

## UNDERSTANDING OF WORLD ENGLISHES

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### ABSTRACT

World Englishes means that the different forms and varieties of English used in various sociolinguistic contexts in different parts of the world. It include the English Studies approach, sociolinguistic approaches (sociology of language, features-based, Kachruvian, pidgin and creole studies), applied linguistic approaches, lexicographical approaches, the popularizers approach, critical approaches, and the futurology approach. English studies approach is focus on the analysis of varieties of English from a synchronic and historical perspective, against a tradition of English Studies (Anglistik), dating from the late 19th century. Sociology of language is focus on English Research in relation to such issues as language maintenance/shift, and ethnolinguistic identity. Features-based is focus on the description of English through dialectological and variationist methodologies. The paper aim is to describe about what is world Englishes and English different form and English varieties used in sociolinguistic context. By knowing about world Englishes will help the language user be easy to use the language.

**Keywords: world Englishes, Approach, English.**

## INTRODUCTION

The expression “world Englishes” is capable of a range of meanings and interpretations. In the first sense, perhaps, the term functions as an umbrella label referring to a wide range of differing approaches to the description and analysis of English (es) worldwide. Some scholars, for example, favor a discussion of “world English” in the singular, and also employ terms such as “global English” and “international English,” while others adopt the same terms in their plural forms.

In a second narrower sense, the term is used to specifically refer to the “new Englishes” found in the Caribbean and in West African and East African societies such as Nigeria and Kenya, and to such Asian Englishes as Hong Kong English, Indian English, Malaysian English, Singaporean English, and Philippine English. Typically studies of this kind focus on the areal characteristics of national or regional Englishes, with an emphasis on the linguistic description of autonomous varieties of Englishes.

In a third sense, world Englishes refers to the wide-ranging approach to the study of the English language worldwide particularly associated with Braj B. Kachru and other scholars working in a “world Englishes paradigm.”

Underlying each of these three broad approaches is an evident concern with monocentrism versus pluricentrism, i.e. one English (with all its geographical and social varieties), or multifarious Englishes (deserving consideration and recognition as autonomous or semi-autonomous varieties of the language). the centrifugal and centripetal dynamics of international English(es) also discuss about “world English” versus “world Englishes.” Butler (1997), for example, writing as lexicographer, claims that in most contexts where English is establishing itself as a “localized” or “new” English “[t] here two major forces operating at the moment . . . The first is an outside pressure – the sweep of

American English through the English-speaking world,” which Butler regards as synonymous with world English, because “[t]his force provides the words which are present globally in international English and which are usually conveyed around the world by the media”<sup>1</sup>.

The other dynamic, at the level of world Englishes, is “the purely local – the wellspring of local culture and a sense of identity”. Thus at the level of lexis, items like cable TV, cyberpunk, high five, and political correctness might be identified with “world English,” whereas items like bamboo snake, outstation, adobo, and sari-sari store would be items found in “world Englishes,” more specifically “Asian Englishes.” When Kachru and Smith took over the editorship of the journal *World*

In an early article on this topic, McArthur (1987) postulates a core variety of “World Standard English,” which he then contrasts with the wide range of geographical Englishes used worldwide. In the last two decades, there has been a substantial change in approaches to English studies in recent years; a paradigm shift that began in the early 1980s. At that time, various branches of linguistics, including English studies, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics, began to recognize and describe the remarkable spread of English worldwide which was then in progress.

Early scholarship in this area included Kachru’s (1982) *The Other Tongue* and (1986) *World Englishes* 369. The *Alchemy of English*, Pride’s (1982) *New Englishes*, Noss’ (1983) *Varieties of English in Southeast Asia*, and Platt, Weber, and Ho’s (1984) *The New Englishes*. The volume edited by Noss included a number of position papers, including one by Llamzon on the “Essential features of new varieties of English.” According to Llamzon, new

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, 1997, p. 107.

varieties of English are identifiable with reference to four essential sets of features: ecological, historical, sociolinguistic, and cultural.<sup>2</sup> In the last context, Llamzon discusses cultural features with reference to creative writing and a local literature in English, arguing that “works by novelists, poets and playwrights have demonstrated that the English language can be used as a vehicle for the transmission of the cultural heritage of Third World countries. The appearance of this body of literary works signals that the transplanted tree has finally reached maturity, and is now beginning to blossom and fructify”.

The emergence of “new Englishes” in the early 1980s thus overlapped with and was influenced by the “new literatures” that were then gaining recognition (see, for example, King, 1980; Hosillos, 1982; Lim, 1984). In the 1980s, such postcolonial creative writing began to attract the interest of both the reading public and academics, and the end of the decade saw the publication of *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989). By 1993, the title of their book had been appropriated for a Time magazine cover story and feature article, which detailed the successes of the Booker nominees and prize-winners, such as Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth (both of Indian parentage), as well as Kazuo Ishiguro (of Japanese descent), Timothy Mo (Anglo-Chinese), Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lankan), Ben Okri (Nigerian), and Nobel prize-winner Derek Walcott (Caribbean).

In this article Pico Iyer describes such writers as “transcultural,” because “they are addressing an audience as mixed up and eclectic and uprooted as themselves.” Iyer argues for “a new postimperial order in which in which English is the lingua franca,” and quotes Robert McCrum to the effect that “There is not one English language anymore, but there are many English languages . . . each

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<sup>2</sup> Lamzon, 1983, pp. 100–4.

of these Englishes is creating its own very special literature, which, because it doesn't feel oppressed by the immensely influential literary tradition in England, is somehow freer".<sup>3</sup>

The last three decades have seen a rapid growth of interest in the study of the "world Englishes" as well as a number of related fields, however these are glossed: English as an international language, global English (es), international English (es), localized varieties of English, new varieties of English, non-native varieties of English, and world English (es), etc. At present there are at least three international academic journals devoted primarily to this branch of linguistics (English Today, English World-Wide, and World Englishes), which have been supplemented by a substantial number of books on the subject. Currently, a number of distinct albeit overlapping, approaches to research (and publications) in the field of "world English(es)," "new Englishes," and "new varieties of English" may be identified. These include the following (1) the English Studies approach, (2) sociolinguistic approaches (sociology of language, features-based, Kachruvian, pidgin and creole studies), (3) applied linguistic approaches, (4) lexicographical approaches, (5) the popularizers approach, (6) critical approaches, and (7) the futurology approach.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. THE ENGLISH STUDIES APPROACH**

The "English Studies" approach to world Englishes has developed historically from the description of English tradition, which dates back at least to the late nineteenth century and the work of scholars such as Henry Bradley (1845–1923), Otto Jespersen (1860–1943), Daniel Jones (1881–1967), Charles Talbut Onions (1873–1965), Henry Sweet (1845–1912), and

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<sup>3</sup> Iyer, 1993, p. 53.

Henry Wyld (1870– 1945). More recently, this approach may be exemplified by the work of contemporary British linguists, such as Robert Burchfield, David Crystal, Sidney Greenbaum, Tom McArthur, Randolph Quirk, and John Wells. Randolph Quirk was one of the first in the contemporary period to discuss varieties of English and the notion of “standards” of world English in his 1962 book, *The Use of English*.

In the mid-1980s, a number of books on world English (es) in the “English studies” tradition were published, including Burchfield’s influential *The English Language* (1985), Greenbaum’s *The English Language Today* (1985), and Quirk and Widdowson’s *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures* (1985). Each of these attempted to address issues related to the learning and use of English from a global perspective.

Burchfield’s comparison of the dispersal of Latin in the Middle Ages with English in the 1980s provides the starting-point for Quirk’s (1985) discussion of “The English language in a global context,” in which Quirk argues the case for normativity, declaiming at one point that “the fashion of undermining belief in standard English had wrought educational damage in the ENL [English as a native language] countries” and that there is no justification for such an attitude to be “exported” to societies where English has the status of a second or foreign language: “The relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-native needs to use English (even in ESL countries) is arguably well catered for by a single monochrome standard form that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech”.<sup>4</sup> By the mid-1980s, it seems that Quirk had

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<sup>4</sup> Quirk, 1985, p. 6.

transcended the linguistic radicalism of his youth, and that he was anxious to join battle on behalf of both “Standard English” and “standards” of English.

So, it focus on the analysis of varieties of English from a synchronic and historical perspective, against a tradition of English Studies (Anglistik), dating from the late 19th century.

## 2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO WORLD ENGLISHES

### a. The sociology of language

Two books by Joshua A. Fishman and his associates (Fishman, Cooper, & Conrad, 1977 and Fishman, Conrad, & Rubal-Lopez, 1996) have provided sociologically-detailed treatments of “the spread of English” and “postimperial English” respectively. The 1977 volume addressed a number of topics, and also attempted to identify the relevant sociopolitical predictors of the use of English in postcolonial societies (former Anglophone colonial status, linguistic diversity, religious composition, and educational and economic development). Fishman also noted that the “international sociolinguistic balance” at that time rested on three factors: (1) the spread of English; (2) the control of English; and (3) the fostering of vernacular languages.<sup>5</sup>

So, it focus on English Research in relation to such issues as language maintenance/shift, and ethnolinguistic identity.

#### 1) “Features-based” approaches

In contrast to the sociology of language approach to world Englishes, a “features-based” approach has typically involved the linguist in identifying and making statements about the distinctive

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<sup>5</sup> Fishman, 1977, p. 335.

features of varieties in terms of pronunciation or “accent” (phonology), vocabulary (lexis), or grammar (morphology and syntax). One leading example of this approach is Trudgill and Hannah’s *International English* (1994, first edition published 1982) which describes “standard varieties” of English in terms of “differences at the level of phonetics, phonology, grammar and vocabulary”. *International English* uses tape-recordings of English speech from Australia, India, Ireland, New Zealand, North America, Scotland, South Africa, Wales, West Africa, and the West Indies. The third edition added an expanded section on creoles, as well as descriptions of Singapore and Philippine English.

So, it focus on the description of English through dialectological and variationist methodologies. Situated against the long tradition of British and European dialectology.

## 2) The Kachruvian approach

In Kachru’s (1992) survey of “World Englishes: approaches, issues and resources,” he summarizes the study of world Englishes in terms of 11 related and overlapping issues, identified as: the spread and stratification of English; characteristics of the stratification; interactional contexts of world Englishes; implications of the spread; descriptive and prescriptive concerns; the bilingual’s creativity and the literary canon; multi-canons of English; the two faces of English: nativization and Englishization; fallacies concerning users and uses; the power and politics of English; and teaching world Englishes.<sup>6</sup> In his discussion of the first issue, “the

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<sup>6</sup> (Kachru, 1992, p. 2).



spread and stratification of English,” Kachru argues in favor of the strength of his model of the spread of English in terms of “three concentric circles,” the inner circle (ENL societies), the outer circle (ESL societies) and the expanding circle (EFL societies). In the second section on the “characteristics of the stratification,” Kachru critically examines such sociolinguistic metalanguage as “lect” and “cline,” before proceeding to a discussion of the “interactional contexts of world Englishes” and the “implications of the spread” of world Englishes for the outer and expanding circles in linguistic, cultural, terms.

In addition there are issues linked to questions of the models, norms, and standards for English in the outer and expanding circles. In this context, Kachru distinguishes three types of varieties: First, the norm-providing varieties of the inner circle, including American English, British English, and the less-preferred varieties of Australian and New Zealand English. Second, the norm-developing varieties of the outer circle, where the localized (or “endocentric”) norm has a well-established linguistic and cultural identity, as in, e.g., Singapore English, Nigerian English, and Indian English. And third, the norm-dependent varieties of the expanding circle, e.g. as in Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, where the norms are external (or “exocentric,” i.e., American or British).

So, it focusses on the promotion of a pluricentric approach to world Englishes, highlighting both the 'sociolinguistic realities' and 'bilingual creativity' of Outer Circle (and Expanding Circle) societies.

### 3) Pidgin and creole studies.

“creolistics” overlaps to an extent with the study of world Englishes, although even commentators such as Görlach remain ambivalent on this issue. In a 1996 paper entitled “And is it English?,” Görlach discusses the existence of varieties such as code-switching, pidgins, creoles, cants, and mixed languages. In the case of pidgins and creoles, Görlach asserts that these are “independent languages on all counts,” noting that varieties which are “marginally English” may persist as “one of the more messy facts of life”

So, it focus on the description and analysis of 'mixed' languages and the dynamics of linguistic hybridisation (beginning with the early work of Hugo Schuchardt 1842-1927).

### 3. APPLIED LINGUISTIC APPROACHES

One of the first “applied linguistic approaches” to varieties of world English began in the 1960s with the work of Halliday, MacIntosh, and Strevens (1964), who sought to apply insights derived from “the linguistic sciences” to the newly-emergent field of applied linguistics, which in Britain and the USA was broadly concerned with theories of language learning, language teaching, and language pedagogy.

Clifford Prator argument that “in a country where English is not spoken natively but is widely used as the medium of instruction, to set up the local variety of English as the ultimate model to be imitated by those learning the language” is “unjustifiable intellectually and not conducive to the best possible results”. He identifies seven fallacies associated with the British heresy: (1) that second language varieties of English can legitimately be equated with mother tongue varieties; (2) that second language varieties of English really exist as coherent, homogeneous linguistic systems, describable

in the usual way as the speech of an identifiable social group; (3) that a few minor concessions in the type of English taught in schools would tend to or suffice to stabilize the language; (4) that one level of a language, its phonology, can be allowed to change without entailing corresponding changes at other levels; (5) that it would be a simple matter to establish a second language variety of English as an effective instructional model once it had been clearly identified and described; (6) that students would long be content to study English in a situation in which, as a matter of policy, they were denied access to a native speaker model; and that (7) granting a second language variety of English official status in a country's schools would lead to its widespread adoption as a mother tongue.

Peter Strevens was one of those singled out for opprobrium by Prator argue that High heresy indeed, but over the next two decades the influence of such heresy was to change the way that many applied linguists would approach their subject, particularly at the level of theory. Thus, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, issues related to world Englishes began to be communicated regularly to an applied linguistics audience through such publications as *The Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *Applied Linguistics*, *English Language Teaching Journal*, *TESOL Quarterly*, and other journals in the field.

So, it focus on the exploration of the implications of world Englishes for language learning and teaching.

#### **4. THE LEXICOGRAPHICAL APPROACH.**

Dictionaries are profoundly important for the recognition of world Englishes. As Quirk (1990) has pointed out, it is only when a world variety of English is supported by codification (chiefly expressed through national

dictionaries) that one can make a strong claim that such a variety is “institutionalized.” Perhaps the best example of this in recent times has been the case of Australia where the Macquarie Dictionary has been largely accepted as a “national dictionary” or, in their own words, as “Australia’s own.” By the 1990s the editors of Macquarie had also become activists for the promotion of world Englishes in Asia, and are now planning a dictionary focusing on English in the Asian region with extensive coverage of the vocabularies of the new Englishes of Southeast Asia, particularly those of Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines.

The domestic English dictionary tradition as exemplified by Samuel Johnson’s (1755) *A Dictionary of the English Language* and J. A. H. Murray’s *Oxford English Dictionary* (1884–1928) embodied two principles: (1) the potential of dictionaries for “fixing” and standardizing the language (however unrealistic this might turn out to be); and (2) the identification of a “nucleus” or core of the language, defined according to “Anglicity.” Arguably, the first dictionaries of world Englishes were glossaries produced in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These included Pickering (1816), Bartlett (1848), etc.

So, it focus on the codification of vocabularies of English worldwide, linked to particular post-colonial societies and issues of linguistic autonomy.

## **5. THE POPULARIZERS, CRITICAL LINGUISTS, AND FUTUROLOGISTS.**

### **a. The popularizers.**

The best-known of these was perhaps McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil’s (1986) *The Story of English*, which was accompanied by the worldwide broadcast of a nine-part BBC documentary on the history of

the English language. Although the series and the book were a popular success in both Europe and North America, they provoked a strong reaction from both linguists intolerant of descriptive inaccuracies, and from cultural critics resentful of the perceived triumphalism.

The first part of the television series, “An English-speaking world,” contained such clichés in Robert MacNeil’s commentary as “World War II was the finest hour for British English”; “The sun set on the Union Jack, but not on the English language”; and “English, the language of the skies, is now becoming the language of the seven seas”; with the American newspaper pundit William Safire declaiming: “I think it’s a glorious language . . . it’s growing, it’s getting more expressive, it’s getting more global, getting more accepted around the world.

Another eminent popularizer from the late 1980s to the present, has been David Crystal, whose first work in a popular vein was the (1988) Penguin paperback, *The English Language*. In a similar vein, most arguments in Crystal’s analysis of the future of “global English” are reducible to the evocative slogan of “having your cake and eating it,” a phrase for which Crystal qua popularizer appears to have a particular fondness. The book drew particular flak from Robert Phillipson, who took Crystal to task in a lengthy review in the journal *Applied Linguistics*, charging that the work was “Eurocentric” and “triumphalist,” accusations that Crystal countered in a response in the same journal (Phillipson, 1999; Crystal, 2000). By this time, Phillipson had already established himself as one of the leading critical linguists in this field.

So, it focusses on the publication of books on English worldwide aimed at a wider reading public.

b. Critical linguists

The discourse on world English(es) changed gear dramatically in 1992 with the publication of Phillipson's book *Linguistic Imperialism*. At the core of Phillipson's theoretical approach to "linguistic imperialism" are a series of arguments about the political relations between what Phillipson characterizes as the "core English-speaking countries" (Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) and the "periphery-English countries" where English either has the status of a second language (e.g., Nigeria, India, Singapore), or is a foreign and "international link language" (e.g., Scandinavia, Japan) (1992, p. 17). The nature of this relationship, Phillipson argues, is one of structural and systemic inequality, in which the political and economic hegemony of western anglophone powers is established or maintained over scores of developing nations, particularly those formerly colonies of European powers.

Another important theorist and commentator from a critical perspective has been Alastair Pennycook. Pennycook's (1994) *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* endorses Phillipson's critique of the role of applied linguistics and ELT in "helping to legitimate the contemporary capitalist order" (1994, p. 24), and seconds his view that anglophone countries (Britain and America) have promoted English throughout the world "for economic and political purposes" and "to protect and promote capitalist interests".

So, it focusses on the expression of resistance to the linguistic imperialism and cultural hegemony of English, in tandem with resistance to AngloAmerican political power

c. Futurologists.

Crystal (1997) and Graddol (1997), have attempted to discuss the future prospects for English in the world. Crystal, in the final chapter of *English as a Global Language*, highlights a number of issues related to the “future of global English.” The issues he discusses include the anxiety about the mother tongue in societies such as India, the debate about the official English movement in the USA, and the existence and growth of the new Englishes.

Graddol’s (1997) *The Future of English?* was commissioned and published by the British Council’s English 2000 project, the final section of which is devoted to “English in the future.” Graddol identifies two major issues linked to the notion of “world standard English”: (1) whether English will fragment into many different languages (the Quirk/Kachru debate); and (2) whether US and British English will continue to serve as models of correctness, or whether a “new world standard” will emerge.

So, it focuses on the discussion of future scenarios for the spread of English and English language teaching worldwide.

## 1. ENDWORD: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE.

The significance of world Englishes for applied linguistics in the first and wider sense is profound, challenging the discipline to come to terms with a wide range of issues, descriptive and theoretical, linked to the unprecedented impact of English throughout the world. Current estimates

suggest that there are now an estimated 375 million users of English in inner-circle societies, 375 million in outer-circle (ESL) societies, and around 750–1,000 million in the expanding (EFL) circle (McArthur, 2001).

The vast majority of teachers of English as a second and foreign language in the world today are “non-native” teachers working in a wide range of settings in outer-circle and expanding-circle societies. In outer-circle Asian societies such as Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines (as well as a host of African societies), such teachers operate in sociolinguistic contexts where English has established de facto intranational norms, often at variance with the exonormative targets of traditional teaching materials. In situations such as these, the maintenance of traditional target norms of English proficiency may not only lack realism but may also contribute to the stigmatization of the norms of local users (including teachers and learners), contributing to a “culture of complaint” rather than “a culture of confidence” (Bolton, 2002b).

A consideration of world Englishes is important to applied linguistics for a range of reasons. Not least because researchers and teachers from Europe and North America may have much to learn from the experiences of the outer and expanding circles, both at levels of theory and description, and in the consideration of pedagogic “principles” and “practice.”



## Conclusion

World Englishes means that the different forms and varieties of English used in various sociolinguistic contexts in different parts of the world. It includes the English Studies approach, sociolinguistic approaches (sociology of language, features-based, Kachruvian, pidgin and creole studies), applied linguistic approaches, lexicographical approaches, the popularizers approach, critical approaches, and the futurology approach.

English studies approach is focus on the analysis of varieties of English from a synchronic and historical perspective, against a tradition of English Studies (Anglistik), dating from the late 19th century. Sociology of language is it focus on English Research in relation to such issues as language maintenance/shift, and ethnolinguistic identity. Features-based is focus on the description of English through dialectological and variationist methodologies. Situated against the long tradition of British and European dialectology. Kachruvian approach is focus on the promotion of a pluricentric approach to world Englishes, highlighting both the 'sociolinguistic realities' and 'bilingual creativity' of Outer Circle (and Expanding Circle) societies. Pidgin and creole studies is focus on the description and analysis of 'mixed' languages and the dynamics of linguistic hybridization.

Applied linguistic approach is focus on the exploration of the implications of world Englishes for language learning and teaching. Lexicographical approach is focus on the codification of vocabularies of English worldwide, linked to particular post-colonial societies and issues of linguistic autonomy. Popularizer approach is focus on the publication of books on English worldwide aimed at a wider reading public. Critical approach is focus on the expression of resistance to the linguistic imperialism and cultural hegemony of English, in tandem with resistance to Anglo American political power and futurology approach is focus

on the discussion of future scenarios for the spread of English and English language teaching worldwide.

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