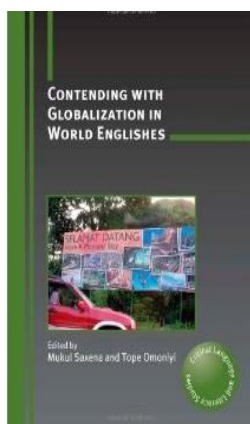


***Contending with Globalization in World Englishes*, Mukul Saxena, Tope Omoniyi, eds. (Critical Language and Literacy Studies),**

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***Reviewed for dialogin.com by Katrin Volt at diversophy.com***



*Contending with Globalization in World Englishes* consists of thought-provoking chapters that highlight and discuss the complexity of English on the current world scene. *Contending with Globalization in World Englishes* has different contributors for each chapter who examine English in globalization from different perspectives. The authors' aim is to describe how the language is used in new ways by speakers who communicate in multilingual contexts to suit their needs. They do not suggest that there should be a single version of the language termed "global English" or say how speakers of English as a lingua franca should or should not be using the language. Given that the book has an academic touch, a glossary would be helpful but is missing from this edition.

There are strong feelings and conflicting attitudes towards the ELT (English Language Teaching) industry. After all it is a huge business which has been promoting native-speaker-like attainment as superior. Although this has been changing in some institutions, often the requirement is to become a native speaker or achieve native-like performance, usually British (BrE) or American English (AmE). This is often reflected in the course books. Is this approach relevant now when there are more non-native speakers using English as an international language (Global English) with other non-native speakers?

Language is used for communication, and understanding the speaker's message is what should count, so why should the speaker worry about British English or American English variety in lingua franca contexts? Another question posed is: What is the relationship between language and power structures? The way some people speak can be a powerful tool for achieving linguistic superiority. There is a deep-seated belief that some varieties of English are better than others. Hopefully further ELF (English as a lingua franca) research will help shift this paradigm.

International communication provokes conflict between both English-speaking and English-using nations, and this is visible in the current political arena where we observe more frequent nationalistic tendencies and tensions. However, language is part of the diversity of changing societies and should be taken as such. As the world changes, so do languages - they borrow, mix, adapt, replace, etc. Should there then not be common ground, respect and understanding between both English-speaking and English-using nations? In reality, World English is multicultural and is not exclusively connected to one culture.

Comments such as, "All the words were correct but it wasn't English," or, "His English is awful." are most likely based on British English or American English expectations. Judging someone's English as, "You are not fluent," or "What an accent!" clearly expresses supremacy and inflicts bias on the

speaker. Accent shows one's identity and the speaker should not be held deficient in some way as long as the message is understandable. Learners, on the other hand, should be taught not only the language functions, forms and stress patterns (intonation is important) but also different worldviews and how these shape our beliefs, i.e., how we make sense of the world. For example, how we praise or thank (or do we at all?), how we relate to time, attitudes to family life, etc. that differ across languages and can lead to misinterpretation or misunderstanding if expressed differently.

The issue of intelligibility is further tackled in Chapter Two by Nihalani who points out that foreign language learners need to acquire pronunciation that is "universally intelligible" and "socially acceptable." The preferred pronunciation model for global communication is proposed to be "that of the fluent bilingual, multilingual, 'non-native speaker'." This model would be based on "the sound linguistic principles of phonetics and phonology of English as a "Glocal language."

Chew in Chapter Three discusses Kachru's model of *Circles (Inner, Outer, Expanding)* and *Diasporas* 1, 2 and 3. Kachru's model has been useful up to now, but is not as relevant any more. For example, speakers who come from Diaspora 2 (i.e., the British Commonwealth, former US colonies) to Diaspora 1 (English home nations) for study or work purposes can encounter major problems in communicating, even though they have studied in an English-medium educational establishment back at home (e.g., in India) or used a local variety of English in their place of origin. An awareness of speakers' cultural background, thinking styles (linear, circular), etc. contribute to their use of language. The further these schemata are from each other, the more difficult it can be for the speaker. Chew distinguishes between Western and Chinese worldviews, and sees the Englishes as a hybrid global dialect of English that includes forms from all three of Kachru's Circles. Chew stresses that our current transitional period, which is characterized by fears of losing the known, poses questions of identity and causes disorientation within the two processes of globalization and localization.

Dewey and Jenkins in Chapter Four emphasize that English as a lingua franca also involves native speakers of both inner and outer circle Englishes but their language use is not a linguistic reference point for ELF. To participate effectively in communication, NSs (native speakers) of English need to observe ELF norms and use ELF strategies as non-native speakers do. They also stress that ELF exists in its own right - it should be explained in its own terms and the norms should be locally determined. After all, speakers are creative in lingua franca contexts and the way they use the language shows their identity. Research shows that non-native speakers tend to sympathise more with other non-native learners, presumably because they have gone through the struggle of learning the language themselves and feel more confident speaking to non-native speakers. What should be the educational aim? Whatever it is, it should be relevant to students and their needs. If they are in Britain, should they be taught British English and what does Britishness mean? There are little Indias, little Ghanas, etc., in Britain. People using Englishes should be tolerant towards different varieties of English, as they all serve a communicative purpose – an interactive exchange. According to French communications expert, Dominique Wolton, "Communication is cohabitation."

Georgieva in Chapter Six argues that teachers and learners of English as a foreign language tend to favor a standard variety of English. She makes reference to other scholars who claim that the local language is used for identification and English (as a foreign language) is used for international communication but it is not easy to keep these two functions separate in reality. However, we

should not forget how much easier it is to express yourself in your mother tongue where you have access to all the nuances of the language that are often non-translatable. It is possible to use a first culture personality and identity when using a native language, to “be yourself,” whereas with the foreign language you often become a different person by the choices you make, the way you speak and behave. This should be reassuring to those who fear the peril of local languages yet we should not forget that languages change as they come into contact.

Sharifian in Chapter Seven analyses glocalization of English among Persian speakers of English, how learners localize the language when they express themselves and use a foreign language to express the ideas of their native culture. Sharifian points out that many speakers are developing global norms and local norms for using English for both intercultural and intracultural purposes.

Rajagopalan in Chapter Nine has doubts about teaching communicative language in contexts such as Asia and Africa. According to Rajagopalan, communicative language teaching approach fosters cultural domination, as it relies on the cultural contexts of given languages with insufficient attention to the cultural contexts where teaching and learning take place. He claims that Outer Circle members shape English and the Inner Circle (the “original” owners of English) need both tolerance and curiosity towards “local varieties of English in the expanding and outer circles.” I enjoyed the point made by Rajagopalan, “World English has no single culture because it is multicultural in its essence.” Furthermore, his argument that World English has no native speaker and so native competence is of no use to people using it in multicultural settings. Rajagopalan uses the term ‘World English’ in the singular to denote what different Englishes have in common to serve as a common lingua franca.

Pennycook in Chapter Ten emphasizes that English may only be a temporary name for a range of cultural and linguistic practices that have always been local. In addition, “World English belongs to everybody but is nobody’s mother tongue.” Pennycook also states that different standards should exist for different occasions for different people and each should be as ‘correct’ as any other’. Thus, national distinctiveness and international intelligibility are complementary, not contradictory.

The concluding paragraph sums up the chapters in the book claiming that further research should focus on local varieties of English and how speakers shape them but also on the standards of use relevant to the specific contexts where English for international communication is used.

The book was difficult to read at times, but world Englishes is not an easy concept to grasp. It is an overdue and welcome treatment of what global English stands for. It definitely pinpoints the shift away from colonialization, native-like measurement and materials promoting native-speaker hegemony. Speakers using English should be ready to use the language with whoever is also speaking it.

*Contending with Globalization in World Englishes* should be of interest to all using English in international contexts and specifically to applied linguists, as the issues discussed are relevant at the current time.