The rapid forces of globalisation, the changing sociolinguistic landscape of English, and thus the complexity of communication in the twenty-first century have prompted scholars in applied linguistics to encourage English language educators to ‘radically reconceptualise’ (p. 14) their pedagogical practices as well as the principles of language teaching that inform those practices. My experiences of teaching English as an International Language (EIL) to pre-service and in-service English teachers from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds have informed me that more guidance is needed in order for this to take place. This edited book makes a large contribution to the process of guiding and inspiring teachers to bring those new ways to reality. It critically reviews previous perspectives on English language teaching, challenging its Anglocentric ideology. The contributors provide a comprehensive discussion of current perspectives on English language teaching that responds to today’s sociolinguistic reality of English, and propose ways to develop socially sensitive language pedagogy that promotes global thinking and local acting. In addition, thought-provoking and reflective questions/activities are provided in every chapter to prompt readers to explore and apply the offered perspectives. I believe that all of these are likely to generate more insightful conversations and research projects about World Englishes and its classroom application.

The book begins with an introductory chapter by Alsagoff (ch. 1, pp. 3–6), who briefly yet convincingly justifies the importance of writing another book on the teaching of EIL. Since English is now practised in multilingual and multicultural contexts and, therefore, ‘real English is not just Inner Circle English’ (p. 235), there need to be more writings that prompt critical ‘reflection on the way English, in its worldwide spread, is taught to and learnt by multilingual speakers and learners across the globe’ (p. 4).

To encourage new ways of thinking and seeing, the first section of the book consists of chapters that call for a change in the way EIL teaching is conceptualised in light of the changing sociolinguistic landscape of English as well as the changing communicative demands that globalisation brings. Kumaravadivelu (ch. 2, pp. 9–27) and McKay (ch. 3, pp. 28–46) start the section by highlighting (a) the complexity and amorphousness of identity construction/formation and (b) the changing uses and users of English in today’s postmodern globalisation era. Both authors urge English language educators to ‘break the dependency on Western knowledge production, centre-based methods, centre-based cultural competence, and the Centre-based textbook industry’ (pp. 16–21).
Focusing on technology and globalisation, Nelson and Kern in ch. 4 (pp. 47–66) argue for the need to conceptualise language as a ‘dynamic semiotic resource that individuals combine with other semiotic resources to act in the world’ (p. 49). The teaching of language should therefore equip students with knowledge and the ability to use language as well as non-linguistic elements in a digitalised world (e.g., videos, sounds, images, etc.) to interpret, communicate, and negotiate meaning. Still focusing on communicating in the globalised and digitalised world, Ware, Warchauer, and Liaw in ch. 5 (pp. 67–84) encourage teachers to use digital media in English language classrooms as they provide students with a ‘forum to have a global presence in English’ (p. 79) and, thus, develop global literacy in English.

The need to be globally literate is also emphasised by Leung and Street in ch. 6 (pp. 85–103). The authors reject the idea of using the so-called native-speakers’ (NS) standards/norms and pragmatic conventions as the benchmarks for communicative competence. Teachers are encouraged to develop pedagogical practices that ‘take into account the dynamic links between “local” and “global” rather than just focusing parochially on the “local”’ (p. 95). Also attempting to challenge the idea of the NS as a role model, Alsagoff in ch. 7 (pp. 104–122) highlights the complexity and diversity of learners’ sociocultural identities, and calls for the exploration of these identities in the teaching and learning of EIL. Advocating for a similar change but with a specific focus, Hu, in ch. 8 (pp. 123–43), highlights the irrelevance of English language proficiency assessment practices in today’s postmodern conditions and their failure in acknowledging the sociolinguistic realities of English.

To encourage new ways of doing or implementing the above calls for action, authors in the second section of the book share pedagogical ideas and approaches that can be incorporated into their classroom contexts. This section begins with two chapters on ways to ‘EIL-ise’ the English curriculum. Brown, in ch. 9 (pp. 147–67), contests the use of NS culture and varieties of English as the source for developing language curricula, and advocates for a curriculum that teaches students to become locally and internationally competent speakers of English. Focusing specifically on teaching materials, Matsuda in ch. 10 (pp. 168–85) provides criteria for evaluating, selecting, and developing EIL-oriented teaching materials that inspire students to appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity while learning how to communicate across cultures.

In order to foster those attitudes and skills, House (ch. 11, pp. 186–205) suggests the teaching of intercultural spoken competence that considers the ‘multiplicity of voices’ (p. 188) in the nature of communication in English between so-called non-native speakers and the communicative strategies they employ in negotiating meanings. Bokhorst-Heng (ch. 12, pp. 206–25) advocates lexical pedagogy that is based on a pluricentric view of English, and that instils in students understanding and knowledge of the ‘pragmatic functions of many [lexical] innovations as well as their cultural embeddedness’ (p. 207). Flowerdew (ch. 13, pp. 226–43) emphasises the teaching of both local corpora and more globalised and widely accepted written standards so that students can use English effectively for intra- and inter-national communication.

Standing on a slightly different standpoint from other authors, Gupta (ch. 14, pp. 244–60) claims that there are ‘almost no real differences’ (p. 248) in English grammar, and suggests that students must be taught to conceptualise Standard English as a monolithic dialect, to learn its universally-agreed syntactical features, and to use its ‘non-standard’ features appropriately.
Wallace, in ch. 15 (pp. 261–81), stresses the importance of inspiring students to critically engage with the texts they read, or to read ‘against the grain of the text, not in the way the text demands to be read’ (p. 267). Similarly, Casanave (ch. 16, pp. 282–98) claims the need to critically challenge adherence to Inner Circle norms in the teaching of writing, and therefore to adopt an ecological approach to L2 writing that uses local cultural norms and the linguistic landscape as the basis for teaching writing.

The importance of contextualising one’s teaching and of helping students achieve a sense of ownership in learning English is emphasised by the last two authors, Maley (ch. 17, pp. 299–317) and Gu (ch. 18, pp. 318–34). Maley suggests an approach to using and teaching literature ‘as appropriation’ (p. 304), which aims at encouraging students to engage in learning literature in ways that are relevant and appropriate for their own contexts. Similarly, Gu argues persuasively for the need to prompt students to assess the appropriateness and relevance of the given tasks against their own learning goals, and at the same time to develop the ability to communicate across cultures and Englishes. McKay (ch. 19, pp. 337–46) concludes the book with a summary of the volume as well as a reminder for the readers, especially language educators, to design a localised and socially sensitive pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment that help foster and nurture in their students the ability to communicate across and within cultures and Englishes.

There are several issues that may need to be re-considered and critically re-visited in the volume. The edited volume as a whole aims to emphasise the urgency of developing EIL pedagogy in contexts outside of Inner Circle English-speaking countries where English is developed in multilingual and multicultural settings. This may imply two things: (1) that Inner Circle countries are not multilingual and multicultural; and (2) the teaching of EIL is not relevant in these countries. In fact, this can be misleading because many Inner Circle English speaking countries, for example Australia, are becoming increasingly multilingual and multicultural. Mass migration and advancement of technology have allowed citizens of Inner Circle countries to be in frequent contact with diverse speakers of world Englishes. Therefore, the principles of teaching EIL and its pedagogical practices should be offered to educators from all contexts.

Moreover, there seems to be a lack of cohesiveness in the ways in which teaching EIL is conceptualised and discussed by authors in this volume. On one hand, some authors emphasise the teaching of world Englishes and reject the idea of choosing a single variety of English for teaching the use of English for international communication. Others, on the other hand, show awareness of world Englishes, but still advocate the idea of using the widely-accepted Standard English or ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) corpus as the model for teaching and learning. Although it is impractical to expect all contributors to share the same view, it is important for the editors to address and justify this in order not to puzzle English language teachers who are interested in ‘EIL-ising’ their lessons and/or learning programmes. Despite this shortcoming, this edited volume is definitely a must-have for teachers, teacher-educators, researchers, and scholars who would like to update themselves with recent theoretical and practical aspects of the teaching of English as a heterogeneous language.

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Anwei Feng and the contributors of this book offer a comprehensive, informative, and timely discussion of English language education across ‘Greater China.’ Surveying a variety of contexts and employing various research methodologies, this book echoes some of what English as a Foreign Language researchers already are keenly aware of in working on Chinese or Asian Englishes, while simultaneously adding some much-needed perspective when it comes to the impact of English on minority groups and languages.

The book has two main sections: the sociolinguistic and sociohistorical milieus of various regions (chs. 2–6) and in-depth descriptions of English language use and education, focusing solely on mainland China (chs. 7–13). The book begins with Feng (ch. 1, pp. 1–18) discussing English spread across ‘Greater China’ and how to best describe the scope and impact of global English diffusion. He proposes the notion of ‘third wave’ to replace the traditional ‘three circle model’ and the use of diaspora or other terms, stating that without a doubt given the spread of English in China and its neighboring regions we are currently at the peak of the third wave. The second chapter (pp. 23–41) by Gil and Adamson reveals a picture that English spread in mainland China has culminated in it currently serving various functional roles and enjoying great status and prestige. They also mention the existence of ‘China English’ as an example of how English has become ‘increasingly connected and entwined with Chinese society’ (p. 38).

In ch. 3 (pp. 46–66), Tupas sketches the different stages and characteristics of Singapore’s bilingual education system, which has greatly advanced the country in terms of prosperity. Tupas also succinctly problematizes the English-knowing bilingualism that emerges from this educational system, citing issues of home language maintenance, a reductionist view of bilingual education that ignores the complex multilingualism of the country’s citizens, and how the educational system perpetuates social class inequalities.

In ch. 4 (pp. 70–90), through a historical examination Chen and Hsieh describe the ‘national obsession’ of English in Taiwan. They show the disjunction between government policy documents and actual practice in the English language classroom, and call for a critical examination of how to best bridge these discrepancies.

In terms of the unique background of Hong Kong, in ch. 5 (pp. 95–110) Li discusses how English in the special administrative region is neither a second or foreign language. Because of the typological differences between English and Chinese, and the predominantly Cantonese-speaking language environment, what has emerged is a localized variety (Hong Kong English). Li also brings up the fact that Hong Kong tertiary institutions have strategized enrolling more non-Hong Kong students or encouraging students to spend time in an English-speaking country as a way of promoting English language use.

In the sixth chapter (pp. 114–28), Young writes that even though English in Macao was neither an official nor colonial language, like much of the world there is a growing demand for it in education and society, particularly because of the gambling

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industry. Young describes some strategies and challenges in implementing sustainable, long-term English language policies, many of which are not dissimilar to those of other countries.’

Part Two of the book, which deals with mainland China, starts with Cheng (ch. 7, pp. 133–49) focusing on the development of the English Curriculum Standards (ECS). In collaboration with teacher practitioners and researchers, these standards saw a shift in goals from grammar and vocabulary to communicative competence. Despite these achievements, certain issues, such as whether all Chinese students should be required to take English courses and that of unrealistic targets of the ECS, still remain.

Ch. 8 (pp. 151–66), by Zhang and Wang, talks about English education in the primary schools of South China. With a review of English teaching history, Zhang and Wang indicate that although the Pearl River Delta is a leading area in terms of being a ‘gateway of the country for exchanges with other countries since ancient times’ (p. 166), it still faces further reform to promote primary English education, especially when it comes to wash-back from overemphasis on examinations, unequal access to English education, and lack of teacher training.

In ch. 9 (pp. 169–86), Qiang, Huang, Siegel and Trube write about an ‘English Immersion’ model adopted in Xi’an that emulates the Canadian French Immersion Model. Applying this model to China presents a series of challenges that need to be worked on. These include the need for more professional development for teachers to develop the English communication skills necessary to deploy the activity-based methods, and addressing the lag between supplying enough resources for the growth of the immersion schools. Other issues are making sure the content knowledge is not dumbed down when English is the medium of instruction, and the implementation of large-scale, systematic program assessment.

In ch. 10 (pp. 189–210), Zou and Zhang explore the relation between family background and English learning outcome in families in Shanghai. Rather unsurprisingly, they find that family involvement and socioeconomic status play an important role in students’ English language learning trajectories and achievement. They point to the financial expense of learning English and how this impacts educational opportunities given the rural-urban divide in China.

The last three chapters focus on minority groups in China, addressing an additional layer of diversity and complexity. Ch. 11 (pp. 212–26) by Huang studies several factors that result from the increasing status of English in the Zhuang Autonomous region of Guangxi. For economic stimulus reasons like the China-ASEAN Exposition, English in Guangxi holds much linguistic capital and prestige. In ch. 12 (pp. 228–56), Blachford and Jones describe their ethnographic fieldwork in village schools serving the Naxi minority group in rural Yunnan. Their research sheds light on the English language learning situation for underserved students, and while the idea of trilingual education for minority groups in China may seem to champion equality and ‘leveling the playing field,’ it is impractical to implement in practice and further perpetuates inequalities. The book ends with a chapter (pp. 260–81) by Sunuodula and Feng on English learning in Xinjiang. Uyghur students consider it an opportunity to equally compete with Han Chinese. Sunuodula and Feng thus believe that English enthusiasm in Xinjiang offers the minority students ‘a blessing in disguise.’ That is, while the need to acquire and develop three languages is a huge task, this unique situation could lead to further negotiation of Uyghur students’ identities in investing in their language learning.

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This book is notable in that it brings together what we all know is a large and complex region of the world. It is quite an undertaking to combine and detail the English language learning situations of all these regions without it feeling cursory; in fact, the second part of the book was arguably the strongest as it focused solely on mainland China’s (already diverse) ‘convergence and divergence of English language use and education.’ The very use of the term ‘Greater China’ is one that can be considered contestable, particularly as it runs the risk of oversimplifying the sociolinguistic field based on imagined communities (cf. Anderson 1983). This becomes especially crucial because English education and use are never in isolation of users’ home or heritage languages in the region in question, and how these home and heritage languages interact with official languages are not always equal.

One prevalent theme that was mentioned across chapters was the issue of access. The role that social inequality plays in contributing to or barring full participation from educational realms is not a new concept in education, nor is how divisions of urban-rural, educated-uneducated, high-low socioeconomic status impact trajectories of English language learning. While the concept of access alone can be a book in itself, it is hoped that this theme being echoed in this book will lead to further research, particularly using ethnographic methods like in Blachford and Jones’ chapter, which will help to dismantle these long-standing societal inequities in education.

Additionally, while the use of the wave metaphor is novel, the fact that waves ebb and flow seems a bit incongruous when talking about language spread, nor does the wave metaphor weave seamlessly through all the chapters of this book. For example, is it really possible, as Zhang and Wang state in ch. 8, for a wave to last almost 200 years (from 1759–1949), or are there smaller waves at play? This metaphor may need some more fleshing out.

Critiques aside, English language education across Greater China is a valuable text for graduate students and researchers alike who are interested in knowing more about English language education and its stakeholders in this region of Asia. This book touches upon many of the issues that are meaningful to those doing research on world Englishes, including language policy, language and globalization/glocalization, and language and access.

REFERENCE


Reviewed by David Gonzales*

Linguistic diversity is valued but it also comes with a price. At what point does linguistic diversity overburden a society, hindering economic stability as well as political cohesion?

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The economists Victor Ginsburgh and Shlomo Weber utilize linguistic and sociological reasoning as well as economic analysis to determine an optimal trade-off between language homogeneity and diversity. While recognizing the emotional and historical ties connected to a language, the authors nevertheless make clear through analysis that there is no free lunch for diversity. For example, the impact of Nigeria’s 527 languages has led to a fractured society, while in the European Union (EU) the translating of speeches and documents into the 23 official languages costs approximately US$1.5 billion per year.

This book consists of an Introduction, eight chapters and a final section entitled Conclusions. In the Introduction (pp. 1–6), the authors propose that linguistic distances, understood primarily in terms of grammatical structure but also with regard to the ability to communicate between groups, are an important consideration when determining the optimal number of languages. These distances and their impact on linguistic diversity are examined throughout the book. Chs. 1 (pp. 7–15) and 2 (pp. 16–28) look at various language policies in the past and present, in, for example, Sri Lanka, India, and Nigeria. The discussion considers the significance people place on their native language and culture, emphasizing that language rights is a sensitive and potentially volatile issue. Increasingly, these rights are being threatened by the effects of globalization and the relentless march of English as a global lingua franca, which can breed strong feelings of disenfranchisement. Cited in particular are Iceland’s strenuous efforts to maintain a monolingual presence of Icelandic in the face of English, which include years of lobbying to successfully persuade Microsoft in 2004 to add Icelandic to the list of languages supported by Windows. Throughout, the authors make clear that people who do not speak the language(s) that a nation uses in official documents and for official communication are effectively disenfranchised.

Ch. 3 (pp. 29–55) explores basic insights into linguistic distances and the various modes of calculation which are referenced throughout the rest of the volume. Structural distances between languages are determined using lexicostatistical analysis based on word cognates; learning scores based on the difficulty that speakers face in learning a particular language; and cladistic analysis which utilizes lexical cognates and other linguistic features, such as syntax and phonology, to delineate the various families of languages. Communication distances between groups can be measured, for example, by theorems proposed by the linguist Joseph Greenberg that consider the probability of two randomly chosen people from different countries being able to communicate with one another. Other measurements concerning groups comprise calculations involving genetic and cultural distances.

Ch. 4 (pp. 56–83) discusses the importance of these distances in various applications. Most economists believe that distances are responsible for many economic outcomes, and have adapted in this regard Sir Isaac Newton’s law of universal gravitation, which is based in part on distances between objects as well as the mass of those objects and the force they exert. Just as distance in Newton’s law has a negative effect—the further apart two objects are, the less gravitational pull is exerted—linguistic distances also have a negative effect on trade, both international and domestic. When linguistic distances are interpolated with other factors, such as geographical distances and political links, it is shown that trade is facilitated and increased through the percentages of people in various countries that speak one another’s language, whether as a native or non-native speaker.

Ch. 5 (pp. 84–107) takes an interesting detour and examines the reasons and advantages for learning another language. The authors note that the degree of difficulty imposed by structural distances between languages can influence the decision to learn a language, as can the perceived monetary and cultural benefits. In Canada, French-speaking citizens
who learn English can increase their potential earnings, though the reverse does not hold true. Ch. 6 (pp. 108–41) notes that although the concept of diversity is becoming more important, its precise meaning is not always clear. It is important to quantify the value of diversity with a numerical measure (the authors are economists, after all), as shown with the use of disenfranchisement and other indices. Ch. 7 (pp. 142–61) examines the applications of these indices in various regions throughout the world, and finds that countries with an array of ethnic and linguistic diversity often encounter numerous difficulties in governing, especially in societies without much democracy.

Ch. 8 (pp. 162–200) focuses on the EU and its official policy of multilingualism, where all 23 official languages of the 27 member countries are deemed equal in status. This however does not always hold true in practice, as English, French and to a lesser extent German are the languages most widely used. A major problem occurs in the area of translation from the original language into the other 22 official languages, which is costly and at times results in mistranslations. Disputes have also occurred over which version of a translated document is official, as differing translations can lead to different outcomes. The prevalence of English presents its own set of problems, with some diplomats who lack a strong functional knowledge of the language finding it difficult to perform their duties. Ironically, native speakers of English can also find themselves marginalized, particularly those who use colloquialisms and have a fast rate of speech.

In order to ameliorate the problems posed by the large number of official languages in the EU, the authors propose designating a set of core languages to serve as working languages. Countries that do not have a core language as an official language would be responsible for their own translations, with appropriate compensation; several methodologies for determining compensations are also explored. Various choices for the core languages are examined, and the percentages of people that would be disenfranchised by these choices are calculated by using an intricate analysis involving linguistic distances, various indices and a numeration of the people who speak the languages, either as a native or acquired tongue.

Designating English as the sole official language would not be feasible, as it would disenfranchise over half the population of the EU. As determined by the authors, the core languages that would be the most optimal in terms of economic and organizational efficiency are (in order) English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish. Significantly, these are the languages most widely spoken in the EU, though Italian, Spanish and Polish are spoken predominately within their respective countries as opposed to transnationally. So, it appears that after all the complex analysis presented involving linguistic distances, the most important factor in determining the optimal languages is the number of people that speak them. This comes as somewhat of a letdown, as it seems to undercut the significance of the concept of linguistic distances so painstakingly examined. For example, the authors choose Spanish as a core language although the linguistic distance between Spanish and Italian, which are both Romance languages, is short—why not choose another language whose family is not represented in the six core languages and which has a sizeable number of speakers, such as Hungarian or Greek? This would better support the volume’s premise that such distances matter. In the section entitled Conclusions (pp. 201–4), the authors state that decisions made by the EU regarding linguistic policies can be studied by other societies, and if compensations are indeed made to member countries for translations, ‘the way compensations are calculated will give us an estimation of the worth of single languages and their value to those who speak them’ (p. 202).
How many languages do we need? is a valuable and thought-provoking book. Though many technical terms are used and some of the economic theories are difficult to penetrate, a concerted effort on the part of the reader will yield satisfying results. As the authors themselves acknowledge, economists with basic training in game theory and econometrics will find the book easier to understand, while linguists and sociologists may encounter more difficulties. A helpful outline is also provided as to which chapters and sections can be skipped or skimmed over without losing the thrust and flavor of the book. Adding to the book’s accessibility are the insightful anecdotes and quotes from such figures as Nelson Mandela and W. H. Auden. Auden’s quote, which ends the book, is worth repeating here as well: ‘Civilizations should be measured by the degree of diversity attained and by the degree of unity retained.’

(Received 21 December 2012)


Reviewed by Edgar W. Schneider*

This interesting volume pays tribute to the bewildering complexity and heterogeneity of contact settings, forms, and outcomes which increasingly characterize current English as used by nonnative and native speakers across cultures, regions and nations, both intra- and internationally. The author proposes to replace, or at least complement, the currently fashionable notion of ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ (ELF) by a broader, more open concept of ‘Interactions across Engishes’ (IaEs) which emphasizes interactional and creative usage perspectives and the ubiquity and usefulness of linguistic variability as opposed to traditional norm orientations. The core assumption is ‘that the different Engishes potentially merge in these interactions’, resulting in a ‘heterogeneous array of new linguistic systems’ (p. 2).

The Introduction (pp. 1–11) outlines the topic, relates it to Kachru’s Three Circles model (associating intranational interactions with the Outer Circle and international ones with the Expanding Circle), and discusses some core concepts, such as dialect contact (and the processes which characterize it) or Mufwene’s ‘feature pool’ idea, which assumes that all the linguistic forms and patterns brought to an interaction by any of the interlocutors become available to all the others and may or may not be picked up and replicated. In a rather broad survey, ch. 2 (pp. 12–47) approaches the topic of ELF from a variety of angles – by looking at historical and present-day lingua francas and uses of English in that role, by rejecting a few ‘myths’ around ELF (such as the assumption of its use being typical of formal contexts and educated speakers only), and by challenging the mistaken assumption that ELF interactions potentially result in the growth of an ‘International Standard English’ as a newly-emerging global norm. Ch. 3 (pp. 48–60) outlines phenomena of language contact and dialect contact and their respective ecologies as the appropriate theoretical underpinnings of IaEs. Relevant social settings may range from short-lived individual

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encounters to the prolonged co-existence and interaction of speakers and groups from diverse backgrounds, and this may involve processes such as borrowing, mixing, code crossing, levelling, or koinéization. Consequently, ch. 4 (pp. 61–68) proposes an ‘IaEs model’, which draws heavily on the feature pool notion, pointing out that a particular feature’s selection in an emerging new variety will depend on both cognitive and social constraints. Somewhat in passing, this brief chapter touches upon important issues, such as the question of whether a new feature needs to be noticed as such as a prerequisite for it to be adopted, and the role of concepts such as prestige, accommodation, and the linguistic marketplace. Furthermore, it emphasizes the difference between an individual, situation-bound and ad hoc adoption of specific linguistic features on the one hand and the gradual emergence of shared long-term communicative routines in stable, extended interactions on the other. The occurrence of these phenomena in both intra- and international settings constitutes a recurring leitmotif which then serves to structure the following main chapters.

Ch. 5 (pp. 69–94) surveys intra-national uses of IaEs in select Outer Circle countries in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, in rather general terms and largely based on earlier writings on world Englishes. The focus lies on a broad survey of the multilingualism of these regions as a core condition stimulating IaEs, though a few specific details and examples of such dialect encounters are offered. Repeatedly the author concedes that while IaEs seem likely to occur, they have not yet been investigated in the territories under discussion (e.g. p. 77 for Nigeria, p. 86 for India, p. 94 for Fiji) – this should be taken as a powerful plea for new research directions needed in the future! Ch. 6 (pp. 95–131) then offers a specific application, drawn from Meierkord’s earlier research in South Africa. A corpus of interactions between black and colored speakers is screened for evidence of mutual accommodation on the levels of lexis, phonology, and grammar, and some examples of such effects of dialect contact are identified (limited in scope, though) and illustrated.

The following two chapters broaden the perspective to inter-national encounters using varieties of English, which are usually short-lived and hence socially less stable, and which mostly involve speakers from the Expanding Circle. Ch. 7 (pp. 132–57) briefly surveys regions (from Europe to South America) and typical social settings (such as international organizations, business, tertiary education, academic life, and, interestingly enough, the grassroots level of ordinary people’s speech) of international interactions in English, involving both individuals in initial encounters and members of moderately stable discourse communities and social networks. Ch. 8 (pp. 158–94) then zooms in to linguistic details, on the levels of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse conventions (such as greetings, leave-taking, turn-taking, or back-channels), as they are manipulated in such encounters; it discusses the variant forms brought to the feature pool by contributors from widely differing regional and social origins, and the choices which speakers make, including the occasional selection of features which were not their own originally. Again, the author builds upon earlier research findings of her own, notably a corpus of recordings of conversations in an international hall of residence, supplemented by selections from other writings. Quite a number of conversational transcripts contribute significantly to the vividness of this section. Again, attention is primarily paid to the potential input to the feature pool; it is assumed that basically all features of world Englishes as described in the literature are available, even if the texts themselves show comparatively few traces of nonstandard forms being used in intercultural encounters. Documentation of real-life occurrences of the ‘crossing’ of a feature into another speaker’s performance is largely lacking (with the exception of one or the other occasional vocabulary item); most of the
patterns that do occur in corpus utterances are accounted for as interlanguage structures caused by acquisitional stages and learners’ strategies. In the end, the features really shaping IaEs in the body of evidence screened here are found to be fairly mainstream, perhaps surprisingly so. In the author’s own words: ‘Inputs and selections are mainly features that occur in standard varieties of English. Features reflecting nativized Englishes hardly occur . . . [L]ocalized forms . . . are hardly ever selected by another speaker for her own production’ (p. 189). Still, as the chapter’s last section (8.4) argues, there are instances of hybridity and innovation, and ultimately IaEs can be viewed as a continuously ongoing process of exchanging and negotiating linguistic choices, resulting in usage ‘somewhere between “language stripped bare” and “linguistic masala”’ (p. 190).

Ch. 9 (pp. 195–204), after summarizing the points made earlier, expands the perspective to include lingua franca exchanges on the internet and compares IaEs to tightly constrained codes like air traffic control communication – a surprising counterpoint at this stage.

On the whole, this is a well-written, engaging and important study which should direct more scholarly attention to and highlight an increasingly important usage context of present-day English. It may serve to redirect an emerging ELF paradigm whose main (and highly constrained) concern currently sometimes seems to be to liberate teachers and learners in many countries from the pressure to strive for native speaker norms in language education. I agree that conceptualizations of intercultural encounters by means of artificial, unified codes (like a ‘lingua franca core’) do not conform to reality and constitute essentially an academic exercise; in contrast, the ‘IaEs’ approach as proposed here is clearly superior, fruitful, and timely both as a reflection of what is happening to the English language on a global scale nowadays and as a significant contribution to poststructuralist thinking in the field of world Englishes. It needs to be developed further – much of the material assembled here is not new; the theoretical framework outlined in ch. 4 remains a bit sketchy and tentative; and in some respects the coverage of the book’s topic is more suggestive than definitive. But this is not surprising considering the novelty of the approach as such, and the dearth of empirical documentations and analyses of what really happens in IaEs. The overall perspective of the approach advocated here, its emphasis on hybridity, interactional creativity, and the importance of dialect contact phenomena in intercultural IaEs, is novel indeed, and the questions resulting from it, for example whether IaEs in relatively stable settings are really likely to lead to linguistic convergence and ultimately produce ‘new linguistic systems’, are important and well worth pursuing. So this is an inspiring book on a topic which has a huge developmental potential, a volume which probes into a vast topic and will hopefully open it up for further systematic investigation.

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Response to a book review in World Englishes, 30(2), 283–6.

Reviewed by ROBERT PHILLIPSON

I could have chosen to ignore Robert King’s review of Linguistic imperialism continued (2009, published by Orient Blackswan for seven South Asian countries and by Routledge

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for the rest of the world), but I think readers of World Englishes deserve something more informed and scholarly. By his own admission, King had a toxic reaction to the book. He reacted in the same way as he does to Chomsky’s writings. Chomsky’s crime? To have documented in detail the workings of the USA as a global empire that upholds an unjust world order and many oppressive regimes, including Israel. Mine? Similarly letting down the side (in the view of supporters of an exploitative status quo) by documenting how the dominance of English is maintained worldwide and whose interests the English teaching profession serves.

The first comment King makes is on the five tenets/fallacies to which I devote 50 pages in my Linguistic imperialism (1992). This topic is not in fact explored in the new book but merely referred to in passing. King expresses his ‘opinion’ on what he sees as five ‘claims’, but the reader cannot know whether he is speaking of tenets or fallacies. He does not appear to be familiar with my earlier book. King suggests that I am ‘ignorant’ of Braj Kachru’s work, or do not find it ‘political enough’. In fact Linguistic imperialism was deeply inspired by Kachru’s work – see the many references in the index. However Kachru’s diverse writings do not deal with the issues that Linguistic imperialism continued engages with, which is why he is not cited. King seems to believe that his review and Kachru’s opus are free of any ideological or political agenda or underpinning, whereas a book that actually deals with imperialism in its various forms is per se politically contaminated. But isn’t language policy a political issue in the United States? Isn’t English worldwide an influential political reality? If so, shouldn’t scholarship be exploring why?

King makes invalid, unsubstantiated statements, for instance that the book contains no ‘simple, non-ideological statements about the English language’, and that words like ‘probably’ do not occur in my language. This is intriguing because several of the chapters of the new book figured earlier in authoritative encyclopedias and state-of-the-art volumes. Likewise, stating that I ‘hate’ English is a misreading. I have nothing against English, quite the opposite. I have taught it for nearly 50 years, but always so that the language is learned additively (as opposed to much TESOL that is subtractive, i.e., learned at the expense of other languages). I frequently write that any language can serve good or evil purposes. I also point out that the advance of English, like other imperial languages, has not been purely unilateral: it involves push and pull factors, supply and demand. What I do denounce is some of the purposes to which English has been put in a wide range of contexts in the past and present. King’s review in fact ignores the coverage in the book of issues of power, social justice and inequality. According to King, US global influence is exclusively due to popular culture, starting with jazz in the 1930s, whereas the book documents a wide range of factors over two centuries, which he completely ignores.

My work is controversial only in the sense that it challenges professional orthodoxy, the academic ‘manufactured consent’ (Chomsky’s term) of the marketing of English as universally, globally relevant, its learning to be guided by Anglo-American expertise (which Kachru has eloquently denounced). This arguably makes some establishment figures uncomfortable, but our differences are not a question of the validity of my data – which are indisputable – but of theoretical approach, different paradigms, and the conclusions that can be drawn. King does not relate to these issues, but resorts to flippancy.
There are also inaccuracies in the review, like misspelling Macaulay. It is also incorrect to state that Macaulay’s much-cited Minute applied to education in general. In fact it dealt with the allocation of funds to higher education only. King misnames the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which he inexplicably cites with its French name, and replaces ‘or’ by ‘and’. The distinction between and (additive) and or (alternative) in the name of the Charter has important legal implications. He states that the Charter ‘requires’ European Union countries to do certain things. The Charter has nothing to do with the EU. It is a Council of Europe text that member states of the Council of Europe can choose to ratify or ignore. The Charter makes no demands but offers an à la carte system of language support for selected languages.

The review is also selective in setting up an alternative worldview. King states as a ‘non-ideological but true statement’ that English is ‘the world language’, ‘the international auxiliary language’ (italics, RP). There are in fact many such languages. English is useful in countless contexts, of course, but you don’t have to go far in continental Europe, Africa, Asia or Latin America to experience that English is of no avail, in business, politics, academia, cultural affairs, etc. King also claims that 90 per cent of all travellers ‘with means’ use English to communicate with others. Again, statistically this is simply incorrect, even if it applies to many monolingual Brits and Americans.

On India King cites anecdotal evidence and a US historian, Frykenberg (whose work on Tamilnadu I happen to be familiar with, and refer to in two forthcoming articles), but not Gandhi or the many Indian and Pakistani scholars whose assessment of the impact of the British on education and language policy is totally different. More fundamentally, King conflates the study of imperialism, including linguistic imperialism, with postmodernism, which is an insult to a vast body of historical and social science research.

There is a striking difference between the Symposium on Linguistic Imperialism in World Englishes in 1993 (Braj Kachru, five reviewers, and myself), and King’s diatribe. But I am delighted to be paired off with Chomsky’s critical scholarship.

REFERENCES

Editors’ Note:

Professor King submitted a reply to this response, which the publishers would not allow us to print, owing to concerns about ‘potentially defamatory’ language.

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Reviewed by ZOYA G. PROSHINA∗

While the world Englishes paradigm has been strengthening its roots, branching into a new linguistic discipline, the need for textbooks aimed at students of various levels, books that can serve as a resource for both practical and theoretical purposes, is becoming more and more urgent. The books under review here are good examples of such resources.

Exploring World Englishes by Philip Seargeant is a repository of theory which outlines the paradigm as an object of study. For the book’s composition, the author had to follow the Routledge Introduction to Applied Linguistics series requirements for a three-section structure that includes an overview of (1) problems and contexts, (2) interventions, and (3) theory. To my mind, the structure is not the best, as it is problems that are the object of any theory; therefore, this somewhat illogical splitting of problems and theory results in an incomplete list of problems mentioned in the first part and the repetition of discussed problems in the theory section. However, I should acknowledge that the author tried to do his best to avoid repetition and make the narration logical and well-organized while representing ‘the core knowledge of World Englishes studies’ (p. 7). Still, restatements of some problems are echoed in different parts of the book, as will be shown below.

Seargeant starts Section 1 (‘Problems and Contexts’) with the definition of a variety as ‘a recognizable system of linguistic features which are associated with a community of speakers or with a particular social context’ (p. 26). The problematic issue of the relationship of varieties, dialects, and languages is discussed, followed by the problem of Standard English as ‘an idealization’ (p. 29) created by specific institutional bodies. The analysis and examples of specific features at different language levels are provided. Time and again the author reminds students that a variety is a dynamic language variation of written and oral forms, with a cline of lects being used within a broad speech community for the purposes of cultural identity. Another problem pointed out in the second chapter (pp. 37–42) of the book is pragmatic or functional variation, which leads the discussion both to the issue of intelligibility in its three levels as proposed by Smith (1992) and to the issue of the symbolic significance of language. Ch. 3 (pp. 46–63) describes the context and history of ‘World Englishes’ (the first word in the term would better be written as non-capitalized, since Seargeant describes the history of varieties, or world Englishes, rather than the World Englishes paradigm). Ch. 4 (pp. 64–75) familiarizes the reader

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with problems practitioners come across due to the worldwide spread of English, that is, problems of teaching models, testing, and education policy. The section ends with the consideration of the role of English as a ‘killer-language’, a discussion that is touched on again in Section 2 when linguistic rights are addressed and in Section 3 when the theory of linguistic imperialism is examined.

Section 2 (‘Interventions’) discusses the issues of language acquisition and status planning. Included in the discussion is a comparison of simplified artificial languages with English as a lingua franca (ELF), the latter notion itself being much debatable and, therefore, may have been better dealt with in Section 1. This section also reviews the issues of codification and legitimation of varieties through the compiling of corpora and publishing of dictionaries, as well as a shift from teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to English as an international language (EIL) or ELF, which is ‘not conceptualized as a “variety” at all, and instead is understood as “a naturally adaptive linguistic development”’, repairing ‘the irregularities and redundancies of [S]tandard English’ (p. 101). This call for repairing (i.e. reducing) Standard English can divert many educators away from the world Englishes ideology, which in fact has nothing to do with simplifying English as a teaching model. Testing is another educational problem known to all teachers and students, and, following Suresh Canagarajah and many other scholars, Seargeant believes that English tests should ‘reflect how people use English in the world both as a local language and as a lingua franca’ (p. 106).

Section 3 (‘Theory’) deals with world Englishes as an academic discipline, named by the author as World Englishes studies (WES). Key factors for molding an academic discipline are brought up; four stages in the development of the discipline are discussed, and the object of study is reconsidered. Ironically, Seargeant seems to restrict WES to Englishes of the Kachruvian Inner and Outer Circles, as well as pidgins and creoles (p. 143), though later he also briefly discusses the Expanding Circle of the Three Concentric Circles model, with its strengths and limitations. This raises the problematic issue of questioning the legitimacy of the status of Expanding Circle varieties as well as the general problem concerning the choice of a name for the concept of English in its global spread, for example, EIL, ELF, EFL, etc.

Each chapter of the textbook is accompanied by thought-provoking tasks in the form of questions to have students reflect on certain issues mentioned in the text. The end of the book provides the author’s commentaries to these questions, which looks strange enough, as the reader gets an impression of either being restricted to a certain solution of a problem or of the author being limited in covering his position in the chapters.

The goal of The amazing World of Englishes is different from the textbook by Seargeant. Its aim is to teach English through both theoretical content on the world Englishes paradigm and through texts that exemplify different varieties of world Englishes. In addition to theoretical material for developing reading comprehension, each chapter comprises exercises for listening comprehension, with references to online sources that expose students to diverse spoken varieties. Some chapters include internet-based viewing comprehension exercises. This makes the book especially attractive to the generation of on-line, video-oriented readers, as today’s youth is sometimes labeled. Since the book is a practical introduction to world Englishes, the authors provide a number of additional comprehension, analysis, and discussion assignments, vocabulary exercises as well as tasks for creative writing, role playing, language games, and self-study. Drawing on the example of other English course textbooks, The amazing World of Englishes also offers an abundance of pictures and colorful material.

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Thematically the textbook is divided into an introduction describing English as a global language and three parts, each of which corresponding to a circle of the Kachruvian model of concentric circles. The Inner Circle varieties described in the book include Irish, Scottish, Australian, and British vs. American Englishes (the last two are given in comparison). The Outer Circle Englishes dealt with in the book are Indian, Nigerian, and South African Englishes. The third part on Expanding Circle varieties describes English in Europe, including French, German, and Russian Englishes. And though the material concerning each variety is limited, it provides a good introduction to the concept of a language variety based on cultural specifics.

Full of references for additional articles, books and online sites, this textbook makes for a splendid guide that invites students to explore the wonderful world of Englishes on their own. Although designed as a practical introduction to world Englishes, this textbook can also serve as a good reference book for burgeoning researchers making their first steps in exploring the new paradigm (the Conclusion and Outlook especially meet this purpose).

Both books are written in an accessible style for undergraduate and graduate students, though the book by Seargeant is definitely designed for students with better linguistic preparation. Both textbooks end with glossaries of terms, with Seargeant’s list of terms being of sociolinguistic nature and Siemund et al.’s glossary addressed to students not trained in linguistics. Besides glossaries, the textbooks have very helpful references, for example, in The amazing World of Englishes each chapter finishes with a list of recommended literature. Siemund et al. finish their book with two tables of the International Phonetic Alphabet, while Seargeant traditionally concludes the book with an index of terms and names occurring in the volume.

Despite minor criticisms, the reviewed books will be very helpful for both students and instructors, and can become additional reliable sources for those interested and working in the field of world Englishes.

REFERENCE


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