



“English” and “Englishes” - A survey on the spread of varieties of English around the world

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ශත වර්ෂ ගණනාවක්ම ඉංග්‍රීසියේ යන වචනය ඉංග්‍රීසි භාෂාවෙන් භාවිතා කළේ බහුවචන ආකාරයක් නොමැති ගණනය කළ නොහැකි ඒක වචන නාම පදයක් ලෙස ය. ඒක වචන නාම පදයක් ලෙස මෙම වචනය සාමාන්‍යයෙන් භාවිතා කරන්නේ එංගලන්තයේ භාෂාව වන බටහිර ජර්මනික භාෂාව හැඳින්වීමට ය. එහෙත් ඉංග්‍රීසි භාෂාවේ උපභාෂාවන් ලොව පුරා පැතිරීමත් සමග මෙම පදය ඉංග්‍රීසි ලෙස බහුවචනයක් වශයෙන් භාවිතා කිරීමට වාග් විද්‍යාඥයන් සහ විද්වතුන් පෙළඹී ඇත. මෙම බහුවචනීය භාවිතයට හේතු වූ මතවාදයට භාෂාඉද්ධිවාදීන් විරුද්ධ විය හැකිය. එසේම මා විසින් මෙම ලිපිය ලියන වදන් සැකසුම් මෘදුකාංගය ද මෙම බහුවචනීය භාවිතය සාවද්‍ය යැයි පෙන්වා දෙයි. එසේ වුවත් ලෝක ඉංග්‍රීසි, අන්තර්ජාතික ඉංග්‍රීසි, නව ඉංග්‍රීසි, ස්වදේශගත ඉංග්‍රීසි, දේශීය ඉංග්‍රීසි, මව්බස නොවන ඉංග්‍රීසි, පශ්චාත් යටත්විජිත ඉංග්‍රීසි, යනාදී වාක්‍යාංශ වලින් නිදර්ශනය වන පරිදි මෙම බහුවචනීය භාවිතය වාග්විද්‍යාඥයින් අතර පිළිගැනීමට ලක් වී ඇති බවත්, එය භාෂා හා වාග්විද්‍යා අධ්‍යයන අංශයන් හි නව පර්යේෂණ ක්ෂේත්‍රයක් බවට පත් වී ඇති බවත් පෙනී යයි. මෙම ලිපිය මගින් මෙම බහුවචනීය භාවිතය සහිත වාක්‍යාංශවල යෙදීමත්, ඒවායේ විෂය පථයනුත්, ඉංග්‍රීසි භාෂාවේ ව්‍යාප්තිය පිළිබිඹු කිරීමට මෙම ඒකවචනීය හා බහුවචනීය භාවිතයන් යොදාගැනීමට හේතු වූ මතවාදය පිළිබඳවත් සමාලෝචනය කරනු ලැබේ.

ප්‍රමුඛ ආදා: ඉංග්‍රීසි භාෂාව, අන්තර්ජාතික ඉංග්‍රීසි, නව ඉංග්‍රීසි, පශ්චාත් යටත්විජිත ඉංග්‍රීසි

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For centuries, the word 'English' was used as a singular uncountable noun in English with no plural form. According to the Oxford dictionary, the term is used to refer to 'the West Germanic language of England, now widely used in many varieties throughout the world' (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/English>).

However, because of the worldwide spread of the *dialects* and *varieties* of the English language, it has become necessary for linguists and scholars to use the term in the plural as 'Englishes'. Although *language purists* would object the ideology behind this plural usage, and even the word processor on which the present writer is typing this article underlines it as incorrect, not only the usage of the plural term 'Englishes' has gained acceptance among linguists but also it has become a new research field in language and linguistic studies as exemplified by the terms such as *World Englishes*, *Global Englishes*, *International Englishes*, *New Englishes*, *Nativized Englishes*, *Indegenized Englishes*, *Non-native Englishes*, *Transplanted Englishes*, and *Postcolonial Englishes*. This article surveys the use of these plural terms, their scope, and the ideology behind the singular and plural usage of the term 'English' to refer to the spread of English.

World Englishes

Among the terms used with the plural form 'Englishes', *World Englishes* has become a common one. *World Englishes* is a relatively new field in linguistics. Most scholars attribute the beginnings of the study of *World Englishes* to two independently organized conferences on *English as a World Language* held, three months apart, in 1978; one at the East-West Centre in Honolulu, and the other at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Based on the distinction between the uses of English for *international purposes* and *intranational purposes* in *outer* and *expanding* circle countries, i.e. former colonies of Britain and the USA where English is a second language and countries where English is a foreign language respectively, these conferences discussed issues such as the sociolinguistic and political contexts of these countries; the sociolinguistic and linguistic profile of each variety; and the linguistic

and other processes of *nativisation* and *acculturation*. This initiative gained impetus through other conferences followed, such as those organized as part of International TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) convention and IATEFL (International Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language). Eventually, research areas in the field such as (intra) national uses of English, features of English for international communication, registers of English, regional sociolinguistic profiles of English, pedagogic contexts and methods, literature in *World Englishes*, and lexicographical studies, were identified (cf. Kachru¹, 1992a:1-2).

The above reference to the beginnings of *World Englishes* applies to only one interpretation of the term, *World Englishes*. Bolton² (2009:240-241), for example, recognizes three senses in which the term *World Englishes* is used. The first, broad sense refers to various approaches to the description and analysis of English(es) worldwide. The second, narrower sense refers to the linguistic descriptions of autonomous varieties of the *New Englishes* used, *inter alia*, in Caribbean, African and Asian countries, focussing on the areal characteristics of national or regional 'Englishes'. The third sense deals with *the Kachruvian approach*, which involves the description of other related topics such as contact linguistics, creative writing, critical linguistics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, lexicography, pedagogy, pidgin and creole studies, and the sociology of language, in addition to the description of national or regional varieties. The beginnings of *World Englishes* referred to above is about the third of the three meanings of the term presented in Bolton (2009:240-241), which covers *the Kachruvian approach to World Englishes*. *The Kachruvian approach to World Englishes* stresses 'the importance of inclusivity and pluricentricity in approaches to the linguistics of English worldwide'. Whereas the *Kachruvian approach* prefers the plural use of the term 'Englishes', in the first sense of *World Englishes* stated in Bolton (2009:240-241), used as 'an umbrella label referring to a wide range of differing approaches to the description and analysis of English(es) worldwide', both the singular term 'English' and the plural term are used by different scholars. Parallel to this divided use of *World English* versus *World Englishes*, other pairs such as *global English* versus *global*

Englishes and *international English* versus *international Englishes* are also used.

The Ideology

The ideology behind the singular and plural usage of these terms is *monocentrism* versus *pluricentrism* of world English(es). For example, Bolton (2009:241) shows that for Butler³ (1997:109) the singular usage, monocentric *World English*, is synonymous with the spread of American English through the 'English-speaking' world, whereas, *World Englishes* represents local culture and a sense of identity of the other new varieties of English. In a different but related view point, McArthur⁴ (1987) makes a contrast between a core variety of *World Standard English* and a wide range of geographical 'Englishes' used worldwide. Crystal⁵ (1997) too maintains a distinction between a common core of *international English* versus geographically distinctive 'Englishes'. Similarly, Quirk et al⁶ (1972:13-32) distinguish the *common core* of English from classes of variety according to region, education and social setting, subject matter, medium, attitude, and interference. Apart from these two term approaches, Schneider⁷ (2007:2-3) reports a one term approach in which Manfred Görlach considered using 'Englishes' as the title of his 1980 journal of *World Englishes*, but opted for *English World-wide* instead, 'because the plural form was still felt to be unacceptable'. In the Kachruvian approach, on the other hand, the purposeful plural usage 'Englishes' symbolizes the functional and formal variation in the language and its acculturation in both inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle countries (cf. Kachru and Smith⁸, 1985:210). Pluricentrism is underscored in this approach:

This concept ('Englishes'²) emphasizes 'WE-ness', and not the dichotomy between us and them (the native and non-native users). In this sense, then, English is a valuable linguistic tool used for various functions. The approaches to the study of World Englishes, therefore, have to be interdisciplinary and integrative, and different methodologies must be used (literary, linguistic and pedagogical) to capture distinct identities of

²Antecedent in parenthesis is by the present writer.

different Englishes, and to examine critically the implications of such identities in cross-cultural communication. (Kachru, 1992a:2) (emphasis mine)

New Englishes

Another frequently used plural term to refer to the 'Englishes' used primarily in outer circle countries is *New Englishes*. According to Kachru⁹ (2001:520), 'the 'new-ness' of these varieties lies in the recent recognition of their linguistic and literary institutionalization'. Platt et al¹⁰ (1984:2-3), use four criteria for inclusion of varieties as members of *New Englishes*: developing through the education system, developing 'in an area where a native variety of English was not the language spoken by most of the population', functional institutionalization, and localization or nativization. Thus, the coverage of the term is similar for both Kachru (2001) and Platt et al (1984), except for the fact that the former is not as specific as the latter in regard to acquisitional contexts. A term with a similar scope is *institutionalized varieties*, which Kachru¹¹ (1986:19) uses to distinguish *second-language varieties* in the outer circle, which have 'a long history of acculturation in new cultural and geographical contexts', and 'a large range of functions in the local educational, administrative, and legal systems', from *performance varieties* of English used as foreign languages in the expanding circle in highly restricted domains; hence the specification, *Institutionalized Second-Language Varieties* for the former.

Some scholars, especially those with *language contact* backgrounds, however, have found the above scope of the term *New Englishes* inadequate. Mesthrie & Bhatt¹² (2008:12), for example, show that although Platt et al's (1984) criteria for *New Englishes* exclude varieties like American Indian English and Black South African English because they exist in countries where English is dominant, other social factors like 'racial and tribal segregation' cancel the presence of a 'native' model, thus making them eligible for candidature. Mufwene¹³ (1994:21) seems to require even wider scope as he wished to use the term *New Englishes* to refer to all new Englishes outside Europe including 'not

only North American English, Australian English, South African English, and varieties commonly referred to as 'indigenized', or 'nativized', or 'non-native Englishes' (e.g., Indian or Singapore English) but also English pidgins and Creoles'.

Nativized Englishes and/or Indigenized Englishes

Another two competing terms to refer to *World Englishes* are *nativized Englishes* and *indigenized Englishes*, which are linked to the two processes of *nativization* and *indigenization* respectively. According to Kachru¹⁴ (1992b:235) 'nativization is the linguistic readjustment a language undergoes when it is used by members of another speech community in distinctive sociocultural contexts and language contact situations', and it involves 'the approximation of a language to the linguistic and discursal characteristics of the native (or dominant) language of the area into which it has been transplanted.' *Indigenization* is defined by Mufwene¹⁵ (2009:353) as 'a process whereby a language is adapted to the communicative habits and needs of its (new) speakers in a novel ecology.' Both of these processes, thus, refer to the linguistic changes in English in new socio-cultural settings. Correspondingly, the terms *nativized Englishes* and *indigenized Englishes* are also used to refer to similar kind of transplanted 'Englishes' by scholars. The tendency seems in the *World Englishes* discipline is to use the terms *nativization* and *nativized*, whereas in *contact linguistics* the terms *indigenization* and *indigenized* are used to refer to the same contact situations. Kachru (1986:33), for example, uses the term *a Nativized Variety* to refer to South Asian English, the variety(ies) of English used in the Indian Subcontinent, which he describes also as an *institutionalized variety*. Hassan¹⁶ (2010:29) too presents Indian English as a *nativized variety*. Working in the field of Contact Linguistics, Winford¹⁷ (2003:15), on the other hand, presents Indian English, along with Irish (Hiberno) English, as an example of an *indigenized variety*. Moving one step ahead, Mollin¹⁸ (2006:34) makes an important distinction between *nativization* and *institutionalization*, which Kachru (1986) does not make; while the former is a prerequisite of the latter, 'not all nativized forms of English are necessarily institutionalized (such as EFL performance Englishes)'. This

is applicable to indigenization as well. *Postcolonial Englishes* (PCEs) is another term with a wider coverage used by Schneider (2007) in his Dynamic Model as a more 'neutral term' to cover 'all forms of English resulting and emerging from' colonial backgrounds.

Interference varieties and/or Contact varieties

Both second-language varieties and foreign-language varieties are sometimes referred to as *interference varieties* because of the linguistic and cultural 'interference' from the first language(s) and culture(s) of the users on them. Quirk et al¹⁹ (1985:27-28) point out that some of these varieties in South Asia and Africa may be stable and adequate enough to be institutionalized and regarded as fully-fledged varieties of English rather than stages on the way to a more 'native-like' English because of their long contact history and widespread distribution.

However, some scholars such as Sridhar & Sridhar²⁰ (1986:10) do not favor the term *interference* because the term appears frequently in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies with a negative connotation; hence their preference for the alternative term 'contact'. Thus, the term *contact varieties* is synonymous with *interference varieties*. Kachru (2001:521) points out that the use of 'contact' here emphasizes 'the multicultural and multilingual contexts in which these 'Englishes' are used, and the impact of local socio-linguistic contexts on these varieties'.

Conclusion

Thus, the survey presented in the present article makes it clear that the plural usage of the term 'Englishes' has gained currency among linguists because of the worldwide spread of the dialects and varieties of English. Whereas some scholars attempt to draw a distinction between a one singular *World English* and regional 'Englishes' (varieties), others prefer to use either only the singular 'English' (as a world language) or only the plural 'Englishes'. The ideology behind this diversity in the use of the terms is whether English has one identity (monocentrism) the world

over or different regional identities (pluricentrism). The end at which these ideological battles would resolve is yet to be seen. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the term 'English' is no more a singular only one at least among certain scholastic circles. Equally undeniable is the diversity among the type(s) of English used by people the world over.

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