Contextualising a pedagogical model in English-language education: The case of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT
A major controversy in the fields of World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) has been the application of exonormative inner circle norms to ELT classrooms in diverse multilingual societies. Proponents of these two research paradigms have suggested alternative pedagogical models that cater for the English needs in specific sociolinguistic contexts. Against this background, the paper seeks to examine the suitability of adopting a(n) WE and/or ELF-oriented pedagogical model, as well as the corresponding research findings, in Hong Kong’s ELT classroom. More specifically, the study investigated the use of English by the local professionals and, furthermore, evaluated the comparability of Hong Kong’s sociolinguistic reality to typical WE and ELF contexts via a structured questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. The findings suggest that the English-using situation in Hong Kong is more sophisticated than either of the WE or ELF setting, and is highly individualised according to the occupational nature. By referring to research findings from both paradigms, the paper concludes by discussing the potential to develop a pedagogical model in Hong Kong in two dimensions, namely, the benchmarking of an endonormative target and the portrayal of the English-using society.