

Not all native speakers speak Standard English, and Standard English is perhaps a fiction, concocted by "a self-elected elite" (Widdowson 2003)

The sociohistorical background of present-day English

The **linguistic developments** of English are products of the **colonial expansion** of the **British Empire** from the late sixteenth to the twentieth century. What counts here is:

- the **expansion and relocation** of a single language to new territories where a specific type of **language contact situation** evolves.

The process of **colonial expansion** was driven by a variety of reasons:

- Political
- Military
- Economic
- Religious

The **agents** of this process were:

- State
- Business
- Companies
- Religious communities
- Missionary and colonization societies (associazioni filantropiche per aiutare gli ex schiavi americani a ritornare nel loro continente d'origine)

The beginnings of the 20th century: the term English has been mainly used to indicate the varieties of British English.

The middle of the 1980s: new studies about the status, the functions and the structures of English have emerged.

This generated a **shift of attention** from questions of language norms and standard to matters of linguistic variation taking place beyond the national boundaries of the language, namely the UK.

The spread of **English** has far exceeded that other famous case, the spread of Latin during the Roman Empire" (Platt 1984) and English will become the most respected and universally read and spoken language in the world (Kachru 1992)

The diaspora of English

The global spread of English is popularly viewed in terms of **diaspora** characterized by different stages.

First stage

Expansion of English within the British Isles, namely **Scotland**, **Wales** and afterwards **Ireland**.

This process:

- started in the **5th century** with the arrival of the first **Germanic tribes**
- continued in the **Middle Ages** with the establishment of English-speaking colonies in Ireland and the conquest of Wales in the 13th century
- Scotland w(h)ere Scottish was spoken, resisted until the beginning of the XVIII century.

Major consequences:

- gradual linguistic, cultural, political and economic subjugation of the Gaelic-speaking populations of the British Isles.
- **Gaelic or Scottish** did not die, but **became minority languages**
- They are **still spoken as a second language** by a large number of people **thanks to their promotion by local institutions**.

The first diaspora of English

- the discovery of new territories
- the movement of English-speaking populations
- the establishment of the British colonies in North America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.
- Contact between English and other languages resulted in the development of Pidgin Englishes and Creoles.

Consequences:

- **Formation of New Englishes**, varieties of English which diverge from British and American standards.
- **English became one of the major languages of the world**, along with Arabic, French, German, Hindi, Russian, and Spanish (but English was still (not) a global language numerically or functionally)

The second diaspora of English

- The global status of English became established (mainly 19th and 20th centuries)
- English was brought to new sociocultural contexts: **South Asia, Africa, and Latin America**
- **English came into contact with genetically and culturally unrelated languages**

i.e. in Asia with **Indo-Aryan** and **Dravidian languages**, in Africa with languages of the **Niger-Congo family**, in Southeast Asia with **Altaic languages**

Consequence:

The contact of English with such diverse languages resulted in the **development of regional-contact varieties of English**: **Indian English, Malaysian English, Singaporean English, Philippine English, Nigerian English, Ghanaian English.**

The beginnings of the study of new varieties of English

Dated to the early 1980s with the publication of some groundbreaking books, e.g. (Kachru 1986, 1992), about the new varieties of English.

Prior to that time, no more than a handful some of the major new varieties of English were studied e.g. **English in Australia and New Zealand, English in West Africa, English in Singapore**

The very fact that **English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it.** (Widdowson 2003)

World Englishes

- **World Englishes (WE): varieties of English used in diverse sociolinguistic contexts.**
- There is now a growing consensus among scholars that **there is not one English language anymore: rather there are many and represent diverse linguistic, cultural, and ideological voices.**
- Why is English plural? Englishes The pluralization symbolizes:
 - the diverse sociolinguistic histories and associations, e.g. **Chinese English, Indian English, Maori English...**
 - multicultural identities
 - multiple norms of use and acquisition
 - the linguistic variations
 - distinct contexts of function
 - combinations of location and activity, e.g. **American legal English, British medical English**
 - the linguistic and literary creativity is determined less by the usage of its native speakers and more by the usage of non-native speakers who are more numerous than native ones

Kachru's classification

- The most successful model to describe English as a world language was devised by the Indian linguist **Braj Kachru (1992)**
- He coined the term **"World English"**
- He classified English as a world language consisting of **three circles**:
 1. **the Inner Circle**
 2. **the Outer or Expanded Circle**
 3. **the Expanding Circle**

Inner circle

The Inner Circle refers to the traditional bases of English where it is spoken as the mother tongue (native speakers).

It includes:

- **UK -> Great Britain**
- **Ireland**
- **the USA**
- **Canada**
- **New Zealand**
- **Australia**

Outer circle

The Outer Circle includes nations where English:

- is spoken as a second language for purposes of business and education
- has a key role in institutions

- may be adopted as an official language.

It includes about 50 territories, mainly belonging to the former British Empire:

- Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines
- Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, (Malawi)

Expanding circle

The Expanding Circle denotes nations where English is acknowledged as an important international language but does not compete for the role of official language; nations in which English has not had a central role in the past but is currently used for purposes of business and technology

(Russia, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Indonesia).

It includes countries:

- which have not been colonized by speakers of the Inner Circle
- where English is taught as a foreign language.

e.g. Mexico, Brazil, Germany, Japan

The circles originally reflected a spread of English from a center, the United Kingdom, to other countries through politics and economics. The circles underscored the fact that English doesn't belong to any one country. With the steady, perhaps increased, influence of English as a world language, the expanding circle has grown to include many more countries.

Esl – English as a second-language countries

In addition to strong indigenous languages English assumes prominent official functions in a multilingual society: the language of politics, the media, jurisdiction, higher education

e.g. Ghana, Nigeria, India, Singapore, Papua New Guinea

Efl - English as a foreign language countries

• English performs no official internal function but is still strongly rooted and widely used in some domains, e.g. the press and tertiary education

• because of its international usefulness in such fields as business, the sciences and technology e.g. Israel, Egypt, Taiwan

- The Inner Circle communities are norm providing. i.e. they have their own varieties of English that are traditionally regarded as the correct ones.
- Outer Circle communities are norm developing. i.e. post-colonial communities have developed their own norms over time, in relation to their own languages and values.
- The Expanding Circle speakers are norm-dependent. i.e. they are not assumed to have internal uses of the language. The norms which they were supposed to adopt are those of the Inner Circle.
- Kachru rejects the idea that any special prominence or superior status should be assigned to ENL countries/inner circle and native-language status
- He places greatest emphasis on the Outer Circle and also the Expanding Circle.

Implications of Kachru's perspective

- norms and standards should no longer be determined by Inner Circle/ENL contexts
- the English language belongs to all who use it
- the most vigorous expansions and developments of the language can be observed in Outer and Expanding Circle countries.

The thing that drives language change more than anything else is CONTACT, mutual influence. The majority usage in the non-native speaking world will eventually influence the minority usage in the native speaking world. There are now at least three non-native speakers of English for every one native speaker, and this is obviously having an effect on language.

World Englishes

The stratification of English and the varieties in the outer circle have been interpreted in two different ways:

1. A polylectal continuum ranging from

- **standard varieties** identified as **ACROLECT** (**the most prestigious variety of a dialect**; **speakers use this to sound sophisticated or in formal situations**) very close to the colonial varieties and mainly used by educated people
 - **intermediate local varieties of English** identified as **MESOLECT** (**a central or middle variety of a dialect, occupying the middle area of the continuum ranging from acrolect to basilect**; it is used in most situations of daily interaction) can be found in the middle
 - **low-standard varieties** identified as **BASILECT** (**the least prestigious form of a dialect, used in casual situations**) are used by people with little contact with English and no formal education
2. A **cline or CONTINUUM of bilingualism**
- the **educated variety** of English
 - **Other varieties** of English. Not only spoken, but also used in literature to characterize various types of identities, socioeconomic classes, and the local cultural ethos.

The **second diaspora** of English can be explained from two different perspectives:

1. **Linguistic imperialism**

- **The spread of English in non-native contexts is actively promoted**, via English language teaching agencies such as the *British Council* and *TESOL* (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), **as an instrument of the foreign policies of major English-speaking states**.
- These agencies introduce and **impose a norm: Standard English**.
- **Result**: an asymmetric relationship between producers and consumers

2. **Econocultural model Linguistic pragmatism** economy + culture

- **Industrial revolution, trade practices, and commercial exploitation of the late XVIII and early XIX century England** created conditions where **English had to develop as the language of the world market, the "commercial lingua franca"** (Bhatt 2001)
- With **England and the United States** at the **epicenter of industrial capitalism of the XIX century**, it was natural that **English became the language of the global commerce**. Especially after *World War II* with the establishment of:
 - the United Nations
 - World Bank
 - UNESCO
 - UNICEF
 - World Health Organization
 - the Commonwealth
 - the European Union

the general competence in English in different political, social, cultural and economic markets has kept growing rapidly. e.g. The spread of English in **South Asia**, which was the result of the demand and willingness of local people to learn it.

Nigerians contested the use of indigenous languages in the schools because it was perceived as denying them the linguistic capital necessary for the accumulation of both economic and political powers.

Language nativization

The English language spread to **non-native contexts** and came into close, protracted contact with **genetically and culturally unrelated** languages.

it went through a process of **linguistic experimentation** and **nativization** ↓

Non-native English speakers created new, cultural-sensitive and socially appropriate meanings by manipulating the structure and functions of English in context dominated by indigenous languages

What is the structure of **non-native Englishes**? Bilingual's **creativity**, especially in the outer circle, *and variation are impossible without reference to existing patterns (Standard language e.g. British Eng)* "[...] **exploit linguistic resources to produce a novel combination, not allowable by the conventional code, but nevertheless a latent possibility which is virtual in the language though not actually encoded**" (Widdowson 1997)

The use of modal auxiliary *may* in Indian English

Indian English: "*May*" is used to express obligation politely.

Standard British English: Use of other forms to express obligation (*to be, should*)

The use of tag questions in Indian English

Tag question: a question that contains an auxiliary verb, a negation, and a pronoun at the end of the statement, e.g. *They said they will be here, didn't they?*

Indian English has replaced Standard British English tags (that inserts a pronominal copy of the subject after an appropriate modal auxiliary) with undifferentiated tags (*isn't it?*), because of the interplay of **grammatical** and **cultural rules** in Indian English, the influence of **culture** on **linguistic expressions** (the so-called **grammar of culture** (Bright 1968; D'Souza 1988))

The distinction between the three circles is getting *blurred* (= "sfumata, poco chiara")

Inner Circle: radically changing as a result of a massive influx of immigrants

Outer Circle: speakers are becoming functionally native speakers

Expanding Circle: speakers use intelligible and fit-for-purpose forms of English, which are becoming linguistically and culturally de-Anglo-Americanized.

Difference between Kachru's model Expanding Circle and the Expanding Circle nowadays:

Kachru's model:

Expanding Circle communities learn English mainly to communicate with speakers in the other two circles.

Expanding circle nowadays:

English has become predominantly a tool for intercultural communication between the three circles, but mainly within the Expanding Circle.

Kachru's model fails:

1. to capture the increasing importance of the outer circle
2. the degree to which 'foreign language' learners in some countries – especially Europe – are becoming more like second language users.

In a globalized world, the traditional definition of **second-language user** no longer makes sense.

Increasing need to **distinguish between proficiencies** in English, rather than a speaker's bilingual status.

The 'inner circle' has recently been reformulated by Kachru:

- the group of highly proficient speakers of English
- those who have 'functional nativeness' regardless of how they learned or use the language

English native speakers

- Traditionally, **native speakers of English have been regarded as providing the authoritative standard and the best teachers**
- They have enthusiastically promoted the learning of their language abroad
- English became seen no longer as an option but as an **urgent economic need**

The English native speaker problem

- **Seen as presenting an obstacle to the free development of global English.**
- **Seen as bringing with them cultural baggage in which learners wanting to use English primarily as an international language are not interested**

In organizations where English has become the **corporate language**, meetings sometimes go more smoothly when no native speakers are present, because **non-native speakers** are intimidated by the presence of **native speakers**, that belong to a different culture and bring their own identity which doesn't reflect international speakers one.

World Englishes and ELF

How can we reflect this new situation?

"English as a lingua franca" (ELF) to replace the concept of "English as a foreign language"

ELF: "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth, 1996)

Kachru's model - Expanding Circle

EFL speakers who learn English with the goal to acquire **native speaker competence**.

Consequences:

Frustration in the learners who will never attain their target level, trying to master difficult features, which are not essential for mutual understanding and do not help communication with other non-native speakers

The concept of English as a Lingua Franca

- “dethrones” the native speaker (NS)
- defines the goal of English learning as the ability to communicate successfully with other non-native speakers (NNS).
ELF:
 - places speakers in the Expanding Circle on the same level as speakers in the Inner and Outer Circles
 - grants prestige to international English, estimated at around 75% of all exchanges in English.

“as a consequence of its international use, English is being shaped at least as much by its non-native speakers as by its native speakers” (Seidlhofer, 2005)

The concept of ELF

Implications:

- ELF focuses also on **pragmatic strategies** required in intercultural communication.
- **The target model of English: not a native speaker but a fluent bilingual speaker who:**
 - retains a national identity in terms of accent
 - also has the special skills required to negotiate understanding with another non-native speaker

Consequences

- **the distinction between native and non-native speakers fades into the background** (“*passa in secondo piano*”)
- English becomes **a global asset belonging to all users**, regardless of whether it is their mother tongue
- speakers have lost the right to control the language
- ELF refers to English as a **contact language**
- ELF scholars have established the fact that Expanding Circle speakers don’t depend on Inner Circle norms for meaning-making.
- the **practices of interpersonal negotiation** that enable people to achieve intelligibility and communicative success are as important as the **shared grammatical norms**.
- **the Englishes spoken by multilingual speakers are NOT deficient forms of native English.**
- Despite their deviations from native speaker norms, multilinguals are able to achieve **co-constructed intelligibility and meaning, through (not despite) their local varieties and identities**

“ELF has moved the field closer to a consideration of English as a translingual practice.” (Canagarajah 2013)

Toward a different paradigm

The label **translingual** highlights two key concepts of significance for a paradigm shift:

First concept: **communication transcends individual languages**

1. **“Languages” are always in contact with and mutually influence each other. The separation of languages with different labels is an ideological act of demarcating certain codes in relation to certain identities and interests.**
2. Users treat all available codes as a repertoire in their everyday communication, and not separated according to their labels.
3. **Languages** are not necessarily at war with each other; they **complement each other in communication**.
4. The influences of one language on the other can be creative, enabling, and offer possibilities.
5. Texts and talk don’t feature one language at a time; they are meshed and mediated by diverse codes, which may not always be evident on the surface.
6. **In the context of such language diversity, meaning arises through negotiation practices in local situations.**

Second concept: **Communication transcends words and involves diverse semiotic resources**

1. **Communication involves diverse semiotic resources; language is only one semiotic resource among many, such as symbols, icons, and images.**
2. All semiotic resources work together for meaning
3. Language and semiotic resources make meaning in the context of diverse modalities working together, including oral, written, and visual modes.

Why translingual and not multilingual?

- Multilingual concerns an obvious contrast to monolingual
- **The term multilingual typically conceives of the relationship between languages in an additive manner.**
- **In society, multilingual often connotes different language groups occupying their own niches in separation from others.**

But

- **the term multilingual doesn’t accommodate the dynamic interactions between languages and communities**

The term **translingual** conceives of language relationships in more dynamic terms.

The languages mesh (si armonizzano, si fondono) in transformative ways, generating new meanings and grammars.

"In adopting translingual, I would also like to break away from the binary mono/multi or uni/pluri, a dichotomy that has led to reductive orientations to communication and competence." (Canagarajah 2013)

Translingual practice finds expression in the hybrid modes like:

- Code-switching
- Code-meshing
- Polyglot dialog

Producing texts characterized by hybridity.

- The translingual paradigm then does not disregard (*non ignora, non trascura*) established norms and conventions as defined for certain contexts by dominant institutions and social groups.
- Speakers and writers negotiate these norms in relation to their translingual repertoires and practices.
- Such translingual negotiations lead to subtle variations of established norms, as appropriate for one's interests and contexts, and gradual norm changes.

English as translingual

Focus on pragmatics rather than grammatical norms

- Give emphasis to the contact relationship
- Treat English as a social process or mode of practice

"Lingua Franca English emerges from the contexts of use" (Pennycook, 2010)

What form does English take in situations of contact?

English may find accommodation in the repertoire of a translingual, combining with one or more local languages.

- The speaker may not have any "advanced" proficiency in English
- The speaker mixes English words and grammatical structures into syntax from other languages.
- The English tokens may consist of borrowings, reduced forms (as in pidgins), and creative new constructions that might show the influence of the language.
- Speakers will be able to negotiate their different Englishes for intelligibility and effective communication
- Speakers of language A and language B may speak to each other in a form of English mixed with their own first languages, and marked by the influence of these languages.
- The type of mixing will differ from speaker to speaker according to:
 - Their level of proficiency in English
 - Their language backgrounds

"[...] Lingua Franca English is not an identifiable code or a systematized variety of English. It is a highly fluid and variable form of language practice. Meaning is an inter-subjective accomplishment. As interlocutors adopt negotiation strategies to align diverse semiotic resources, they will construct a hybrid form that meshes different languages for situated meaning." (Canagarajah 2013)

• Translinguals

"Speakers who demonstrate the ability to use their language(s) successfully across diverse norms and codes in response to specific contexts and purposes."

• Translingual orientation

"Communication transcends individual language [and] words, and involves diverse semiotic resources [in addition to language] and ecological affordances"