GELT': Global English Language Teaching. One of the highest barriers that would need to be confronted is the necessity for a more flexible curriculum design that better reflects the needs of the students. According to Liu and Fang, such a curriculum "is particularly important because this type of curriculum reflects the current linguistic landscape where language use is far more dynamic and complex rather than traditional curricula targeting Anglophone varieties and StE [standard English] as the ultimate goal" (89). Current curricula, in most situations, abide by Inner Circle norms and do not adequately reflect the reality on the ground for most. In Japan, the school and university curricula very closely align with Standard American English norms, even though a number of students may well find themselves living and working in an Asia-Pacific context once they graduate and enter the workforce. Thus, not only is it arguably impractical for students, it could also be said that the constant drive for phonological, grammatical, and lexical accuracy with native speaker English as the benchmark, is actually demoralizing to students. Therefore, the design of English language curricula should strive to incorporate elements of GE in terms of objectives, syllabus, and evaluation (Rose and Galloway 28). The objectives of most curricula tend to reflect the students' progress toward a proficiency in English that would facilitate communication with a native speaker; this is the essence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Perhaps in a European context, an adherence to British English norms could be argued for, but in the Asia-Pacific region, this would make little sense. Surely the objectives of curricula should be moving away from mainly dwelling on accuracy and instead measuring how English is used, and how the interlocutor negotiates meaning in an ELF situation. According to Marlina, a Global Englishes curriculum should be "one that is informed by students' immediate needs and learning goals" (245). Marlina continues to express the opinion that such a curriculum should set "realistic learning goals, ones that are achievable and relevant to students' linguistic, situational, communicative, and professional needs" (241). Furthermore, Rose and Galloway opine that "it is questionable how far 'traditional' approaches that focus on 'native' English-speaker norms are meeting these needs" (28). Thus, there is an argument here that a 'one cap fits all' approach should be discarded in favor of allowing local contexts to reflect the reality of their own situation. In other words, flexibility must be built into the curriculum. No one, after all, is arguing that Inner Circle norms should be completely dispensed with; many international exams which students rely on to study outside of their countries or to enter foreign universities (TOEFL, IELTS etc.) are still very much in demand and it would be unfair to deny such students these chances. A compromise should perhaps be reached

where traditional ELT practices are blended with GELT to provide a more comprehensive and flexible curriculum for students. Indeed, it seems that the trend in a number of university English programs in Japan are now of a communicative nature, incorporating approaches such as Content Based Instruction (CBI), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which are not specifically tailored for international examinations. They may run alongside more traditional classes which cater for students wishing to increase their scores on these international tests. Perhaps then there is scope and opportunity in the communicative branch for GE to be introduced in a bottom-up approach which can focus on the needs of students in their particular context. According to Galloway and Numajiri, “successful and sustainable curriculum innovation requires the involvement of key stakeholders to ensure those involved have a sense of ownership. It has to be informed with a bottom-up approach” (137).

Of course, evaluation is a key component of any curriculum, but how can a curriculum promoting GE in all their variety be adequately evaluated? If the goal is to diverge from the orthodoxy of Inner Circle varieties, the emphasis should surely move away from conventional linguistic accuracy and rest more on the ability of students to use English well enough for communication to occur smoothly. This does not lend itself to standard testing and thus fits more into the continual assessment format that many university language classes already have in Japan. Indeed, Rose and Galloway state that “communicative assessment tasks such as role-plays, written assignments, interviews, presentations and group projects are more appropriate to the criteria central to Global Englishes, rather than traditional standardized tests that usually require standardized norms” (57). For example, Rahal describes a class activity in which dialogues and role plays can be used in a way that also aims to raise the awareness of students to GE and this is described later in this essay. Thus, it can be noted once again, that these changes are not necessarily calling for a wholesale change of the manner in which many students already experience their English classes. Indeed, such assessment criteria can be blended into what many university curricula are already prescribing. Through such communicative assessment tasks, the teacher can evaluate effective communication rather than just focus on Inner Circle norm-driven accuracy. It is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility that curricula can be flexible enough to provide a happy medium between traditional ELT and GELT. This relies a great deal on the cooperation of the teacher and the value they invest in developing students’ communicative competence through embracing a flexible curriculum that involves GE. As stated by Galloway and Numajiri, “GELT curricular innovation is complex, particularly due to the conceptual transition that it requires, but this should not deter TESOL practitioners from considering the relevance of GELT for their contexts” (140). This is indeed the case and the effort will be worth the results in delivering curricula that best suit the needs of our students.

Raising Awareness of GE

Arguably the single most important step in the implementation of a more global paradigm of English teaching is the raising of awareness among teachers and students of the many ways in which English is used around the world today. Unfortunately, this is not as easy as it sounds, as there are a number of significant barriers that lie in the way of such a reforming agenda. The often-entrenched views of stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, curriculum designers, and textbook publishers alike have ensured that the concept of 'native-speakerism' survives even now in the third decade of the twenty first century.

The term 'native-speakerism' may require some further explanation: It is, essentially, the ingrained belief that native speakers of English in some way uphold the standard of 'correct' English and that alternative varieties (particularly those from the Outer Circle) are somehow inferior. Rose and Galloway attest that: "[a]t the essence of native speakerism is the idea of 'othering', which creates an 'us and them' dichotomy in society where native speakers are assigned certain cultural, intellectual and linguistic attributes" (14). The fact is that such a belief belies a fundamental misunderstanding of how English is used in the world today. It is therefore paramount that teachers do their utmost to take any opportunity to expose their students to English varieties outside of their experience and raise their awareness of GE. This is simply because textbooks and official examinations seem to unconsciously propagate the myth of native-speakerism, so that right from the time a student in an Expanding Circle country such as Japan or China begins English classes in elementary school, the image of the ideal speaker as an Inner Circle speaker, becomes seemingly entrenched. Therefore, how is it possible to confront such ingrained attitudes among the major stakeholders in English teaching? And how can these stakeholders help to raise awareness of GE?

Probably, the attitude of the teacher would have to be the most important matter to address, as teachers are the primary gatekeepers and arbiters of the English used in the classroom. Whether native or non-native speakers, most of these teachers have already been taught and tested through the use of 'standard' Englishes and perhaps feel consciously, or unconsciously, a need to perpetuate this model through their own students. More often, they are perhaps unaware that there are alternatives to such standard Englishes in the classroom. The often pedantic and slavish clinging to traditional standard Englishes serves more as a reflection of their own experiences than the reality of English as it is used globally today. However, it is from the teacher that the multifaceted nature of English should emanate; the fact that the native 'standard' model of English is not owned by the Inner Circle countries, but is used globally in a gloriously, various way, between peoples often as a second or third language. In the words of Chen et al., "[t]o fit the global spread of English and adopt the concept of GE, teachers must shift their cognition from traditional assumptions about ELT

to a GE-informed perspective” (3). Thus, it is important in pre-service and in-service teacher training that GE and GELT is included in order to raise awareness of GE. Karakas believes that “[i]t is through this awareness that with a dual identity, they [pre-service teachers], both as language users and soon-to-be language teachers can start questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions about the English language, language learning and teacher process / practices” (21). For example, Karakas uses a variety of audio-visual material with pre-service teachers to expose them to both native and non-native accents and has found the results to be largely positive. Indeed, “most students tend to indicate a willingness to make their future students aware of differences in the use of English and diversity of English speakers upon being in-service teachers” (23). Thus, with the internet at our disposal, and access to a plethora of audiovisual material, it does not require a great deal of preparation to replicate such an activity. Ambele and Boonsuk write about exposing their university English major students (preparing to be teachers) to a variety of Englishes by asking them to visit tourist areas and interview tourists from the three circles. This was, in their words to “ensure that the students received maximum communicative experiences with and exposures to visitors from diverse ethnolinguistic and linguacultural backgrounds” (45). They subsequently reported a positive response to this exposure and an acknowledgement that “speaking with a native accent is unnecessary” (47). One of the advantages of this activity is that students are more likely to be exposed to Englishes of visitors from neighboring countries, and this helps to localize the context and simulate the reality that the students will likely face in their futures.

Turning back to the classroom, however, teachers are often given little option in their choice of material, and this is another challenge to be faced. However, raising awareness of GE is not an insurmountable problem. For instance, Rahal describes an activity that raises awareness of GE by introducing students to different varieties of English pronunciation. “Students are taught pronunciation to help them understand the different accents and to differentiate among them” (27). Students are given different audio recordings of Englishes and asked to identify the main features of the pronunciation. After identifying these features, in small groups, students explain these to each other. Finally, students collaborate in writing a role play, using the pronunciation that they listened to and studied. It is with such activities that in this digital age are not so difficult to prepare, that students can become more familiar with and respectful of differing varieties of English.

Introducing Appropriate Materials

It is stating the obvious to any English language teacher or student that native norms are predominant in the classroom, and this often manifests itself in the materials used. Jenkins rues the fact that despite the tremendous growth in the use of English as a Lingua Franca around the world today, “the prevailing orientation in English language teaching and testing, and materials remains undoubtedly towards ENL [English as a Native Language]” (487). Indeed, there have been several studies conducted, for example, on the predominance of American and British culture being depicted in classroom textbooks. The not-so-subtle message being conveyed to learners is that the ideal to aim for is the native Inner Circle speaker, and somehow, through ‘standard ideology’, standard US or standard UK English varieties are the ‘norm’ when it comes to English language education.

Therefore, as far as materials are concerned, it is still the case that many English language textbooks used by students throughout the world reflect an Inner Circle linguacultural bias, and it is here that so much change can be made. Year after year, the traditional publishers of such textbooks introduce many new titles which predominantly adhere to either American or British English as well as the cultural norms of these two nations. With a seeming disregard for the reality of English for most students, they continue to provide learners with linguistic and cultural materials that predominantly serve in continuing to promote native-speakerism and Western culture. Of course, one cannot entirely blame the publishing industry, as they are also reflecting the desires of other stakeholders. Even when publishers do endeavor to include examples of GE it is not often sufficient. Rose and Galloway lament that “while some textbooks claim to have a global English focus, at times this is provided at a tokenistic level. GELT requires more than merely a few token ‘non-native’ Englishes.” (14).

It is quite clear in the 21st century, and the continuing expansion of the English language around the world, that an accommodation should be reached with traditional English language teaching practices and GELT to provide a truer representation of a language that has traveled far from its native shores over the past few hundred years. As Liu and Fang (2022) so clearly state, “A GE-oriented [Global Englishes] curriculum in ELT [English Language Teaching] is particularly important because this type of curriculum reflects the current linguistic landscape where language use is far more dynamic and complex rather than traditional curricula targeting Anglophone varieties and StE as the ultimate goal” (89). Fortunately, we are seeing a growing awareness of GELT in academic journals and books, and one hopes that this continues and in turn influences the materials produced for students. For example, the edited volume by Ali Fuad Selvi and Bedrettin Yazan entitled: *Language Teacher Education: A practical resource book* contains a rich variety of interesting ideas in such domains as: language teaching pedagogy, language teaching methods, language assessment, and curriculum development. In addition, the edited volume by Michelle D. Devereaux and Chris

C. Palmer: *Teaching English Language Variation in the Global Classroom* contains a rich variety of ideas for the GE-informed language teacher.

Ideally, one would hope that greater attention is drawn to the different ways in which English is used around the world. A very important aspect is the matter of accent discrimination and how this manifests itself in textbook audio materials. Orelus explains that “this discrimination is linked to a dominant sociolinguistic mindset that favors accents socially constructed as standard over those labelled as non-standard” (123). This is true even in the case of Inner Circle varieties of English which tend to favor certain accents over others in textbook materials. However, it is crucial that students are exposed to phonologies that they are likely to encounter when using English in their lives outside of the classroom; any other policy would not be prioritizing the needs of students. Avoiding an Indian accent because it is deemed ‘too difficult’ for students, ignores the simple fact that the students have probably had very little, if any, exposure to accents other than those of standard American and British English. Thus, an obvious lack of exposure to different accents will leave the student at a disadvantage. In the Asia-Pacific region, where the author teaches, students are very accustomed to the standard American accent, and few have had exposure to those speaking English with an Indian, Malaysian, or Thai accent. It is therefore incumbent on textbook writers and publishers to cater in a more focused manner, the needs of the market they are targeting, and likewise the teacher to provide their students with appropriate listening materials. As it seems unlikely that the major textbook publishers will be dramatically changing their policies on appropriate dialects any time soon, it really is incumbent on the teacher to provide supplementary materials that are readily available online. Indeed, reading materials and online video materials can be used to supplement more traditional aspects in the textbooks.

The adoption of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) can also provide ample opportunity to introduce GE into the classroom as a way to “engage learners with meaningful real-life tasks and materials connected to the present-day sociolinguistic realities around the globe” (Bayyurt and Selvi 77). The adoption of the CLIL approach could be alongside established textbooks (by introducing authentic reading and listening texts to supplement textbook content), or a dedicated course in itself, perhaps teaching a course in intercultural communication or even GE. The author has used such an approach with university students and felt quite liberated from the constraints of traditional materials. In this way, students can be exposed to a variety of Englishes through authentic real-world content and move away from the usual Inner Circle norms that they would normally be exposed to. A different viewpoint has been put forward by Chen et al. who believe that more localization is necessary to challenge the ideology of native-speakerism. They advocate the use of more localized textbooks to better reflect the local cultural context and provide more relevance to students who may be uninspired by standard textbooks which may promote

unfamiliar settings. According to Chen et al., “[b]y incorporating and contextualizing local culture content into textbooks, teachers could counter the negative influence of native-speakerism, empower themselves, and better address students’ needs” (6). Whichever point of view one holds, the main idea is that teachers should endeavor to offer their students materials other than the usual fare and provide them with at least reading and listening texts that better reflect the English spoken in the region in which they teach. In the words of Rose and Galloway, “the dominance of TESOL materials that orientate to native speaker norms is problematic and we have to acknowledge that, until the creation of more materials, many will have to create or adapt existing materials.” (103)

To conclude this section, teachers should actively select or adapt materials that better reflect the concept of GE. Bayyurt and Selvi rightly highlight the fact that “instructional materials (especially commercial and published ones) predominantly promote a very limited view of the “standard” Inner Circle norms, uses, users, and cultures associated with these countries” (78). Although the written word is fairly uniform across varieties of English, the content can often reflect a cultural landscape. By exposing students to different cultures and cultural viewpoints through selected materials, students can receive a broader education through their English learning experience.

Practical Application in the Classroom

As far as practical application of GE in the classroom, the literature is slowly but steadily growing. Journal articles and edited books are acting as a showcase for researchers, teachers and teacher-trainers alike to suggest practical activities that can help introduce GE into even conventional language or teacher-trainer classrooms.

For example, Campos and Carrazai are both teacher educators in Brazil and have been introducing GE into their classes by means of audio and video material. Through a structured approach, student teachers are exposed to such materials and given questions to check their understanding (27). The author of this essay also ensures that when video clips from the internet are used in any English language teaching environment, the utmost care is taken to ensure that accents other than standard American or British are chosen to maximize students’ exposure to unfamiliar varieties of English. This is hardly a problem with the tremendous amount of material now at our disposal digitally. It also provides students with an important lesson. In the words of Campos and Carrazai, (in their case student teachers) “...they can not only have access to more ways of speaking English, but they can also learn how to value them.” In other words, students can learn how to value their own accents (30).

Raimondi, teaching at a school in Italy, demonstrates how even in a conventional setting, GE can be incorporated into a program even if the core of the program remains firmly rooted in British English norms. The students were at the undergraduate level, and the course was

centered on morphology, or word formation. Even in such an unlikely setting, it is possible to raise awareness of GE. At first, using movies from such countries as India and Liberia, the students are first explicitly taught about the idea of GE. Following on from this, word formation processes (such as compounding, blending, conversion etc.) are explained to the students. Following on from this, students analyzed words by applying these processes. Words from English varieties other than American and British English were gleaned from online material, newspapers and so on in order to further raise awareness of the rich variety of Englishes in the world. As Raimondi concludes, the feedback on this approach demonstrated that it “was successful not only in catalyzing their interest in the subject, but also, most importantly, in broadening their view of the English language beyond the stereotypical “native-speaker model” (8).

Kemaloglu-er promotes the practice of translation in the classroom as a way in which students can bring their L1 into the classroom at the benefit of their burgeoning L2. Kemaloglu-er acknowledges that translation has been side-lined in recent years but feels that it is beneficial in acting as a means of broadening vocabulary and grammar knowledge in the L2. By translating videos of people from Kachru’s three circles, students were able to “reflect on the variety of English they worked on”, particularly the “specific aspects that facilitate or hinder intelligibility” (36). It was found that students completed the activity with “positive perceptions” of the English varieties they encountered (38).

Jansz and Schreiber promote the use of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as an excellent way of heightening student awareness of GE. Their project included pairing students from the US with students in Sri Lanka with the objective of giving “both groups of participants the chance to interact directly with speakers of different varieties of GE and to reflect on their own beliefs about the English language” (61). As part of their ‘reflections from the field’ they came away with a number of positives. For example, the project raised awareness of GE in a realistic way, helped students to value variation in the English language, and allowed students to challenge their assumptions on who owns English (62 – 63).

Conclusion

This essay has endeavored to provide a broad overview of some of the practical ideas that have been arising in recent years as a result of a growing interest in Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT). The essay began with a short rationale for promoting GE in the classroom, although so much has been written on this in previous years, it almost seems redundant now to clarify why this is such an important area. In terms of specificities, the essay looked at the area of curriculum development as this is what underpins any working English program. It is the assertion of this essay that to dispense with or radically alter

existing curricula may be undesirable, if not impossible in most situations. Instead, a blended curriculum is one that would most likely meet the needs of most students in the EFL classroom. Students do need to have a grounded knowledge of the traditional varieties in order to succeed at high-stakes examinations such as TOEIC or IELTS. However, this should be complimented with explicit instruction of GE so that students are made aware of the diversity of English around the world, and the varieties that they are probably going to be exposed to once outside of the classroom. This should also have the added benefit of raising students' motivation by realizing that they do not necessarily have to strive for a native-speaker proficiency, but feel pride in themselves as non-native speakers with their own language norms.

The essay then proceeded to provide examples of how awareness of GE can be raised among teachers and students alike. It is particularly important that such awareness raising activities are included in teacher-training courses so that pre-service teachers are equipped to employ such concepts in the classroom once they become teachers. This section provided a couple of examples of how this has been achieved.

Providing appropriate materials is of course a major challenge to bringing GE into the classroom. When so many textbooks still cling to the traditional Inner Circle models, it is often incumbent on the teacher to design and create such materials for their students. Fortunately, with more and more material on the internet this is becoming less of a challenge, but it is still far from ideal. The GELT teacher still has a challenge to provide such useful materials.

Finally, the essay introduced some practical ideas of how GE can be incorporated into the classroom. There is a growing body of literature that provides examples of how creative teachers are being with regards to introducing GE, and this section merely scratches the surface. Suffice to say that in the coming years there can be little doubt that more and more activities will be shared amongst teachers in the pursuit of spreading and raising awareness of GE.

To conclude, it is not the object of this essay to vouch for a complete overhaul of curricula, English classes, or teaching materials. Rather it is a call for all of us, as English teachers or English program designers, to address the very real issue of how English is used in the world today. This will certainly do a service to our students, enrich their learning experience, and prepare them better for the English-speaking world outside the classroom. English has become a wonderfully diverse amalgam of varieties, that reflects the rich tapestry of cultures around the world. It is a rich resource to be brought into the classroom.

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by

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It has been a passionate belief for at least a couple of decades now, particularly among a number of teachers and researchers, that there should be more room for Global Englishes in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom. By Global Englishes (GE), we mean the rich variety of Englishes that exist in the world, and not just the usual 'standard' varieties of Englishes which prevail in most classrooms and textbooks. These varieties have been largely ignored in most curricula, which in this age of Globalization would appear to be an unfortunate oversight. After all, in a world where most speakers of English are non-native speakers, it would seem incumbent on the ELT teacher to at least address this important issue, and for students to be exposed to this reality. This paper endeavors to put together some of the more recent research in this area, moving away from theory and suggesting more practical ways in which GE can be introduced in the ELT classroom without necessarily discarding current practices or causing too much disruption. For example, how can GE be successfully blended into already working curricula? How can teachers raise their students' awareness of GE and convey the relevance of doing so? In a world where most ELT materials appear to be focused on either American or British English, how can teachers provide resources that better reflect the nature of English today? This paper endeavors to address these very real issues and then ends by briefly describing a number of activities developed by resourceful teachers around the world who have already embarked on this very interesting journey.