Chapter 6

The Ambassador of English:
An Emerging Intuitive Pedagogy for Teaching English Around the World

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ABSTRACT

This chapter shares the experiences of two Jamaicans recruited to teach English in Colombia and Japan. The male, armed with only an English-speaking tongue, carved out a new instructor identity as a self-acclaimed Ambassador of English on a mission. The chapter charts this intuitive and emerging understanding of this pedagogical construct and mission through curriculum interrogation, a paradigm shift in classroom teaching, and the abrogation of hegemonic notions of native-speakerism, outer and inner concentric notions of facility with English, and the ownership of English in a counter discourse of the Ambassador of English as an international interlocutor digital native and intuitive practitioner strategically placed to engender a shared international professional-academic for the teaching of English as an international language.

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INTRODUCTION

Vignette: Flying Above Inhibitions

Departure to the land of the rising sun became a reality on the morning of July 25, 2014 for a twenty-two-year-old bright-eyed female college graduate jetting halfway across the world to a new country to start her first real job. Four years of studying for a college degree had finally ended and so had the six months of teaching experience in a vocational institute in Jamaica. On June 21, 2015, almost a year later, a young male university graduate boarded his flight to Bogotá, Colombia from Kingston, Jamaica on a new mission. That mission was to be an English Teaching Fellow as part of the Colombian’s Government initiative to have a bilingual Colombia by 2025. He was one of 200 individuals of various ages from all over the world selected that year to play a role in completing this task. His fellowship would last 6 months, with the option of extending his contract for an additional 6 months upon the completion. As he sat there in his window seat, watching his island home disappear beneath him, it dawned on him that he had absolutely no idea what he was going to do! The young woman, who left for Japan the year before had held tightly onto her six months teaching experience and the methods she had as those were the only things she was sure about as that plane took off. The young man spent the entire duration of his flight wondering how big an impact he would make in six months or even a year, and if he were even qualified enough to be selected to do this job. Flying at that altitude above his perceived limitations provided new perspectives and angles. He was already armed with the vision and purpose of the Colombian government’s initiative. He had his competencies, success and achievements in English under his belt. He was about to touch the soil of Colombia, a country that valued investment in English, personal growth, national development and prosperity. He too was making an investment in this venture. He was a Jamaican on a mission. His heart summersaulted and fluttered with new anxieties, but these came with a resounding resolve that he would find the path to becoming the English Ambassador, he mused that he was. In retrospect, he would want to believe that this thought was what inspired hi then and still inspires him today. He was a foreigner! But he was an Ambassador on a. As soon as the plane landed. He too landed on his feet. Meanwhile, almost a year after landing in Japan, the bright-eyed young woman was just getting more sure-footed in her classroom.

Colombia’s Investment in English Language Teaching

Colombia’s national government has set the ambitious goal for Colombia to become the most educated nation in the region by year 2025. With less than 1% of Colombian
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