Title of Project: 
Assessing Speakers of World Englishes: The Roles of Rater Language Background, Language Attitude and Training

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Project Summary:
Although many studies have been conducted that examined the relation between rater language background and their scores, none have compared World Englishes raters with native speaking raters in their scoring of World Englishes test takers and none have simultaneously examined how additional factors of rater training and rater language attitude could impact the scores. Investigating all three factors is essential in addressing the validity of existing English language tests, because variability in rater scoring relates to the fairness and accuracy of test results. This dissertation study aims to fill in the gap by comparing 30 Chinese, Indian and American raters’ assessment of Chinese and Indian TOEFL iBT Speaking Test responses. First, I examined the differences among the three rater groups in the internal consistency and severity of their scores, and in their scoring processes. Second, a special training package that targets raters’ awareness of language varietal features was administered to raters that were randomly selected from the three language groups. All raters then rated another set of responses and scores were compared between those that received and did not receive the special training. Finally, I measured raters’ language attitude through a questionnaire, and examined its relation to scores. Results from this study shed light on the conceptual debate about the legitimacy of World Englishes varieties, address the concerns about the dominance of native speaker norms in language tests, and have important implications for the current practice of rater hiring and rater training.