The native factor:

bringing the discussion

into our classes.

BY MAREK KICZKOWIAK AND VARINDER UNLU

Game plan

1. The main issues.

2. Why bring the discussion into our classes?

3. Sample activities:
   - Who is a 'native speaker'?
   - 'Native speakers' and language learning beliefs;
   - Recruitment in ELT.

4. Conclusion and Q&A.

Some issues concerning 'native' and 'non-native speakers'

1. Defining a 'native speaker':
   - Subjective and value-laden;
   - Language expertise vs. inheritance vs. affiliation;
   - Inherent racism.
2. Language learning beliefs and 'native speakers':
   - Which English?
   - 'native speakers' speak 'real' English;
   - I will learn 'bad' English from 'non-native speakers'.
3. Recruitment:
   - What skills make an effective English teacher?
   - Inclusive and egalitarian recruitment.

Why discuss the issue with students?

- Our role as teachers;

- Most students are not informed customers;

- Raise students' awareness;

- Motivating for students;

- Interesting topic for debate.

"It's unrealistic to think that [equality] can be achieved only on the basis of prayer. What we need is to take **action**"

~Dalai Lama

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English as a global Lingua Franca

Take a look at these facts and figures. Some of them are true and some false. Decide which are true:

- There are approximately four times more 'non-native speakers' of English (~1.2 bilion) than 'native speakers' (~370 million).

- The US is the country with the highest number of English speakers.

- There are less than 10 countries where English is an official language.

- English has a much longer history in Jamaica than it does in Australia.

- Research shows that 'native speakers' of English are typically the least understood in international settings.

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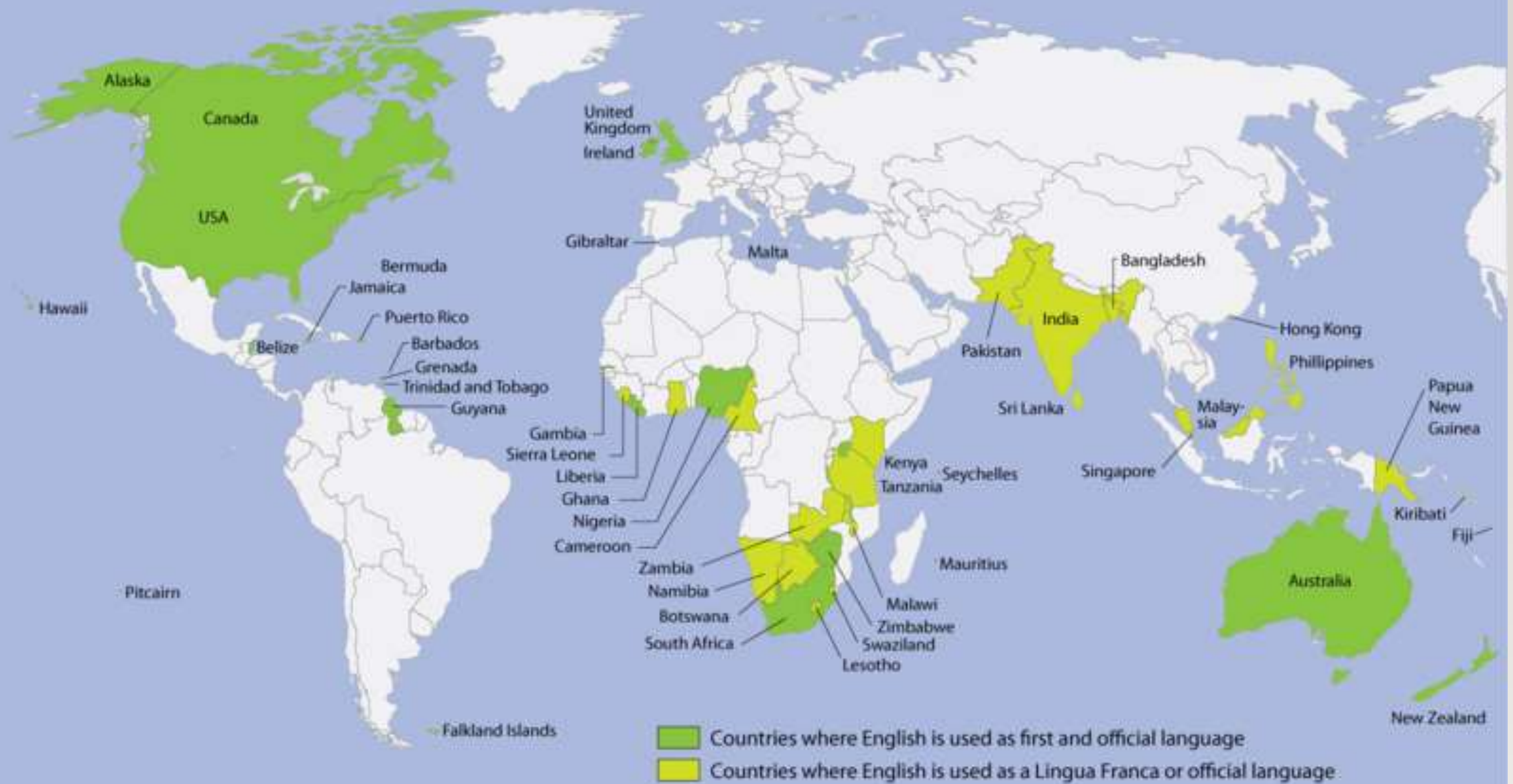
'Native-speaking' countries?

- How would you define a 'native-speaking' country?

- Why are Jamaica and India not considered 'native-speaking', but Canada, Australia or South Africa are?

- How could you use the map with your students to raise their awareness of World Englishes?

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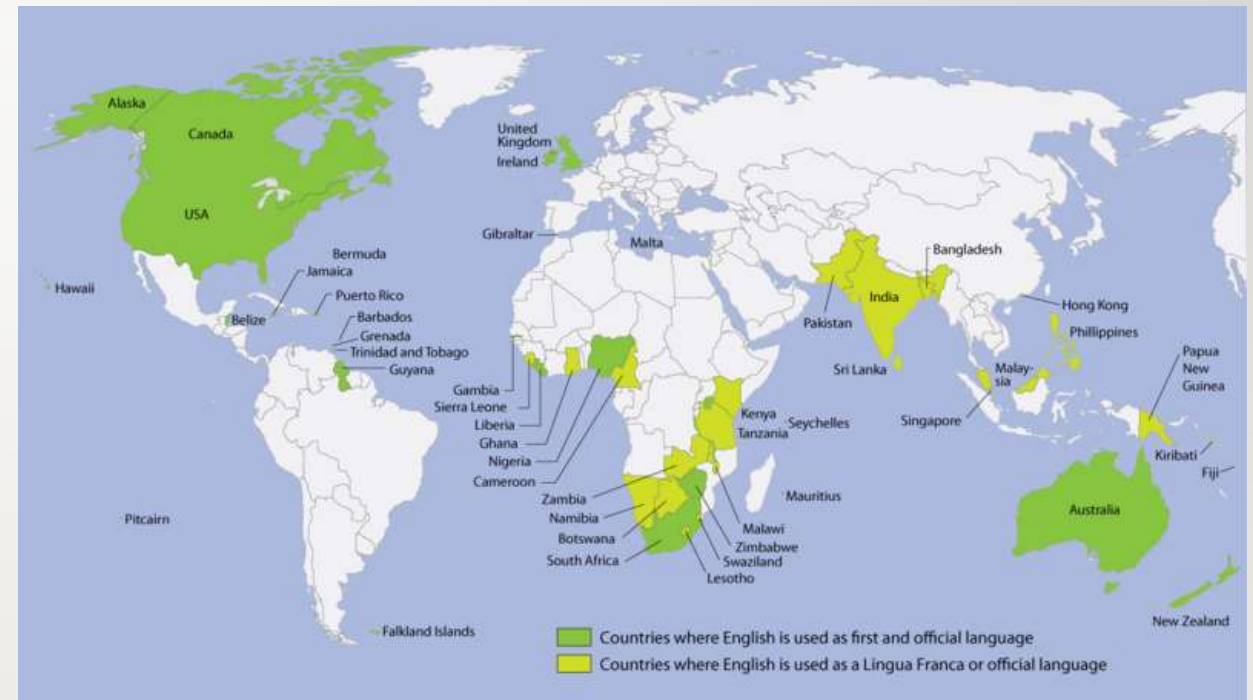
Who is a 'native speaker'?

With the person next to you, write a definition of who a 'native speaker' of English is. You might want to consider:

- Place of birth;

- Age of language acquisition;

- Language(s) spoken at home;

- Language proficiency;

- Parents' place of birth.

Pronunciation: native and non-native speakers

Listen to the speakers and answer the questions:

1. Who is a 'native speaker' in your opinion?
2. Which speaker is easier to understand?

Discuss:

- Is 'native speaker' pronunciation important for you? Why (not)?
- Should students aspire to speak like a 'native speaker'? Why (not)?
- Is having a foreign accent a bad thing? Why (not)?
- Are 'native speakers always good models of pronunciation? Why (not)?
- Do you think students should aim to reduce their foreign accent? Why (not)?

'Native' and 'non-native speakers' in the classroom

NON-NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHER   NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHER

What makes an effective English teacher?

- Proficiency in the language;

- Language awareness;

- Ability to motivate students;

- Knowledge of methodology;

- Ability to convey knowledge;

- Flexibility (adjusting to students' needs, level, etc.);

- Gaining and maintaining rapport.

Discuss these questions:

1. What makes an effective teacher?

2. Are any of these skills exclusive to 'native' or 'non-native speakers'?

3. How important is being a 'native speaker' for an effective teacher?

4. Can both 'native' and 'non-native speakers' be effective teachers? Why (not)?

Recruitment

Imagine you own a language school and are recruiting a teacher. Discuss:

- What are the necessary requirements and why, consider:
  - Qualifications;
  - Experience;
  - Specific teaching skills.
- What would you include in a job ad and why.

Look at the job ad and discuss:

- Are any of the requirements you mentioned listed in the ad?
- Is it appropriate to ask ONLY for native speakers with EU passport? Why (not)?
- Is it appropriate to recruit teachers with no experience? Why (not)?
- Would you go to this language school? Why (not)?

English Teachers in Aragon, Spain
Well-established, growing EFL language academy.

Aragon, Spain – 3 x full-time positions starting immediately for TEFL trained teachers.

Well-established, growing EFL language academy.

Must be native speakers of English and UK / EU passport.

Applications accepted individually or as a couple. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.

For academic year 2016 – 2017. Some Spanish an advantage, but not necessary. Help given with finding accommodation.

Please forward an up-to-date C.V. by email stating **exact** availability and the position(s) you are applying for.

Recruitment

With the person next to you discuss:

- What should be the minimal requirements for English teachers?
- Which skills or qualities are important in effective English teachers?
- Which requirements are inappropriate or discriminatory and should not be used in job ads? Why?

Now write a job ad for a language school. Remember to:

- Avoid discriminatory language;
- Focus on relevant skills necessary for the job.

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Further reading – English as a Lingua Franca

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