

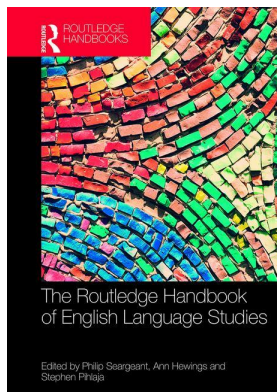
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World Englishes

Disciplinary debates and future directions

Kingsley Bolton

Introduction

Over the last three decades, the phrase ‘world Englishes’ (WE) has become an established term to refer to many varieties of English found throughout the world, particularly in the Caribbean, former Anglophone colonies in Africa, and many societies in Asia. Before the 1980s, discussions of English worldwide typically employed a normative vocabulary that utilized a distinction between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers, employing such terms as ‘English as a Native Language’ (ENL), ‘English as a Second Language’ (ESL), and ‘English as a Foreign Language’ (EFL). Over the last thirty years, however, ‘world Englishes’, with its inclusive plural, has increasingly become the standard term to refer to varieties of English worldwide. Debates about the status, functions, and features of varieties of English may be traced back to the mid-1960s, and the work of Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens, who asserted that ‘English is no longer the possession of the British, or even the British and the Americans, but an international language which [...] exists in an increasingly large number of different varieties’ (Halliday et al. 1964: 293). Twelve years later, the US educator Larry Smith described English as ‘an international auxiliary language’, and asserted that it was ‘time to stop calling it a foreign language or second language’, suggesting instead the term ‘EIAL’ (English as an International Auxiliary Language) which, he asserted, ‘more accurately reflects the present state of English language usage around the globe’ (Smith 1976: 39). Since then, the work of Braj Kachru, Larry Smith and many other scholars has contributed to a major paradigm shift in English studies. Over this period, there has been a growing recognition of ‘Englishes’ in the plural, as in ‘varieties of English’, ‘international Englishes’, ‘new Englishes’, ‘English languages’ and ‘world Englishes’.¹ Of all these designations, arguably the most popular term currently in the literature is ‘world Englishes’, and the last three decades have seen the rise of this discipline (or sub-discipline) in linguistics as a site for scholarly research and publication. There are now a number of academic journals, including *English Today*, *English World-Wide*, *World Englishes*, and *Asian Englishes*, devoted to the field, numerous book-length studies dealing with research in this area, and the very active International Association for World Englishes (IAWE), which regularly organizes international conferences in the US and across the globe (Sergeant 2012a).

The scope of ‘world Englishes’ studies

The term ‘world Englishes’ may be understood as having both a narrower and wider application. The narrow application of the term refers to schools of thought closely associated with the approach to the study of English worldwide pioneered by Braj B. Kachru and a group of closely-related scholars. The wider application of the concept also includes many other approaches to the study of English worldwide ranging from the regional Englishes of Britain to varieties of English in the US, Australia, New Zealand, and to the Englishes of East and West Africa and many Asian societies, as well as the study of discourse and genre in those contexts where English is regarded as a second or foreign language. Research on WE in the widest sense includes at least a dozen distinct approaches including those of English studies, corpus linguistics, features-based approaches, the sociology of language, ‘Kachruvian’ studies, pidgin and creole research, applied linguistics, lexicography, popularized studies, critical linguistics, and futurological approaches (Bolton 2004, 2006, 2012). To this list, we might now add current work on ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ (ELF), a recently emergent approach to English as an international language, which is now proving a highly productive area of study, particularly in the European context (Bolton 2011). These approaches are summarized in Table 4.1 below.

From the 1960s onwards, the English studies approach was associated with such scholars as Randolph Quirk and others active at the Survey of English Usage at University College London, including David Crystal and Sidney Greenbaum. The work of these UK-based scholars was complemented by the research and publications of a number of German scholars including Görlach (1995) and Schneider (2007), as well as that of work in corpus linguistics, which again is closely associated with an English studies approach, as in the work of Greenbaum (1996), Nelson et al. (2002) and others on the International Corpus of English (ICE) project (ICE 2016). In addition to the ICE corpora worldwide, research teams have also begun to compile their own regional corpora of Englishes, including the important SAVE corpus of South Asian Varieties of English (Mukherjee 2012).

The English studies approach and the work of corpus linguists overlap considerably with the ‘features-based approach’, which typically involves the linguist in identifying and making statements about the distinctive features of varieties in terms of pronunciation or ‘accent’ (phonology), vocabulary (lexis), or grammar (morphology and syntax). Leading examples of this approach include Trudgill and Hannah ([1982] 2013), Schneider et al. (2004), and Kortmann et al. (2004). Schneider has made an important contribution to the field through the formulation of the Dynamic Model of postcolonial Englishes (Schneider 2003, 2007). Sociolinguistic approaches to WE have included (i) ‘the sociology of language’ (Fishman et al. 1996); (ii) the ‘linguistic features’ (and dialectological) approach (Trudgill and Hannah 1982, etc.); (iii) pidgin and creole studies; and (iv) ‘socially-realistic’ studies of WE (Kachru 1992).

The use of the term ‘world Englishes’ to refer to a distinct approach to this subject is most closely associated with the work of Braj Kachru. The origin of the term ‘world Englishes’ can be located in the two conferences on English as a world language that took place in 1978, one in April at the East–West Center in Hawaii and the second in June–July at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, and Braj Kachru and Larry Smith played a major role in both conferences. A key theoretical and methodological tenet of the Kachruvian perspective was that the earlier three-fold distinction between ENL, ESL, and EFL was ideologically loaded and intellectually flawed, and instead an approach was adopted that categorized varieties of English in terms of a three-fold distinction between the Inner Circle (including the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), the Outer Circle (postcolonial societies such as

Table 4.1 Approaches to world Englishes

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
English studies	The analysis of varieties of English from a synchronic and historical perspectives, against a tradition of English studies (<i>Anglistik</i>) dating from the late nineteenth century, e.g. the work of Otto Jespersen, Daniel Jones, and Henry Sweet.	1960s–present
English corpus linguistics	The accurate and detailed linguistic descriptions of world Englishes from a features perspective.	1990s–present
'Features-based' approaches	The description of English through dialectological and variationist methodologies. Situated against the long tradition of British and European dialectology.	1980s–present
The sociology of language	Research on English in relation to such issues as language maintenance/shift, and ethnolinguistic identity.	1960s–present
Kachruvian studies	The promotion of a pluricentric approach to world Englishes, highlighting both the 'sociolinguistic realities' and 'bilingual creativity' of Outer Circle (and Expanding Circle) societies.	1980s–present
Pidgin and creole studies	The description and analysis of 'mixed' languages and the dynamics of linguistic hybridization in language contact settings.	1930s–present
Applied linguistics	The exploration of the implications of world Englishes for language learning and teaching.	1960s–present
Lexicography	The codification of vocabularies of English worldwide, linked to particular postcolonial societies and issues of linguistic autonomy.	1980s–present
Popularisers	The publication of books on English worldwide aimed at a mass reading public.	1980s–1990s
Critical linguistics	The expression of resistance to the linguistic imperialism and cultural hegemony of English, in tandem with resistance to Anglo-American political power.	1990s–present
Linguistic futurology	The discussion of future scenarios for the spread of English and English language teaching worldwide.	1997–present
English as a Lingua Franca	An approach to international English focusing on those contexts, e.g. universities and international businesses, where English is used as a common language by speakers of different nationalities and linguistic backgrounds.	Late 1990s–present

Nigeria, Kenya, India, Philippines, and Singapore), and the Expanding Circle (for instance, Brazil, China, Germany, and Japan).

By the mid-1980s, a number of popular works intended for a general reading audience began to appear, including publications by Crystal (1997, 2004) and Bragg (2003). Challenging the perceived 'triumphalism' of such popular works, Phillipson's landmark *Linguistic Imperialism*

(1992), encouraged a strong interest in the politics of English, and has also informed the work of a generation of other critical scholars. The futurology perspective is best represented in research reports from Graddol (1997, 2006). From the late 1990s, linguists began to look at the increasing use of English within the Expanding Circle (or 'EFL') context of Europe, where English was quickly spreading as the common language of international university education and international business. It is in this context that English as an international language began to be redefined as ELF, with foundational work in this area including Seidlhofer (2001), Jenkins (2007), and Mauranen and Ranta (2009).²

World Englishes as a discipline

Within linguistics generally, and English linguistics in particular, there can be little doubt that the WE approach to English worldwide has succeeded in creating a major paradigm shift in academic English studies within the UK, and North America as well as the international academic community. Whereas English studies in the 1960s in the metropolitan academy in, for example, the US and UK, were tied almost exclusively to national literatures (especially English and American literatures), supplemented by historical approaches to language studies, today it is an almost unchallenged orthodoxy that academic English studies are regarded as global phenomena, from both literary and linguistic perspectives. Against this changing academic background, it is perhaps unsurprising that WE has emerged and been recognized as a distinct branch of linguistics at many universities worldwide. Some have even suggested that the WE approach to English studies now constitutes a distinct 'discipline' within the academy, an issue that Seargeant's (2012a) article examines at some length, highlighting at first the socio-historical and political underpinning of the field:

[T]he discipline of world Englishes studies [. . .] did not arise out of nowhere [and] the development of the discipline is the result of a number of different social, historical and political pressures which frame the ways in which the subject is presently studied in academic circles. In other words, it is these various social, historical and political processes which have produced a mostly coherent field of study which now goes by the title of world Englishes studies, and which provide the meaning-matrix in which work executed within this tradition exists. And any subsequent work in this field will, in some sense, be a response to this general framework.

(Seargeant 2012a: 114)

Seargeant then goes on to identify the various components of a 'discipline' within academia (with reference to previous theorizations), which include an academic community of practice, a shared domain of academic interest, a tradition of scholarship, a network of communications, and conceptual structures, noting that the two most important factors in the formation of a discipline are 'how knowledge is organized' and 'how organization comes about as a result of the social practices of those involved in the production or reproduction of that knowledge' (Seargeant 2012a: 115). In this context, a major influence is the adoption of teaching materials in education systems, which help 'establish a central canon of key theories and empirical studies which constitute the academic content of the discipline' and in turn lead to 'the appearance of the named subject with a relatively standardized content across different universities which marks the status of discipline within this educational context', accompanied in turn by the emergence and institutionalization of research funding and research publications in the designated field (Seargeant 2012a: 116).

More specifically, in the case of WE, Sargeant identifies a number of key factors that have led to the emergence of WE as a disciplinary field, namely (i) teaching resources and educational programmes; (ii) history; (iii) methodology and objectives; and (iv) discourse patterns (Sargeant 2012a: 121–126). Teaching resources and educational programmes include all those programmes and courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level on ‘world Englishes’ or closely allied topics in North America, Europe, the UK, Asia, and elsewhere, often using such textbooks as Jenkins (2003), Melchers and Shaw (2003), Kirkpatrick (2007), Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008), Sargeant (2012b) and Sargeant and Swann (2012). Research publications include the three key journals (mentioned above) in the field, as well as increasing numbers of book publications from such major international publishers as Bloomsbury, Cambridge University Press, John Wiley, Oxford University Press, Routledge (Taylor and Francis), and Springer. History here refers to the history of WE as a discipline, a topic that I have earlier attempted to tackle in some detail (Bolton 2003: 1–49). At the levels of methodology and objectives, Sargeant notes a good deal of variation, with a range of approaches, from the linguistic to the sociological/political in play, as well as a range of related discourses, all of which (reassuringly perhaps) in ‘broad-based’ fashion, ‘allows for diverse and competing approaches to the analysis of the subject [. . .] within the wider institutional disciplinary framework’ (Sargeant 2012a: 124). In this context, ‘discourse patterns’ refers to the multiple ways in which WE has developed varying yet distinctive ‘discursive norms’ in terms of a specialized vocabulary, as well as diverse norms of approach, methodologies and scholarship, while ultimately preserving coherence ‘in terms of shared fundamental concerns and a focus on globally-contextualized enquiry into the spread of the English language’ (Sargeant 2012a: 126). In conclusion, Sargeant summarizes the case for WE as a discipline, asserting that

[T]here is now a stable body of knowledge that constitutes a subject entitled world Englishes studies, and the status of this is such that it is beginning to be projected onto curricula and, occasionally, departmental structures. The pedagogic implications are that there has been a paradigm shift in the way that the academic mainstream now focuses on the teaching and research of diverse varieties of English [which] affects not only sociolinguistic studies of English around the world, but also applied linguistics scholarship, and in this way feeds into the training of language professionals, specifically TESOL practitioners and those involved in language planning.

(Sargeant 2012a: 126–127)

Indeed, as the above discussion suggests, at present the pluricentric and pluralistic approach of WE has become so well-established as to constitute something of an orthodoxy in contemporary English language studies and sociolinguistics. So much so, perhaps, that various linguists have begun to question this new orthodoxy, and to problematize various aspects of the WE approach, including the work of Professor Braj B. Kachru and associated scholars.

Debating world Englishes

One important challenge to the WE paradigm in recent years has been from scholars who have highlighted the ‘linguistic imperialism’ associated with the spread of English. The foundation document on this topic, Phillipson’s (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism* was a landmark publication, which subsequently politicized the debate on WE and related issues. At the centre of Phillipson’s theoretical approach to ‘linguistic imperialism’ are a series of arguments about

the political relations between the ‘core English-speaking countries’ (Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) and the ‘periphery-English countries’, where English either has the status of a second language (for example, Nigeria, India, and Singapore) or is a foreign and ‘international link language’ (including Scandinavia and Japan) (1992: 17). The nature of this relationship, Phillipson argues, is one of structural and systemic inequality, in which the political and economic hegemony of western Anglophone powers is established or maintained over scores of developing nations, particularly those formerly colonies of European powers, contributing to a form of ‘English linguistic imperialism’, where ‘*the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages*’ (1992: 47, original emphasis). Phillipson’s voice in the early 1990s was original and persuasive and has subsequently influenced the work of many others, including, to some extent, such applied linguists as Canagarajah (1999), Pennycook (1994, 2001). While Phillipson’s perspective was uncritical of the WE approach at first, his attitude seems to have changed somewhat in recent years. By 2009, Phillipson was maintaining that ‘global English’ was a ‘capitalist neoimperial language that serves the interests of the corporate world and the governments that it influences’, and was asserting that, in this context, ‘[t]here are serious theoretical and empirical weaknesses in the way world Englishes are classified and analyzed’ (Phillipson 2009: 132, 164–165). In the same year, in an interview, Phillipson further commented that ‘[m]ost work on World Englishes in the Kachruvian sense is purely descriptive, and an over-simplification of the complexity of the sociolinguistics of English in multilingual settings’ (Phillipson 2010).

Other critiques of the WE approach have included the commentaries of Bruthiaux (2003) and Jenkins (2003). The criticisms of both these authors have largely focused on the ‘Three Circles’ model of the Kachruvian approach, with Bruthiaux publishing a lengthy critique of this strand of the approach. The core of Bruthiaux’s critique is that the Three Circles model ‘has little explanatory power’ and ‘has left us with a primarily nation-based model which draws on specific historical events and which correlates poorly with current sociolinguistic data’ (Bruthiaux 2003: 161). Similarly, Jenkins’ (2003) textbook *World Englishes: A Resource Book for Students*, also contained a number of criticisms of the Three Circles model including (i) the assertion that this was ‘a model based on geography and genetics’; (ii) that there were ‘grey areas’ between the Inner and Outer Circle countries, and Outer and Expanding Circles; and that (iii) ‘the model implies that the situation is uniform for all countries within a particular circle’. Kachru’s (2005) response to these criticisms emphasized that, for him, the notion of the Circles was primarily historical, which also involved a geographical (though not, in his formulation, a genetic) dimension (Kachru 2005: 213). With reference to the ‘grey areas’ issue, Kachru responded by quoting an earlier paper, where he had specifically argued that

The Outer and Expanding Circles cannot be viewed as clearly demarcated from each other; they have several shared characteristics, and the status of English in the language policies of such countries changes from time to time. What is an ESL region at one time may become an EFL region at another time or vice versa.

(Kachru 1985: 13–14)

On the third issue of supposed uniformity of countries, Kachru’s response was that he had always argued that there was ‘significant variation’ within varieties, and indeed if we look back at one of Kachru’s earlier articles on ‘Models of English for the Third World’, he reports

on no less than ten distinct varieties of Indian English identified by survey respondents at that time (Kachru 1976: 234). In his (2005) commentary on criticisms of the Three Circles model he went on to emphasize that it is important to consider the spread of English from a historical perspective for a range of rather basic reasons:

That historical reality [of the Inner Circle] and the source of English need not be negated but has to be confronted in contextualizing the process of the spread of English and its implications. The earlier colonial designs and the resultant Imperial Raj directly impacted the Outer Circle countries (e.g. Nigeria, Kenya, India, Sri Lanka) with their distinct earlier linguistic and cultural histories, which are not necessarily the same as those of the Expanding Circle countries. The post-1950s period has created a specific dynamic and energy in the Outer Circle in terms of its identities, attitudes and creativity in the language. (Kachru 2005: 219)

At the same time, however, Kachru was fully aware of the dynamic nature of WE, commenting that, within his model, ‘each Circle, including the Inner Circle, is reshaping itself within fast-changing sociolinguistic ecologies in which the English language has become a vital partner and a linguistic icon with a variety of avatars’ (Kachru 2005: 219). Ultimately, however, perhaps this model is best appreciated when compared to the prejudices against ‘non-native’ speakers of English that preceded it, as noted by McArthur (1993), who recognized its virtues in terms of ‘the democratization of attitudes to English everywhere in the globe’:

[T]his is a more dynamic model than the standard version, and allows for all manners of shadings and overlaps among the Circles. Although ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ still suggest, inevitably, a historical priority and the attitudes that go with it, the metaphor of ripples in a pond suggests mobility and flux and implies that a history is in the making. (McArthur 1993, cited in Kachru 2005: 219)

McArthur’s point here, I would argue, is well taken. The discourses that had preceded the emergence of the WE paradigm emphasized the importance and supremacy of ‘native-speaker’ norms, largely of the UK or US, with localized versions of English across the globe discussed in terms of ‘varieties’ of a notionally singular ‘English’. In addition, however, I would also argue that it is misleading and simplistic to conflate WE (or the Kachruvian approach to WE) with the Three Circles model alone; not least given the much wider disciplinary underpinning of the WE enterprise, in both the Kachruvian approach, and as a wider academic enterprise.

The essence of much such criticism has been that the Kachruvian approach to WE has been too simplistic (or even too ‘nationalistic’) in focusing on geographically-defined varieties of English. However, this in itself may be a simplification, as the analysis of the content of the *World Englishes* journal in the twenty years from 1985 to 2005 has shown that only a minority of articles focused predominantly on linguistic features (9.4%) or areal studies (11.4%). In fact, most space in the journal in this formative period was given over to such topics as applied linguistics, contact linguistics (including code-switching and code-mixing), discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and a diverse range of other subjects (Bolton and Davis 2006). More recently, substantial space in the journal has been accorded to topics related to creativity, cultural linguistics, linguistic landscapes, media, popular culture, and a slew of issues intellectually distinct from the sole focus on geographically-defined ‘varieties’ in the classic

sense. In my view, the WE approach as it has developed has been intrinsically dynamic and remains open both to debate and to new perspectives in research, scholarship, and theorization. Indeed I would see this flexibility, diversity, and openness as a crucial element of the ‘ethos’ of WE (Bolton 2005).

Saraceni’s (2015) review of WE scholarship, entitled *World Englishes: A critical analysis* identifies at least two new challenges to the WE enterprise. He argues that, despite the obvious strengths of the Kachruvian approach and the success of the WE paradigm shift, WE research has recently been outpaced by the effects of globalization, and the impact of these on linguistic ecologies worldwide. Thus he suggests:

[T]he World Englishes framework has been feeling ‘pressure’, as it were, from two separate fronts of scholars: on the one hand those who have been engaged with research aimed at providing insights into the forms and functions of English as a lingua franca (ELF) [...] on the other hand those who have concentrated their attention on phenomena related to globalization, such as ‘super-diversity’, language ‘hybridity’, ‘translanguaging’, ‘metrolingualism’ [...] In some ways, it could be said that both ELF and the sociolinguistics of globalization have ‘eroded’ some of the scope of World Englishes. (Saraceni 2015: 4)

Saraceni’s views are constructive in highlighting the impact of globalization, and I would agree that what is new here (compared with WE in its earlier years of theorization) are the palpable impacts of economic, political, and cultural globalization over the past fifty years (Martell 2017).

One major example of this has been the impact of increased migration and the movements of peoples. In the case of Europe, in the last three decades in particular, the effects of multiculturalism and multilingualism have been felt everywhere, as a result of the expansion of the European Union (EU), and the movement of Europeans across national boundaries, but also as the result of large-scale immigration into Europe from outside the EU (seen most dramatically in the recent waves of immigration from the war-torn Middle East). Given the relative openness of European higher education, this has also had a major effect on academia, across the EU and even the UK. Whereas four decades ago the vast majority of students in European university classrooms would have been domestic students ‘native’ to particular European nations, today French, German, Scandinavian and British universities are populated by substantial numbers of foreign students, and continental European universities have experienced increasing pressure to provide curricula for such students through English. It is hardly surprising therefore that early attempts to provide theorizations and descriptions of ‘European English’ soon gave way to a more considered attempt to describe the lingua franca English of multicultural students in European classrooms (Seidlhofer 2011; Jenkins 2013). It was these educational and sociological conditions, I have suggested elsewhere, that have provided the direct impetus for the emergence of ELF as a distinct field of inquiry, and it may be further helpful here to understand ELF studies as (in the first instance) a European phenomenon, or, at least, as a European response to the shifting demographics of the EU as well as European universities (Bolton 2011).

With reference to the second challenge identified by Saraceni, that of ‘super-diversity’ studies, there can be little doubt that recent work by Blommaert (2010) on the sociolinguistics of globalization has the strong potential to expand our understanding of language contact and multilingualism in the contemporary world. Here again I would suggest that a major stimulus for such studies has again been the European response to the changing demographics of

European cities and societies, as a direct result of immigration. To take one example from Scandinavia, until the 1970s Sweden was very largely racially and linguistically homogeneous, but by the early 2000s, as a result of the country generously accepting large numbers of international refugees, over 150 different languages were recorded as ‘home languages’ for Stockholm schoolchildren (Bolton and Meierkord 2013).

Blommaert has persuasively argued that ‘globalization forces sociolinguistics to unthink its classic distinctions and biases and to rethink itself as a sociolinguistics of mobile resources’, while further arguing that ‘[w]e need to replace it [traditional sociolinguistics] with a view of language as something intrinsically and perpetually mobile, through space as well as time, and made for mobility’ (Blommaert 2010: 1, xiv). Thus, whereas traditional sociolinguistics is concerned with the use of ‘languages’ or ‘varieties’ within or between stable ‘speech communities’, or with ‘code-switching’ or ‘code-mixing’, super-diversity studies have a focus on multilingualism in a globalizing world, where individuals engage in ‘polylinguaging’ and ‘translinguaging’. In Europe, this has now resulted in rethinking sociolinguistics in at least three areas of research: (i) face-to-face communication, as in recent studies of multicultural urban dialects in the UK; (ii) Internet-based communication, including blogging, gaming, social media, and Youtube; and (iii) linguistic landscape studies, concerned with displayed public languages, commercial signage, street signs, posters, and shop names (Parkin and Arnaut 2010).

The specific linguistic effects of globalization in Europe are not necessarily duplicated elsewhere, as the linguistic realities in this context have been (re-)shaped by the transnationalism of the EU, high levels of immigration and the increasing awareness of multilingualism. In Asia, the sociolinguistics of many societies have been determined by rather different influences, not least the tension between ongoing national projects and the demands of globalization, resulting in a shift away from traditional linguistic diversity associated with regional and local varieties of languages towards a restricted combination of the standard national language, very often in combination with English. In the US, it might be argued that such dynamics are again different from those in Europe, for a number of reasons.

First, as many discussions of ‘globalization’ concede, the driving force of many of those cultural, economic and social phenomena associated with globalization have had their wellspring in the US, particularly since the Second World War, after which America’s ‘irresistible Empire’ of consumer goods, global media, mass production, popular entertainment, and contemporary modernity was spread worldwide (de Grazia 2005). Second, it may be argued that, whereas many European societies appear to have enjoyed only limited success in integrating large numbers of recent immigrants into their societies, the power of the American dream seems as strong today as ever, at a time in the US when ‘ethnic’ minorities such as Asians and Hispanics are gaining ever more economic and political clout in society. However speculative such comments may be, such factors may at least help explain why ELF studies have emerged and gained wide popularity in the European context, but have largely failed to gain major traction in the US (although see Matsumoto 2011). Despite the huge influx of overseas students into US universities and colleges in recent years, the expectation is still strong that the vast majority of such students wish to acquire a command of a standardized (or standard-like) variety of US English as part of their educational experience, and to meet such demands, most universities have relatively well-established ESL and academic writing programs in place to meet such needs (Liou 2012). In this context, as in others, it may also be argued that the power of the US variety of English continues to parallel the continuing economic, cultural, military and political power of the US in many other spheres worldwide (Demont-Heinrich 2010). To this, one may also add

the powerful effects of Internet technology, and its related ‘mediating’ impact on our reception and use of languages, a technology perceived as global, and yet one whose origins and key stakeholders have (often) been strategically and compactly located in California’s Silicon Valley (*The Economist* 2015).

Naming and defining world Englishes

The criticisms of the WE approach of Bruthiaux (2003) and Jenkins (2003), however partial, have been repeated by a number of other commentators over the last decade or so, perhaps most recently in Galloway and Rose (2015) who propose that the field of world Englishes should be renamed ‘global Englishes’. One major reason for this they argue is that the WE approach is essentially (and almost exclusively) concerned with ‘national varieties’ of English. Consequently, they avow, a better name for the study of English studies worldwide is ‘global Englishes’ as this (unlike ‘world Englishes’) incorporates such issues as ‘globalization, linguistic imperialism, education, and language policy and planning’ (Galloway and Rose 2015: xii). However, the accusation that WE has been mainly concerned with ‘national varieties of English’ and has not engaged with such questions ignores the pioneering research and publications of numerous WE scholars, as well as that of Kachru himself.

A number of issues are raised by Galloway and Rose’s (2015) critique of the Kachruvian approach to WE. At the core of their critique is the claim that ‘world Englishes’ should subordinate itself to the newly-emergent ‘global Englishes’ paradigm, as if this were an innovative conceptualization that was entirely original and fit for purpose. Although some might regard the issue of whether the field is referred to as ‘world Englishes’ or ‘global Englishes’ as a trivial question, in many respects this is a matter of no small concern, as Seargeant’s (2010) discussion of ‘Naming and defining in world Englishes’ explains. In this study of the nomenclature of the field, Seargeant draws our attention to the complexities of the ways in which ‘Englishes’ or ‘varieties of English’ are categorized. For example, they may be categorized according to *function* (‘English as a foreign language’ etc.); in terms of *community* (‘native/non-native varieties’); *history* (‘colonial Englishes’); *structure* (‘pidgin Englishes’); *ecology* (‘Inner Circle variety’); and *multiplexity* (‘World English’, ‘English language complex’). What is significant here, Seargeant argues, is that although the creation of such nomenclature is avowedly descriptive in intention, the act of naming has performative consequences, and has an important influence on the discourses associated with particular academic activities (Seargeant 2010: 109).

There are many reasons for rejecting the re-scripting of ‘world Englishes’ as ‘global Englishes’, which might be better left to a much longer discussion elsewhere, but two important (and interconnected) reasons might be mentioned here. First and foremost, to baldly assert (as Galloway and Rose do) that ‘Global Englishes *includes* the concepts of World Englishes’ (emphasis added) seems at best an attempt at the (mis)appropriation of pre-existing discourses, and at worst a crude takeover bid of an existing academic discipline that, as Seargeant (2012a) has eloquently pointed out, has its own specific history, associated with diverse and open-ended approaches to the field, that have all contributed to a newly-emergent discipline bearing the name of ‘world Englishes’. Second, this attempt at renaming the field, for which Galloway and Rose provide only slight scholarly justification, evidently attempts to marginalize or misrepresent at least fifty years of scholarship in the WE field, not least that of Braj B. Kachru (1932–2016). More specifically, such a rhetorical move (conscious or otherwise) represents, I would argue, a misguided assault on decades of ground-breaking and innovative empirical research by numerous distinguished scholars.

Interestingly, one important starting point for the WE enterprise was the completion of Kachru's PhD thesis on Indian English in 1962, under the supervision of Michael A. K. Halliday at Edinburgh University. While at Edinburgh, Kachru (in the company of fellow graduate students Ayo Bamgbose, Ruqaiya Hasan, and Rodney Huddleston) also took classes with such other major linguists as David Abercrombie, J. C. Catford, M. A. K. Halliday, Peter Ladefoged, Angus McIntosh, and Peter Strevens, as well as J. R. Firth, who was Visiting Professor during that time (Nelson 2012). In 1963 Kachru took up a post at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and served in the Department of Linguistics full-time, until becoming Professor Emeritus in 2002. At Illinois, Kachru played a major role in promoting linguistics through a wide range of research and publications covering such diverse fields as multilingualism and sociolinguistics, Kashmiri language and literature, Indian linguistics, and WE, as well through his academic leadership as the Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Director of the Center for Advanced Study. It is no exaggeration to state that Braj B. Kachru changed the history of English studies through his theorization of the WE paradigm in the 1980s and 1990s (Sridhar 2016). In his endeavours at the University of Illinois, from 1965 onwards, Professor Braj B. Kachru was encouraged and supported by Yamuna Kachru (1933–2013), who herself was an eminent linguist whose publications spanned such areas as Hindi linguistics, Indian languages (including Bengali, Marathi, Urdu, Kashmiri), applied linguistics, discourse analysis, literary analysis, Asian Englishes and world Englishes. Her contribution to research on WE went far beyond research and publications, and at Urbana-Champaign she was an influential and inspirational educator who supervised more than forty PhD students. In 2006, she was also the recipient of India's Presidential Award for her research and publications on Hindi language studies (Bolton and Davis 2015: 3–4).

A third foundational figure in the history of WE is Larry E. Smith (1941–2014), whose academic career at the East–West Center at the University of Hawaii ran parallel to and complemented that of the Kachrus at Urbana-Champaign. Their early collaboration at two 1978 conferences is often seen as the beginning of their collaboration and another milestone in the creation and promotion of the WE paradigm, which also involved the renaming of the *World Englishes* journal in 1985 (previously titled *World Language English*) and the establishment of the IAWE in 1992. Any history of the discipline of WE needs to acknowledge that Braj B. Kachru and Larry Smith played a decisive role in the early foundation and development of the field, not least through their insistence that their approach to the subject was pluralistic; this was deliberately and iconically captured in the title of their journal, as they explained in the editorial for the first issue:

The term 'Englishes' is significant in many ways. 'Englishes' symbolizes the functional and formal variation in the language, and its international acculturation, for example, in West Africa, in Southern Africa, in East Africa, in South Asia, in Southeast Asia, in the West Indies, in the Philippines, and in the traditional English-using countries: the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard form or in its localized forms.

(Kachru and Smith 1985: 210)

Arguing for a 'new international perspective' in English studies, the editorial added that '[t]his new perspective entails questioning the prevalent dichotomies and reevaluating the 'sacred cows' in literature, language, and language teaching methodology' (210–211). At the time, the Kachruvian approach to WE was nothing less than revolutionary, not least through the

pluralization of *Englishes*, a designation now taken for granted, which was hotly disputed at the time. The field of ‘world Englishes’ can be seen in both wider and narrower perspective. In wider perspective, the boundaries of the field of inquiry may be drawn large to include all those approaches listed in Table 1 at the beginning of this article. In a narrower perspective, ‘world Englishes’ was originally associated most closely with the theorizations and publications of Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, Larry Smith and associated scholars, but over the last twenty years, given the large number of textbooks and monographs devoted to the subject, the reach and inclusivity of the name has expanded to include a large range of researchers approaching the field with diverse perspectives and methodologies, and yet, as Seargeant (2012a) has noted, nevertheless sharing ‘fundamental concerns’ and ‘a focus on globally-contextualized enquiry into the spread of the English language’ (126, also cited above). Indeed, one reason why this diverse field has developed in such a rich fashion may be linked to the founding vision of Kachru and Smith, and the inclusive and pluralistic ethos of the intellectual movement that they founded (Bolton 2005: 78–79). The founding fathers and founding mother of the Kachruvian approach to WE have now sadly and rather suddenly passed on, but whatever else, the firm wish of many of their colleagues and students is that their legacy should not be forgotten, and the cooperative and humanistic vision of the founders of this field should endure into the future.

Conclusion: future directions for world Englishes

It may indeed be the case that, as Saraceni (2015) suggests, WE is facing a number of challenges, including the emergence of the ‘sociolinguistics of globalization’ and ‘English as a lingua franca’ as important new areas of academic research and publication. My own view is that the intellectual enrichment that such fields offer through synergies with WE research is both potentially challenging and exciting, but here I would again argue that the WE paradigm is sufficiently robust and dynamic to meet such challenges. One major thread of continuity throughout the development of WE has been its inclusivity and pluricentricity, its inclusivity of subject matter, and the pluricentricity of languages and views on language that a global perspective allows.

Much of the criticism of the WE approach focuses narrowly on the geographical approaches to varieties of English adopted by some researchers in the field. Actually, if one goes back to look at Braj B. Kachru’s own theorization of the field, very little space, relatively speaking, was given over to the discussion of regional varieties as such. One work currently in progress sets out to compile Kachru’s writings from the 1970s to the present, and so far three volumes of collected articles have been published (Webster 2015). A reading (or re-reading) of such essays reminds one at once of the breadth of vision that helped shape Kachruvian linguistics as it developed in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, Volume 1 of the collection includes essays on ‘Models of English for the Third World’, ‘The pragmatics of non-native varieties of English’, ‘The power and politics of English’, and ‘The spread of English and sacred linguistic cows’. Volume 2 covers such issues as ‘Transcultural creativity in world Englishes’, ‘The paradigms of marginality’, and ‘World Englishes and culture wars’, while Volume 3 includes chapters on ‘Code-mixing as a communicative strategy’, ‘Bilingualism’, and ‘Multilingualism and multiculturalism’. A common thread that runs through almost all these essays is the strong awareness of the multilingual contexts of Englishes worldwide, and the acute need to situate WE research within a sociolinguistic approach to issues within the field. For example, nearly twenty years ago, Kachru and Nelson wrote:

It is imperative that teachers and students be aware of the sort of presence that English has in the world today [. . .] The concept of a monolithic English as an exponent of culture

and communication in all English-using countries has been a convenient working fiction that is now becoming harder and harder to maintain. What we have now in reality is English languages and English literatures [. . .] To understand the pluralism of English, it is therefore vital to see its spread, uses, and users in sociolinguistic contexts.

(Kachru and Nelson 1996, in Webster 2015, Vol. 2: 81, emphasis added)

The emphasis here on the ‘sociolinguistic contexts’ of English(es) was a major strand of WE theorization for Kachru, and also helps explain the major and enduring impact his work has had on the field, and on the later work of other scholars whose work has focused on issues related to code-mixing, critical linguistics, linguistic imperialism, multilingualism, the politics of language and much else. It is also salutary to consider that Kachru himself published an article entitled ‘English as a lingua franca’ as early as 1996, some years before the recent interest in ‘ELF’ studies began to gather momentum (Kachru 1996, in Webster 2015, Vol. 2). Elsewhere, I have suggested that theoretical challenges in relation to globalization may find some resolution with the recognition of the role of WE in an expanded understanding of the changing and dynamic ‘language worlds’ of people in diverse communities around the world, where the ‘worlds of Englishes’ are ineluctably linked to the multilingual realities of language use (Bolton 2013). This again resonates with Kachru’s pioneering theorizations of the WE field, and the maxim that the description and analysis of WE should be centrally concerned with the ‘sociolinguistic realities’ of language use in multilingual societies worldwide (Kachru 1992: 11).

As WE develops in the future, it is likely that the diversity of the wider field will continue, with scholars working on a wide range of linguistic and sociolinguistic issues. In Bolton (2005), I argued that three broad approaches to WE studies exist, at least if one considers the approaches of scholars working in the field in terms of their objectives. These were: (i) WE approaches largely linguistic in orientation (for instance, English studies and corpus linguistics); (ii) approaches that share both linguistic and sociopolitical concerns (many sociolinguistic studies and the WE approach); and (iii) those approaches that are largely sociopolitical and political in orientation (for example, critical discourse analysis and linguistic imperialism studies). The latter two strands of WE scholarship have been broadly concerned with various aspects of the sociolinguistics of English worldwide, and it is perhaps from sociolinguistics that we might expect WE to draw its theoretical inspiration. Sociolinguistics continues to motivate much of the current research in the *World Englishes* journal, where important topics in recent years have included contact linguistics (including code-switching and mixing), critical linguistics, language and religion, linguistic landscapes, multilingualism, popular culture, and ELF. While the journal still publishes articles of areal interest, many of the articles in the journal also resonate with key issues linked to the sociolinguistics of globalization, with special issues on such topics as ‘The Englishes of Europe’, ‘Perspectives on English as a lingua franca’, ‘Creativity and world Englishes’, ‘World Englishes and linguistic landscapes’, ‘World Englishes and international call centres’, ‘English in Southeast Asia’, ‘English in China’, and ‘World Englishes and language contact’. One important challenge here is the extent to which the sociolinguistic methodology and analysis of WE is informed by recent trends in sociolinguistic research, where there has been a major paradigm shift in recent years. The essential thrust of this recent paradigm shift in sociolinguistics has been to question many of the foundational tenets that were established in the decades between the 1960s and 1990s, and were tied to a ‘static’ view of language and society, a view now challenged by newer iterations of a ‘mobile’ sociolinguistics, distinguished by ‘a view of language as something intrinsically and perpetually mobile, through space as well as time, and made for

mobility' (Blommaert 2010: 1, xiv). This new sociolinguistics has also brought with it new terminology to describe a range of processes associated with a mobile sociolinguistics, including such notions as 'superdiversity', 'translanguaging', 'translingual practice', 'transglossia', 'polylingual languaging', and 'metrolingualism', the use of which has been recently critiqued by Pennycook (2016). In his review of these 'post-Fishmanian' reconceptualizations of sociolinguistic constructs, he queries 'whether a new paradigm is likely to be ushered in by such a plethora of new terms' but nevertheless argues that 'we need at the same time to understand that terms such as "diversity", "bilingualism", and "multilingualism" have become burdened by their history of use both within academic texts and across social life more broadly'. Finally, Pennycook argues that the paradigm shift in sociolinguistics appears to mark 'a moment of disciplinary upheaval', signaling that 'communication occurs across what have been thought of as languages, that speakers draw on repertoires of semiotic resources, and that language is best understood in terms of social practices' (Pennycook 2016: 212).

The relevance of sociolinguistic theory to WE is centrally important. In the 1980s and 1990s, the WE paradigm represented a fresh, innovative and pluralistic vision of English studies, at a time when the English language was spreading rapidly, particularly throughout the education systems of former Anglophone colonies. As WE studies developed, however, they were never merely focused on English alone, but were more broadly concerned with describing and analysing how the spread of English impacted multilingual societies and cultures around the world, as well as the related processes of language contact, hybridization and cultural negotiation. For Braj B. Kachru, the Englishization of African and Asian languages was as much a concern as the nativization of the English language worldwide. Kachru's work on such issues preceded and anticipated recent conceptualizations of 'translanguaging' and 'translingual practice', and it is difficult to imagine that such theorizations would have been formed without his innovative analysis of the sociolinguistic dynamics of multilingual societies. The point here is that the relationship between WE and sociolinguistics has never been one-way. Sociolinguistics may have provided the initial inspiration for the WE turn but, over the last three decades, WE perspectives have directly influenced sociolinguistic perspective on language change, contact, and variation.

As sociolinguistic theory adapts itself to the current era of globalization, it is to be expected that WE research will follow a similar trajectory of development. The WE approach has always been intrinsically dynamic and open to debate and new perspectives in research, scholarship, and theorization, and this flexibility, diversity, and openness has been a crucial element of the 'ethos' of WE as it (Bolton 2005). One key and enduring feature of WE research has been this openness to new ideas and innovation, and this, one trusts, will continue. Earlier, I have suggested that, in coming to terms with globalization, scholars might also recognize the key role of WE research in an expanded understanding of the 'language worlds' of young people across the planet, where the 'worlds of Englishes' are ineluctably linked to the multilingual matrices of diverse and varied global communities (Bolton 2013). In this context, we might be well advised to remind ourselves of Kachru's oft-repeated axiom that WE always maintains a focus on the 'sociolinguistic realities' of language use in multilingual societies worldwide (Kachru 1992: 11).

From the 1980s to the present the WE project has contributed to a major theoretical shift in English studies worldwide, in large part through the pioneering foundational work of Braj B. Kachru, which from the outset argued for a paradigm shift of two types: (i) 'a paradigm shift in research, teaching, and the application of sociolinguistic realities to the functions of English', and (ii) 'a shift from frameworks and theories which are essentially appropriate only to monolingual countries', involving a pluralism which is 'reflected in the approaches, both

theoretical and applied, we adopt for understanding this unprecedented linguistic phenomenon' (Kachru 1997, in Webster 2015: 175, Vol. 2). At this point in its development, the WE enterprise may be regarded as having reached a point of maturity or even orthodoxy within English studies and linguistics, but this remains a diverse and pluralistic field, and, as its ethos suggests, WE remains open for new directions, new insights, and new energies.

Notes

- 1 Interest in the diverse forms and functions of so-called 'new Englishes' throughout the world has been paralleled by a related interest in new literatures in English, particularly from writers originally from former British colonies, such as V. S. Naipaul, Michael Ondaatje, Timothy Mo, Ben Okri, Wole Soyinka, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie, and Derek Walcott (King 2005).
- 2 To some extent, studies using an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) approach may be seen as a contemporary updating of an earlier approach to research, which highlighted the role of English as an International Language (EIL). This approach was associated with linguists such as Smith (1976, 1981), Strevens (1980), McKay (2002) and Sharifian (2009). Theorists of ELF have stated that early EIL researchers may be seen as 'precursors' in the field of English as a Lingua Franca (Ehrenreich and Pitzl 2015).

Further reading

- Bolton, K. and B. B. Kachru (eds) (2006) *World Englishes: Critical Concepts in Linguistics*. Vol. 6. Abingdon: Routledge. This provides a definitive collection of articles on WE from a range of perspectives, including theoretical approaches, regional profiles, paradigms of description, codification, intelligibility, language contact, discourse studies, corpus linguistics, the politics of language, and globalization.
- Melchers, G. and P. Shaw (2009) *World Englishes: An Introduction*. 2nd edn. London: Arnold. A carefully-researched and well-designed textbook on English worldwide, which provides a detailed description of the linguistic features of varieties in many regions of the world.
- Seargeant, P. (2012) *Exploring World Englishes: Language in a Global Context*. Abingdon: Routledge. A comprehensive survey of many of the contemporary debates on WE from an academic perspective, with a clear explanation of many of the central theoretical concerns in this area.
- Webster, J. J. (ed.) (2015) *Collected Works of Braj B. Kachru*. Vols. 1–3. London: Bloomsbury. An extremely valuable collection of key articles by Braj B. Kachru, whose work has provided a foundational and inspirational basis for a number of important approaches in the field of WE.

Related topics

- The historical study of English
- English and colonialism
- Standards in English
- Contact Englishes
- English and multilingualism: a contested history.

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