**3: Varieties of English**

**3.1 Introduction**

As the proposed goal is to teach pupils an internationally intelligible English, it is considered useful to acquaint pupils with the vast array of English dialects around the world (Jenkins 2006, Seidlhofer 2004).  Through acquainting pupils with these varieties, they learn that there is not one specific English that they should always have to use, and it lessens pupils’ anxiety concerning their own pronunciation of English (Widdowson 2014).

Teaching methods used in the Netherlands often offer a wide range of audio and video samples to be used in class, but these tend to focus on RP and General American (Van der Haagen 1998), ignoring the complex and varied amount of English spoken around the world. It is advised to use these recordings, but add examples of your own as well; although keep in mind that a heavy focus on BBC news could be considered to work against the aims of this handbook. Even though regional dialects or accents may be considered permissible now by BBC viewers, “regional grammar and vocabulary certainly are not” (Hodgson, 2014).

**3.2 How to use this in class**

To acquaint pupils with as many varieties as possible, I have constructed an assignment, in which pupils are instructed to give a short presentation of the typical hallmarks of a certain variety. Because the pupils will be instructed by their peers, and because they will work with and restructure the information in order to give the presentation, a more enduring acquaintance can be expected than if it was teacher-instructed (Ebbens & Ettenkoven 2005, Cohen 1994).

There are no guidelines for teaching specific dialects of English, so we have chosen to primarily work with the dialects of English they are most likely to encounter, both in tests (CITO exams) and in real life. This means that we have weighed both the number of speakers (Pinon & Haydon 2009, Crystal 2003) and the mean distance to the Netherlands (CIA 2015). That is why, for instance, there are more British variants of English than African Englishes in the assignment as given in Table 2.

Since the average number of pupils in any given secondary education class in the Netherlands is between 22 (VMBO) and 27 (HAVO) (Schoenmaker et. al. 2013), 30 varieties of English have been selected on the aforementioned criteria. Work with group presentations to save time and let pupils work together, and at least discuss the first 15 varieties.  Depending on available time, a teacher can still choose to discuss every single variety.  Do pay attention in class to the varieties of English that have not been discussed in the pupils’ presentations, preferably through recordings that are discussed with the class.

During the pilot study, two types of presentation were used, both of which were experienced as positive and useful by teachers and pupils. The first type used was a round of presentations, where each group of two was asked to step forward and showcase their variety of English. The second type was the use of expertise tables, where pupils went from group to group to present their variety of English in a more intimate group. Other varieties of presentation (e.g. poster presentations, game show/interview, documentary video assignments) could be used in class as well, depending on the amount of time and the group of pupils available.

**3.3 Assignment on varieties of English and planner**

Prepare a short presentation (3-5 minutes) about one of the dialects from the list below, in which you discuss its origin, and show or play some distinctive grammatical features and pronunciation. Find both a written example (e.g. a transcription, an excerpt) and an audio or video fragment which you present to the class. Mail your material, including links, to [email teacher]. (This could be changed into upload to Drive, of course.)

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| **1** | **Received Pronunciation** | **16** | **Greek English** |
| **2** | **Welsh English** | **17** | **Liverpudlian/Scouse** |
| **3** | **Scottish** | **18** | **Chinese English** |
| **4** | **Irish** | **19** | **Ulster English** |
| **5** | **General American** | **20** | **Southern US** |
| **6** | **General Australian** | **21** | **African American Vernacular English (AAVE)** |
| **7** | **Indian English** | **22** | **Canadian English** |
| **8** | **Nigerian English** | **23** | **Pakistani English** |
| **9** | **Dutch English** | **24** | **South African English** |
| **10** | **Jamaican English** | **25** | **Kenyan English** |
| **11** | **Singapore English (Singlish)** | **26** | **Birmingham (Brummie)** |
| **12** | **Northumbrian English/Geordie** | **27** | **Spanish English**  |
| **13** | **East London/Cockney** | **28** | **Trinidad & Tobago English** |
| **14** | **German English** | **29** | **Italian English** |
| **15** | **Russian English** | **30** | **Hawaiian Pidgin English** |

**Table 2: Varieties of English to be discussed in class.**

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| Varieties of English |
| Goal: raise awareness of the existence of the extend of variability in English pronunciation worldwide. |
| Lesson 1 | Introduction: ask students how they would classify their English, and how they feel about their variety of English. Show them <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBYsuohdKs4>, and talk about how these people sound. Is this all English? Are they all born speakers of English? Are they understandable? Then move on to why a global English, a Lingua Franca English, is coming up as a new world standard. Tell them that the amount of non-native speakers of English is now close to 1,5 billion speakers, outnumbering the native speakers 4 to 1! You can then divide the groups/varieties of English. |
| Lesson 2 | Let them work on their presentations in class |
| Lesson 3 | Presentations are held and recorded. |