Lesson materials and their nativization (Sri Lankanization) for teaching English in Universities

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Nativization of English has many facets in it. Among the aspects of the Sri Lankanness in English such as morphological, syntactic and semantics discourses, the phonological aspect is the most common and widely discussed aspect. Alongside the recognition of a Sri Lankan variety of English in pronunciation, accent, structure and meaning, nativization of English as regards its teaching invites in depth discussions in two other domains: materials and methodology. Although these two issues are interwoven, the present discussion is on materials. How do we nativize materials for teaching English?

The interviews I held (in 2007) with 22 teachers of English in the three universities (Colombo, Jaffna and Sabaragamuwa) for my research showed that they were not satisfied with the materials. One common comment was that the materials in use were not suitable for the Sri Lankan context. The responses of 240 students on the same revealed that they found the materials as "student unfriendly".

It is important to have content that is culturally appropriate. It would help students relate to English language by creating a low anxiety level that enhances language acquisition process. Accomplising the task of cultural resonance could be done through nativization of materials.
Possible nativizations of materials include Thematic Adaptations, i.e., using themes that are culturally, socially and emotionally close to students; Functional Adaptations, i.e., using incidents from experiences akin to students' lives, etc.; Character Adaptations, i.e., using names from local contexts; Phonological comparisons, i.e., comparisons and reinterpretation of English phonology in terms of the mother tongue; Use of languages as complementary and not as discrete entities, for example, using proverbs in the mother tongue equivalent to concepts in English.
The difference between localization and nativization of materials to my perception is that nativization is part of the process of localization: a process within a process. Where localization addresses a larger scope that embraces learners' social, psychological, physical and educational needs, nativization supports to achieve them with a 'cultural touch'.

Localization of materials may be carried out to address a particular teaching style or learning style of students, to adapt for a different grade level, to adapt for a different discipline, to adjust for a different learning environment, to suit the ideology of a particular programme, to address diverse needs, to address a cultural preference, to address either a school or a district's standardized curriculum.

Therefore, nativization of lesson material as shown above is part of localization. Nativization has more to do with culture and other features of a language that emerge as a result of the exposure to a particular contextual reality whereas localization of materials addresses the issues of learner needs and the specific needs of a particular programme.

To conclude, nativization of English can be divided into two main areas: automatic and deliberate; Automatic nativization is mainly vis-à-vis pronunciation, accent and syntax and

happens as a result of mother tongue influence; deliberate nativization is mainly for teaching English in the domains of material production and teaching methodology. But in certain cases it could be found in pronunciation and accent also. Deliberate nativization of teaching materials and methods are best suited to reach out to students who have distanced themselves from learning English and who have been distanced from English despite their desire to learn it. However, whether it is deliberate or automatic, the discussions on nativization are the result of the search for a national identity in using English. Such an identity created via teaching English by means of nativized materials and methods would be consolidated and sustained by many generations to come.

Non-Violent Spoiling: The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka

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The existing literature on spoiler problems in peace processes focuses mainly on violent spoiling. This paper examines non-violent spoiling using the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in Sri Lanka as a case study. Generally, types of spoilers are identified depending on their goals and commitment. This paper introduces a new spoiler type based on the methods used by and the commitment of the spoilers: (1) violent total spoilers, (2) violent partial spoilers, (3) non-violent total spoilers, and (4) non-violent partial spoilers. Filling a gap in the existing literature, this research explores the possible strategies that could be employed by non-violent spoilers, such as the JVP, including mass mobilization, collaboration with similar actors, use of political leverage, forming and activating front organizations, and seeking judicial intervention. While rejecting violence even against violent spoilers, this paper proposes that the responsibility of spoiler management could be shared among local political leadership, local civil society organizations, and international guarantors. The assumption is that the international actors or custodians neither have the power nor the capacity to make peace single-handedly, especially in strategically insignificant regions, nor should they be expected to address spoiler problems unaided.