

# VARIETIES OF ENGLISH AND THEIR SOCIAL CONTEXT

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## Abstract

The article devoted to the varieties of English Language and their social context. The notion of “English languages” was analyzed as well as ideas of famous linguists as B. Kachru, R. Kirk were presented. The author brought the evidence that English is owned not only by native speakers, but also by the people who learn it.

**Key words:** language, native, international, socio-linguistic, standard.

## INTRODUCTION.

For a long time, English has been the language of international communication. It is often referred to as a "global language", an "international language", and more recently it has increasingly been referred to in the plural as "Englishes", emphasising not only its global reach but also the rich diversity of its variants, dialects and varieties.

The famous linguist B. Kachru wrote that the word "Englishes" symbolizes the formal and functional variation in a language and its international acculturation. This process takes place for example in Africa, South and South-East Asia, India, the Philippines and etc. In his opinion, modern English belongs not only to those people for whom it is a native language, but also to those for whom it is a 'second language', whether it is a normative version of the language or a local one (6,210).

## MAIN PART.

The history of the concept of World Englishes is thought to date back to two major international conferences on English as a World Language. The first was held in April 1978 in Hawaii and the second in the summer of that year at the University of Illinois. These conferences focused on the socio-political context of

English, the processes of nativization and acculturation of English in the former British colonies, and issues of linguistic variation (6,p31).

These conferences initiated an understanding of the fact that English transcends the boundaries of any one country and becomes a universal domain. By the mid-1980s the term 'World Englishes' was widely used and recognized (12,p11). This term, according to B. Kachru, reflects the diversity of sociolinguistic contexts for the rich diversity of English forms in different parts of the English-speaking and non-English-speaking world. It also evens out the boundary between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', i.e. those for whom English is a native language and those for whom it is not.

The term "Englishes" now represents the plurality of forms of English existence in today's global world. Intensive linguistic contacts lead to inter-linguistic interaction and the inevitable mutual influence of the contacting languages. The English language has a reciprocal impact on other languages and cultures. On the one hand, by having a significant influence on them, it leads to their anglicisation, and on the other hand, it is itself influenced by them, experiencing the processes of nativisation in other cultures.

From B. Kachru's point of view it should be understood that the term "World Englishes" represents certain linguistic, cultural and pragmatic realities of pluralism, which has already become an integral part of the concept of World Englishes. And to fully understand this new linguistic phenomenon- pluralism must be reflected in both its theoretical and practical approaches of language learning. Thus, B. Kachrou emphasises the importance of this new paradigm in the study and teaching of English languages, literatures and cultures (7,p30).

However, not all researchers share B. Kachru's views on the position of English in the world and its position in modern society. For instance, Randolph Quirk, a famous British linguist, a member of the House of Lords in the British Parliament, a professor at University College London in the 1980s, a Knight of the British Academy, and a recipient of the Order of the British Empire, calls such

approach to the English language 'half-baked quackery', inadmissible and unacceptable, pointing out the importance of standard English (10,p21).

R. Quirk is one of the most famous linguists who deals with linguistic variation and the notion of the "norm" of English. In his book "Grammar of Contemporary English" he defines the linguistic "standard" ("common core"), separating it from the other variable forms - regional, social, media, and intermedia. In his book "Grammar of Contemporary English" he defines the linguistic "standard" ("common core"), separating it from the other variant forms - regional, social and media. According to R. Quirk, the standard (English) is a set of laws and rules established in dictionaries and grammar textbooks. The language norm, or standard (of English) according to R. Quirk, is a set of laws and rules fixed in dictionaries and grammar textbooks (10,p13).

In his work "Language varieties and standard language" (1990) R. Quirk divides language variants into institutionalized, i.e. described and fixed in the literature as normative language variants, and non-institutionalized. He points out that the former includes the British and American variants, as well as the established norms of Australian English. And this division into native and non-native variants is fundamental for both general linguistic and educational terms.

In the same research, Canadian and New Zealand English are not included in the list of institutionalised languages. Probably they are not included because their norms were not yet finalised at that time. This happened a few years later. In 1997, for example, The Dictionary of New Zealand English was published to establish the norms of New Zealand English. A year later, The Canadian Oxford Dictionary was published to establish the norms of Canadian English.

The norm of English fixed in written sources - dictionaries and grammar books - is the standard of the language not because it is better (better, more prestigious, etc.). Historically, Standard English has been chosen as the standard because of its universality and practicality. A linguistic standard, a norm, is a variant of language that is understood by all participants in communication due to the unambiguity of its linguistic interpretation.

The linguistic norm exists, it is respected by native speakers of English, for whom this language is an integral part of centuries-old culture, and it should be respected by all other people who learn it and use it in speech. According to R. Quirk, the value of the linguistic norm and its priority over other variants should be universally accepted.

English is the most studied language in the world. It is spoken in almost every country. Globally, it has become the embodiment of scientific and technological progress, wealth and prosperity in the West. English not only became the language of international communication but also began to conquer other languages and cultures. In particular, this has given rise to its plural form (Englishes), emphasising the multiplicity of its forms in the world (3,p242).

National languages in general, and English in particular, as a social product, are in constant flux, changing and adapting their form to new and changing contents. Where English comes into contact with other national languages, a new form of English emerges, different from the original, influenced by local languages and cultures (2,76).

Not all those involved in global Anglicisation adopt the concept of 'English languages' for academic contexts. For example, in many Japanese schools the standard of English (British and American), the so-called linguistic ideal, is taken as the most preferable option for learning and further use.

Some developed European countries have perceived the scale of the spread of English in the world as a threat to their own culture. More than half of Europeans consider it necessary to protect their national language from English-language expansion. Concerns are openly expressed, for example, in Sweden and Germany, Iceland and France. These countries have a protective policy towards English by passing laws and emphasising the role of the state language of their country.

A number of developing countries believe that the spread of English represents the cultural hegemony of powerful Western countries, and that the language itself is being imposed on them from outside.

Others, on the contrary, see English as a symbol of progress and new opportunities and work hard to motivate it. Others, on the contrary, see English as a symbol of progress and new opportunities and work hard to nativise it. For them, English is the language of academic mobility, access to English-language information and science and technology, global trading platforms and markets based on English-language communication. Such countries view the process of their "anglicisation" positively.

In the context of the above, the natural question arises as to In the context of the above, the natural question arises to what extent a national language, as part of the respective culture, can be considered as belonging to it exclusively. Can a language be "denationalised" in favour of the global community if it has become global and is in common use? The well-known linguist David Crystal believes that the learner of an English language acquires rights to it along with knowledge: the right to use it, modify it, supplement it or create a new form of it (5,p140).

As the comparative analysis of opposing approaches to English outlined above shows, at the moment there is no definitive understanding of what "English languages" are, how legitimate they are and how productive they are in socio-cultural terms. It remains to be seen why English takes multiple forms where it is in contact with other national languages, and whether the use of the term ('English languages') is appropriate for a national language where there are already many variants and dialects.

### **CONCLUSION.**

It may take some time and a certain amount of research on this subject to be able to determine more precisely what has happened to English in recent decades, which forms of it can or cannot be considered languages, being strictly speaking pidgins, creoles or other non-normative variants; what the future holds for English, and in what form it will function as a language of international communication. Although speakers of English may believe that the language is their own, in fact, the development of the language is in the hands of those who

speak it. As the former constitutes a minority, the future of English will be determined not only by those who are native speakers, but also by those who are currently studying it. Thus it cannot be ruled out that in a relatively short time English will become a universal, global property. And perhaps it is not only the English-speaking countries that will determine the vector of its development and form of existence.

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