

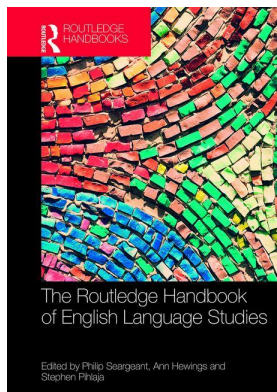
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### English and colonialism

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# English and colonialism

*Edgar W. Schneider*

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## Introduction

Between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries European powers established colonies, exerting political power and control over foreign territories, driven by economic or other motives and often accompanied by large-scale settlement movements. Colonialism has shaped the modern world in significant and irreversible ways, having produced young, often ethnically heterogeneous nations in Africa, Asia and the Americas after decolonization. Its traces are political and economic but also cultural and, not least, linguistic. European languages have been diffused, relocated and transformed in contact situations around the globe. British colonial expansion has disseminated English to all continents, and has paved the way for its current status as the world's leading language and, ultimately, for a new conceptualization of what 'English' means: modern English cannot be viewed any longer as a single monolithic 'Standard English' but is commonly understood as a set of more or less interrelated national or regional varieties. Consequently, the notion of 'Englishes' in the plural has come to be established and accepted.

This chapter describes British colonialism, as well as the contexts of its European background, and surveys the substantial consequences it has had, both sociopolitically and structurally, for the English language and our conception of it. Clearly, this is of utmost importance for English Language Studies as a whole, since, as was just stated, the plurality of varieties of English constitutes an essential component of today's reality and needs to replace overly simple concepts of a single, uniform type of English. This issue will be touched upon again later.

Following the Introduction, the second section focuses upon colonization as a historical process, including the fact that European colonial powers practiced different strategies of imposing their own cultures and languages in their respective colonies, and the main types of colonization and their typical ecologies. In the British Empire, English was established as the language of power in all colonies, and as such it began to be adopted by indigenous populations in their respective countries. It is a controversial issue, however, whether or to what extent the British colonizers intended to pass their language on to indigenous populations, especially in 'exploitation colonies' (see below). Contrary to claims attributing to English the

role of ‘killer language’ (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas 2000), originally the ‘indirect rule’ policy practiced in the Empire (and described by Lord Lugard, who early in the twentieth century was Governor of Hong Kong and then Nigeria and published a notable doctrine, which he called the ‘dual mandate’, in 1922) gave access to English mainly to indigenous elites. Due to its economic and political value, however, the language increasingly got disseminated and diffused down the social scale as well, a process which was, perhaps surprisingly, even accelerated during and after the period of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century.

An essential determinant of the changes which have affected English in colonial transmission is language contact. Wherever English was transported, there were indigenous peoples who spoke local languages, so speakers of both languages interacted with each other, as did their respective linguistic systems. Contact thus produced new varieties, marked strongly by local lexical borrowings as well as phonological and grammatical transfer phenomena. The third section is devoted to these processes and their characteristic linguistic outcomes. In line with a cline of transfer effects which is familiar in contact linguistics, three major types, characterized by increasingly intense contact-induced restructuring, are described: settler dialects as products of light interlingual contact and new dialect formation; so-called ‘New Englishes’, typically strong second languages with strong internal functions in former colonies; and English-based pidgins and creoles, products of heavy contact and restructuring. Interestingly, despite all the major differences between locations and historical settings, constant social similarities between colonizers and the colonized and the predictable patterns of their changing social relationships have led to linguistically similar developmental processes and results, which the ‘Dynamic Model’ of the emergence of Postcolonial Englishes (Schneider 2007) seeks to account for.

Not surprisingly, the analysis of all these processes has generated controversies, and the fourth section presents some of the key issues under discussion: both linguistic (such as to how to best account for the new types of varieties ultimately produced by colonialism) and sociopolitical (considering consequences of these processes for language attitudes, language policies, or teaching strategies).

The final section looks to the future, showing that processes initiated and shaped in colonial times did not terminate but have continued evolving to the present day. Globalization has replaced colonization as the driving force, and some media and contexts of transmission have been transformed, but the basic process of English expanding into new spheres and contexts has continued and gained strong momentum.

### **The historical basis: European and British colonialism**

Some earlier precursors (like the Vikings) notwithstanding, European colonialism started in the late Middle Ages, with Portuguese and Spanish explorers navigating around Africa or crossing the Atlantic in search of a sea route to the Far East. Colonial activity seemed promising and profitable to European powers, and their deeply-rooted and unquestioned sense of moral (and partly religious) superiority dismissed any considerations of inflicting harm on indigenous populations, so all the major nations soon partook in the race for wealth through expansion and conquest. The Portuguese and the Spanish, who established the first Empire ‘on which the sun never sets’, paved the way, followed by the Dutch, the French, the British and others, like the Germans and Belgians. Interestingly enough, the main European powers practiced rather different colonization styles, and left permanent traces, both cultural and linguistic, to varying extents (cf. Belich 2009: 27–40). The Dutch and Portuguese each sent more than one million people overseas, though most were not permanent settlers but male

sojourners, intending to return. The Spanish, mainly in their Mexican and South American colonies, were mostly interested in the exploitation of silver, gold and wealth and the dissemination of the Catholic faith to pagan peoples, and pursued both goals by brute force. French colonization was shaped by the same centralization directed around Paris and the Court that characterized France itself, and consequently led to gallicized colonies extensively, rooting the French language, culture and institutions to a remarkably high extent there (a policy which in the long run extends to today's 'Départements et régions d'outre-mer' of the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, which are legally fully integrated into France). British colonization, presumably continuing the important role of class distinctions characteristic of the motherland, implicitly perceived indigenous populations, and Africans in particular, as inferior (BBC World Service 2001–2002). The British Empire practiced a policy which Lord Lugard later labelled 'indirect rule', admitting local rulers and their offspring to English educational institutions and inviting them to exert and share power in the interest of the colonizers (Louis 2007: 21–22). This had important consequences for the dissemination of languages as well: while French was deliberately taught and disseminated, access to English was granted only to an elite stratum of prospective co-administrators and withheld from the masses (Brutt-Griffler 2002: 39–57, 86–105).

In fact, the British were latecomers in the colonial race, but they turned out to be considerably more successful than all others, a fact which clearly is one of the main reasons, together with America's economic dominance, for today's globally leading role of English (Belich 2009: 27). Cabot's voyages of the late fifteenth century constituted a prelude (Winks 2007: 50), but the British displayed a 'relative tardiness ... in making the switch from exploration to exploitation' (Canny 2001: 3). Serious expansionist activity started no earlier than 1600. A 'First Empire', consisting of the large-scale North American settlement colonies and commercially driven activities and possessions in the Caribbean, gave way to a 'Second Empire' in Asia, Australasia and Africa after 1783, and the ultimate loss of the North American colonies (Winks 2007: 43–72).

In its early phase, British imperialism was largely driven by economic impulses and commercial interests (Cain and Hopkins 2001: 34, 61), and its agents were entrepreneurial private trading companies like the East India Company, which received its Royal Charter on the last day of 1600. However, the level of state involvement was remarkably low until at least the late seventeenth century (Canny 2001: xi–xii). This situation remained effective for almost two centuries, during which time the Empire was 'not a structure of global hegemony' but rather a 'far-flung conglomerate' of colonies, protectorates, condominiums, mandates, treaty-ports, etc. (Darwin 2009: 1). It was comparatively late, around the 1840s, that the state and Crown took over colonial authority. Consequently historians have argued that the British impact on many African and Asian colonies remained rather superficial, since the actual periods of full colonial dominance were comparatively short:

in much of Asia and Africa substantive European empire arrived very late and did not last very long. The British did not comprehensively dominate India until the suppression of the 'Mutiny' in 1859, and they were gone 90 years later. ... For many Asians and Africans, real European empire lasted about 50 years.

(Belich 2009: 22–23)

This plainly political assessment overstates the case; it is counterbalanced by the much longer period of cultural influence and contact, but clearly there is a need to carefully weigh the intensity of British impact in any given context.

Large-scale settler movements, beginning in the seventeenth century and with another strong wave mainly throughout the nineteenth century, relocated English as the main first language to as many as three continents (North America and the Caribbean, Australasia and small parts of Africa). A ‘large surplus of manpower (the product of birth-rate and prevailing social conditions) fuelled Britain’s “demographic imperialism”, the human capacity to stock the settlement colonies and maintain their British complexion’ (Darwin 2009: 9). Belich (2009), in a very thorough historical study, actually talks of a ‘Settler Explosion’, caused by a multitude of factors including the growth of mercantile capitalism, the impact of Protestantism enhancing literacy, improved maritime technology and transportation networks, a desire for new consumer goods such as tea and sugar, population growth (and a decline of mortality rates), the role of financial institutions such as banking and insurance, and the consequences of the scientific and industrial revolutions (cf. 10–11, 51–52, 107).

Degrees of infiltration and intensity varied, but ultimately British colonial impact and the British Empire effectively spanned the globe, as can be seen in Figure 3.1, which shows the regions which were affected by it at one time or another.

Early in the twentieth century, various processes began to trigger a desire for independence in many colonies, and a process of decolonization set in with India’s release into independence in 1947. Military defeats during World War Two such as the fall of Singapore and the conquest of Burma in 1942 essentially caused what amounted to almost a collapse of an imperial system which was possibly overstretched, and which never fully recovered: ‘The post-war empire was a pale shadow of its former self’ (Darwin 2009: 476). There are competing interpretations as to why Britain gave in to demands for independence so quickly and ceded authority to young independent states. One explanation sees this as an altruistic move, viewing the voluntary and peaceful transition as a recognition of the competence of local institutions to manage their own affairs. Another is critical, and perhaps more realistic, regarding old-style colonialism as superfluous in times of big business growth: ‘Empire had become an irrelevant burden, an obstacle to the rational allocation of Britain’s resources’ (Darwin 2007: 547). However, this did not entail a complete release. To the contrary, post-war British governments (first Labour and then Conservative) pursued a relatively liberal and pragmatic policy which recognized the potential future importance of the ‘tropical’ colonies, to be tied to the centre by the construct of the ‘Commonwealth’ for good (Darwin 2009: 558–579). Hence, after the colonial years of ‘shoe-string budgets and skeletal government’ (558) the goal of maintaining influence and generating allegiance in former colonies resulted in an increased support for the dissemination of British institutions and traces: ‘to survive as a world power at all, the British were forced into much heavier intervention in their tropical empire, with its skeletal states’ (654). This included the spread of the English language. Hence, unlike in the colonial days proper, in the mid-twentieth century decolonization period mass schooling of English for local populations came to be considered a worthwhile goal and gained support, and English became more accessible, and clearly also more desirable, to many less affluent Asians and Africans.

The process of decolonization mostly did not weaken English, perhaps surprisingly. Rather than removing English from the local linguistic scene, as a sign of former oppression and foreign dominance, in very many young postcolonial nations its role even became strengthened – very often because the newly independent states tended to be ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous, with borders once drawn by European politicians ignorant of local distinctions. Establishing English as an ethnically neutral tool for internal political and social functions avoided the dangerous strategy of promoting and privileging only one or some of the indigenous languages at the expense of others, which would have created serious

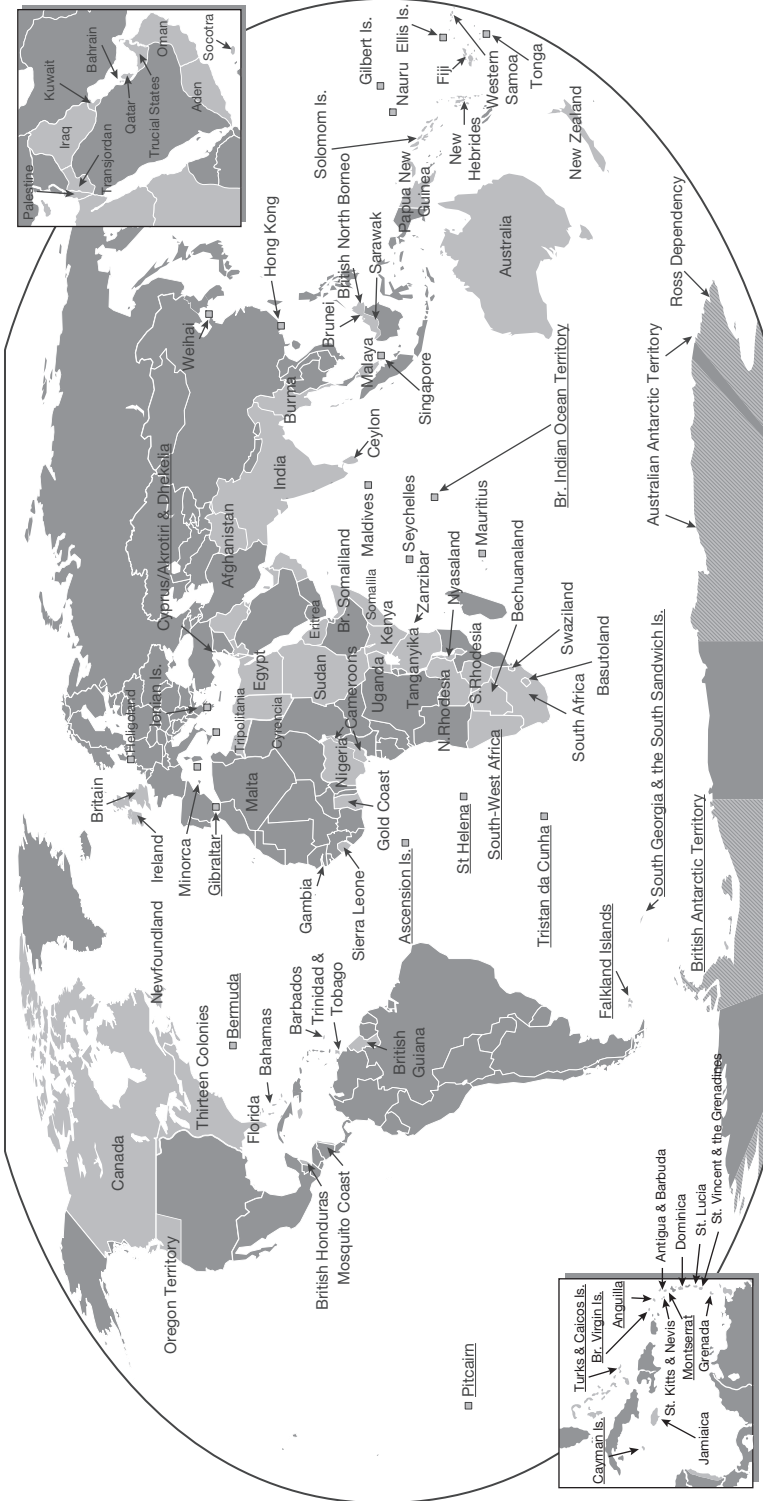


Figure 3.1 The British Empire: territories that were at one time or another part of it

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_British\\_Empire.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_British_Empire.png) (The Red Hat of Pat Ferrick [public domain] via Wikimedia Commons), accessed 28 January 2016.

social tensions – and so in very many countries English has remained in a very prominent role, often as the main language of formal nationwide proceedings, politics, higher education and jurisdiction, etc. Strong cases in point are India, whose ‘Three-Language Formula’ failed, or Nigeria, where any steps towards elevating Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa to the status of national languages would be likely to result in ethnic riots (cf. Schneider 2007: 166–167, 206–269).

## The impact on English(es): linguistic diffusion and transformation in colonization

### *English transported: extraterritorial diffusion*

Colonists of course took their language with them, and so around the globe we now find European languages (and English especially) in use, relocated and typically transformed. Postcolonial varieties of English can be native tongues of the majority of a population and the main language of a country (as in the United States, Australia, etc.); strong second languages used widely for internal purposes, as in many parts of Africa (e.g. Kenya, Ghana) and Asia (e.g. The Philippines, India); or a foreign language still perceived as important and used often (e.g. Tanzania, Zimbabwe); or a mixture of practically all of these (as in, for example, South Africa). The diffusion patterns and the ensuing results strongly depend on sociopolitical and sociolinguistic background conditions, such as the time, place and linguistic ecology of the dissemination process in any given case, and the social status, roles and linguistic competences of the agents involved in various functions. While this can be seen as a bewildering set of varying conditions, there are also substantial similarities, and many contexts have been identified as belonging to similar types or sharing developmental processes and resulting properties.

Mufwene (2001:8–9, 204–209) suggests a typology of three main colonization contexts which focuses on linguistic consequences and has thus become influential in World Englishes research, even if his descriptions remain rather brief and fuzzy in some respects. Mufwene’s colonization types correspond to what historians have identified as the major forms of European expansion: ‘*networks*, the establishment of ongoing systems of long-range interaction, usually for trade; *empire*, the control of other peoples, usually through conquest; and *settlement*, the reproduction of one’s own society through long-range migration’ (Belich 2009: 21; original emphasis). Firstly, around trading forts and along commercial and navigational routes ‘trade colonies’ were established (e.g. in West Africa), serving the exchange of goods. Language contact in these contexts remained thematically limited and sporadic, so as a result the emergence of trade jargons and pidgins or highly restricted forms of bilingualism were often found. Secondly, ‘exploitation colonies’, e.g. in India, typically constituted a later stage which grew out of trading activities, when the colonizing nation attained some sort of political authority, and her representatives stayed there for extended periods of time (some for good). In line with Britain’s distanced attitudes and ‘indirect rule’ policy, their lifestyles often remained fairly segregated from the indigenous populations, and power structures were stratified. It is noteworthy that not only standard English was transported to the colonies, since many of the agents coming from the mother country were speakers of nonstandard dialects, so informal speech contributed significantly to local linguistic ecologies. Local elites and leaders participated in the exertion of political power in the interests of the colonizers, and were granted access to English, predominantly in scholastic contexts. The adoption and appropriation of English by these locals, and the further dissemination of second-language acquisition in the course of time, have ultimately produced the nativized varieties of ‘New Englishes’ which we find today, e.g. in Singapore, Malaysia, Kenya and

Ghana. Thirdly, there are the ‘settlement colonies’ to which larger numbers of British emigrants moved, taking their language and dialects along. In these colonies, in North America, Australasia, parts of South Africa, and elsewhere, European settlers soon constituted a majority and interacted primarily amongst themselves, so language contact with indigenous speakers and its effects remained restricted largely to lexical borrowings, constrained by the demographic disproportions. Finally, some colonies saw an extensive need for manual agricultural labour, for example for sugar production in the Caribbean, and met this need by the importation of immigrant labourers, as slaves or indentured servants. These ‘plantation colonies’, considered a subtype of settlement colonies by Mufwene (2001), frequently produced intensive language contact and ultimately newly-born languages, creoles, on large and segregated plantations.

The most significant quantitative expansion occurred in settler colonies around the nineteenth century; as Belich (2009: 4) puts it, ‘English-speakers grew over sixteenfold in 1790–1930, from around 12 million to around 200 million ... it was the remarkable explosion of the nineteenth century that put the Anglophones on top of the world’. In contrast, in Britain’s ‘tropical’ colonies, mainly in Asia and, later, in Africa, the presence of British native speakers was lighter, always constituting a minority. Still, for a long time it was substantial and influential even in those areas. Striking numbers of Britons migrated overseas to support and enact colonial rule (Bickers 2010a) – many of them as ‘service sojourners’ intending to return home after having done their duty, but many others also for long periods of time or for good. It is important to note that not only high-ranking colonial and military officers moved to the colonies, transplanting educated standard language forms, but also huge numbers of lower-class people, ‘non-officials and unofficials, traders, planters, men and women in the professions, and in service trades, state functionaries at all levels – police, public works and health, customs, merchant marine, railways’ (Bickers 2010b: 1), who brought all kinds of nonstandard dialects with them.

From a linguistic perspective, the decisive point is that in all types of colonies language contact took place, and the products of these processes constitute today’s new varieties of English around the globe. While conditions and their outcomes vary to some extent from one type and context to another, it has also been argued, notably in the Dynamic Model of Postcolonial Englishes (Schneider 2007), that fundamental similarities and shared processes and products can also be identified (see below). One fundamental principle of language contact theory (Thomason 2001; Winford 2003) is that there is a direct correlation between the intensity of contact between peoples speaking different languages (defined by demographic proportions, power hierarchies, and the regularity of interactions) and the amount and kind of linguistic effects produced. Light, only occasional (but persistent) contact typically produces little more than lexical borrowing. Intermediate contact levels, including wide-ranging second-language acquisition, result in stronger transfer effects, also on the levels of phonology and, less commonly, morphology and syntax. And finally, very intense contact (e.g. when a group of people is forced to switch to a foreign language completely) produces new and mixed languages, such as creoles.

### *Settlers varieties: light contact and new dialect formation*

Beginning with the seventeenth-century movements to North America, and continuing with late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century migration strands to Australia, New Zealand and Africa (and also to smaller locations), British emigrants, often called ‘settlers’, moved to faraway lands in large numbers, to populate the colonies and mostly to stay for good.



They came in large numbers, so that in their new homelands they soon constituted by far the majority population, with indigenous peoples who had been there before suffering badly from being displaced, often after warfare, or decimated by diseases (Belich 2009: 180–181). Native tribes in North America were seriously reduced in numbers or eradicated completely, and only some of them have retained their ethnic vitality. Aboriginals in Australia were marginalized as a consequence of the legal ‘terra nullius’ fiction, which assumed the land to have been uninhabited before the settlers’ arrival (Pennycook 1998: 10). The Maoris of New Zealand, while formally ceding their lands in the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840, lost their power and positions in wars of the 1860s (even if today they and their language are granted official recognition and respect to a greater extent than elsewhere). In all these cases, the quantitative and social disproportion of a minority of indigenous peoples as against huge settler numbers who were also dominant militarily produced rather distanced, light contact and caused mostly loan words from local languages to be taken over into local dialects of English. The varieties found in these former colonies today are not only distinct because of these words, however – they are products of unique mixtures of input varieties from various regions and walks of life in Britain itself, outcomes of processes known as *koinéization* (the emergence of a compromise dialect) and ‘new dialect formation’ in linguistics.

In World Englishes research, these young settler first-language varieties and their settings have been called ‘English as a Native Language’ (ENL) or, following the model established by Kachru (1992), ‘Inner Circle’ varieties. The focus of World Englishes as a research area has been more strongly on the ‘ESL’ or ‘Outer Circle’ varieties discussed in the next section, because of their innovative character, status and properties, but historically the role of the settler nations in producing today’s dominance of English globally cannot be underestimated, as the historian Belich argues (2009). ‘It was settlement, not empire, that had the spread and staying power in the history of European expansion’ (p. 23). Emigrant numbers were significant: ‘in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, about half a million people emigrated from the British Isles. In the long nineteenth century, 1815–1924, the number rocketed to 25 million. Around 18 or 19 million of these British and Irish left permanently’ (p. 126). Possible causes included population growth, poverty and a reduced need for an agricultural workforce, but also the attractions of economic opportunities overseas, as well as a significant change of attitude after about 1815, when emigration was no longer viewed as ‘compulsory and disreputable, the fate of convicts and [hopeless] people’ (p. 145) but rather also as an attractive opportunity, ‘an act of hope’ (p. 556). Belich (2009) claims that the ultimate success of the settlement colonies rested on a later stage of ‘recolonization’, the strong retention of an economic and cultural connection of the new expansionist areas with the erstwhile homeland, strengthening both in this mutual integration.

The most important outcome of these processes is the establishment of the United States as the late twentieth century world’s superpower, and of American English as the globally predominant reference variety of English, spoken by more people than all the other native varieties put together. Australian English is following suit in adopting the role of a regional epicentre, having moved toward cultural and linguistic norms of their own roughly since the 1970s (Schneider 2007: 122–125; cf. Darwin 2009: 502–521; Belich 2009: 261–278, 356–368, 462).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, New Zealand, after a ‘staunch’ period of ‘Britonism, intensifying from the 1880s and persisting until the 1960s’ (Belich 2009: 464), has now come to emphasize her cultural and linguistic independence, including the recognition of Maori as a co-official language and an adoption of many more Maori words than indigenous words in the other ENL varieties.

The dialects of these settler nations are all products of new dialect formation (cf. Trudgill 1986, 2004), with mainstream American English having been strongly influenced by

seventeenth-to-nineteenth century northern and Irish input and the southern hemisphere varieties sharing a largely nineteenth-century southern British base. ‘Koinéization’, the process typical of dialect contact, means that a compromise variety emerges which strengthens widely shared (and hence communicatively useful) linguistic forms and tends to lose rarely used, strongly regionalized dialect forms (which are typically not understood by speakers from other regions). Obviously the demographic proportions and relative strengths of speakers from diverse regions and the linguistic similarities and relationships between their respective input forms are decisive for the outcome of these processes. Trudgill (2004) voiced the strong (and controversial) thesis that the product of such a mixing process is ‘deterministic’: fully dependent on these input factors and hence mechanically predictable, at least in theory. The database for these claims and discussions derives strongly from evidence for the emergence of New Zealand English, which, owing to the existence of recordings with speakers born as far back as the late nineteenth century, is exceptionally well documented and researched (Gordon et al. 2004). White South African English, going back to two distinct waves of nineteenth-century settlers from Britain, in contrast, has evolved in a much more complex contact setting, and is a minority dialect (if a highly respected one) today (cf. Schneider 2007: 173–188).

In addition to these well-known and large settler varieties, British colonial expansion has also produced and (with one exception) left a few postcolonial L1 (first language) varieties which are of sociolinguistic interest because of their special, sometimes laboratory-like dialect contact settings, even if speaker numbers are comparatively small or even dwindling. These include the dialects of English found on the South Atlantic islands of Tristan da Cunha (studied by Schreier 2003) and the Falklands (Britain and Sudbury 2010), on St. Helena (Schreier 2008), in Kenya (with a British-derived settler group of a few tens of thousands of whites since the 1910s; Hoffmann 2010) and, now extinct, former Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe; Fitzmaurice 2010). Further documentation of such small-scale, mostly settler-derived ‘lesser-known’ varieties of English is available in Schreier et al. (2010) and Williams et al. (2015).

### *New Englishes: intermediate contact and structural nativization*

In so-called ‘exploitation colonies’, motivations for colonial activity and consequently demographic proportions between British representatives and the indigenous population were different. As noted above, it was originally trading companies and their agents that gained and expanded footholds across Asia, beginning with India and followed by Malaysia and others, and established trading posts and, much later, inland expansions and, mainly in Africa, plantations. They were interested in extracting goods desirable to the homeland from the colonies, for commercial profit. Only much later did the agency of colonial activity turn to state representatives and the goal come to include political authority and cultural impact for its own sake. The number of British representatives in foreign lands, in different functions and representing the whole range of social strata, varied from one period or location to another. Usually it kept growing in the course of time, and in many cases it turned out to be a substantial, if, obviously always strong minority. It consisted of both temporary sojourners and long-term residents; many British were born in the colonies and identified with colonial service and adventurous experiences there much more than with a quiet residence in Britain. Some locations, like Singapore’s Cricket or Recreation Clubs or Malaysia’s ‘Hill Stations’, offered close-to-perfect copies of English architecture and institutions, to make the expatriates feel ‘at home’.

Language contact in these settings was quite different from that in settler colonies, with English supplementing indigenous languages as an add-on tool associated with economic and

political power, and also increasingly rooted in administrative structures such as jurisdiction or education. A few Englishmen studied local languages. Predominantly, however, it was the indigenous population who became bilingual and acquired (some) English (particularly those of higher social status, who were admitted to English schools). The level of contact between English and local languages was thus much more intense, and learners tended to transfer words, sounds and patterns from their native tongues into their way of using English. There was a good chance for these transfer phenomena to become regular linguistic habits of the second-language speakers, and some of these features, notably loan words, were also picked up by long-term British residents. In a process of ‘structural nativization’, new and increasingly firm dialects of English evolved, as products of this intermediate level of language contact, often (though somewhat controversially) called ‘New Englishes’. With English playing strong internal roles, the countries in question have come to be classified as ESL or ‘Outer Circle’ (Kachru 1992), emphasizing their increasingly independent, norm-developing status.

These frameworks, while useful, have been found to be partly too simplistic (considering South Africa, for instance, where English is both second and native language for many) and too static given complex and rapidly changing realities (as in Singapore, where English is moving from ESL to ENL status, or Tanzania, which used to be ESL but attempted to do away with English for internal functions). Consequently, a more complex, flexible and realistic framework, the ‘Dynamic Model’ of the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes described and applied most elaborately in Schneider (2007), has come to be widely accepted, discussed and used. This model argues that there are enough similarities across all colonial contexts, including the ENL ones, to posit a fundamentally uniform underlying developmental process, both socially and linguistically. Its basic idea is that in the course of time (i.e. across generations and even centuries) the forces of coexistence in the same territory have caused the relationship between colonizers and colonized to change in a predictable direction. While in the beginning both groups were distanced and largely independent of each other, long-term coexistence caused increasing amounts of interaction and mutual accommodation. Ultimately a new sense of spatially-based homogeneity in a process of nation-building emerged before and after independence, because speakers came to recognize that with the erstwhile mother country no longer serving as a reference point a new common identity and basis for life and coexistence needed to be forged. The model suggests that five consecutive, if partially overlapping stages, each with their characteristic social and linguistic properties, can be identified, namely ‘foundation’, ‘exonormative stabilization’, ‘nativization’, ‘endonormative stabilization’ and ‘differentiation’. At each of these stages, specific historical and political background conditions determine the interactants’ identity definitions (i.e. who is perceived as belonging to the same or a different group). These, in turn, are decisive for the socio-linguistic conditions of contact, use and attitudes (who talks to whom, how regularly and with which attitudes), which then translate into characteristic structural effects (such as koinéization, the borrowing of place names and sometimes pidginization first, later followed by cultural lexical borrowing, phonological innovations and, later still, grammatical transfer). This framework allows for a certain degree of fuzziness, variability and adaptability, but still, it is remarkable that the basic pattern has been found to be stable and applicable to very many different countries and contexts.

The emergence of Postcolonial Englishes, both ENL and ESL, has thus been a direct consequence of British imperialism: language contact began to affect English as used locally immediately after all moves of colonial expansion, and the systematic emergence and increasing stabilization of linguistic innovations and new varieties then trailed the historically

causative steps by a few years or decades. The seventeenth century saw the intense colonization of the eastern parts of North America and parts of the Caribbean as well as the beginnings of trade with and expansion into India, and also early stopover points set up in West Africa. Moves into what is now known as Malaysia, Cook's exploration of the Pacific, and the beginnings of the settlement of Australia followed in the later eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, settlers moved to parts of South Africa and New Zealand, Singapore was founded, and British authority was strengthened or initiated in Malaysia, Hong Kong, India, and parts of West and East Africa, followed by early-twentieth century settlements in Kenya and Rhodesia (cf. Schneider 2011: 48–51, 58). In all these countries we find distinctive new varieties of English today, with their seeds in colonization (even if affected by substantial modifications and expansions thereafter).

### *English-based pidgins and creoles: heavy contact and restructuring*

Situations of 'heavy contact' include those in which speakers are forced to continuously use and adopt a language which is not their own originally (and of which they often have insufficient input and knowledge). In practice, this has happened most regularly in plantation colonies, where a large number of labourers or field hands were brought together from a wide range of cultural, regional and linguistic backgrounds and had to interact with each other, while there were only comparatively few speakers of the region's target variety, in this case English, around. In the majority of instances such situations were caused by slavery; as Belich (2009: 26) explains it, 'African slaves comprised about three quarters of the eight million migrants to the Americas before 1800, though high death rates and low birth rates meant that they did not generate a proportionate number of descendants.' The number of Europeans around on plantations tended to be comparatively low, so newly arrived slaves received limited, mostly lexical input from the target language, and kept employing grammatical patterns and principles entrenched in them from their native tongues. The result typically was creolization, widely considered the birth of new languages. Creole languages are commonly described as being lexically based upon the target ('superstrate' or 'lexifier') language but grammatically characterized by heavy restructuring and pattern transfer from 'substrate' languages which otherwise could not be used in the new speech community any longer (for a comprehensive survey of the discipline and descriptions of creoles, see Velupillai 2015). The growth of creoles proceeds through stages of incomplete, natural second-language acquisition, possibly involving pidginization in between, with innovations and restructured features being continuously strengthened because new arrivals, mostly slaves, to a plantation or community picked up their new speech skills and approximated linguistically to older residents, whose speech in turn was also only an approximation and contact-induced restructuring of the superstrate. Early creolist theory assumed that creolization occurs only when children acquire their parent generation's pidgin as a mother tongue, but more recently it has been understood that in such extreme contexts adults also restructure their performance patterns substantially, thus producing creoles.

English-based creole languages are thus also products of British colonial expansion, though under much more constrained circumstances. Regionally, such languages are found almost exclusively in tropical zones: in many parts of the Caribbean, between Jamaica and Suriname; across West Africa (most importantly in Nigeria), and in many states of the South-West Pacific region, where some of these languages, conventionally called pidgins there, have attained the status of official state languages (such as Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea, Bislama in Vanuatu, and Pijin in the Solomon Islands). Traditionally, pidgins and creoles have

been dealt with as a language type of their own, independently from other contact varieties, but it is becoming increasingly clear that they come in various degrees of ‘depth’ and as products of extended language contact, just as do the ESL Englishes in Asia and Africa. Basic processes are the same; differences are a matter of degree, of contact intensity, and of the nature and amount of mutual influences, transfer and restructuring (cf. Schneider 2007: 60–64, 219–238; Siegel 2008).

## Key areas of discussion

### *Linguistic outcomes: processes and structures*

Traditionally, historical linguistics, rooted in nineteenth-century nationalism, has tended to emphasize the ‘purity’ of English and to downplay the ‘contaminating’ effect of other languages. For example, any possible Celtic influence on early English was considered ‘almost negligible’ (Baugh and Cable 1951: 76), a view no longer held in modern scholarship (cf. Filppula et al. 2008). In contrast, the importance, and even ubiquity, of language contact has been recognized generally and studied intensively for the last few decades. The basic cline of contact effects, from lexical loans in occasional encounters via some phonological and structural transfer in second-language acquisition (SLA) to massive restructuring in intense contact settings, is largely uncontroversial. The status of the outcomes of strong contact, and of creoles as independent languages or not, is disputed, however. Early creolist theory claimed creoles to be new, independent languages; Thomason and Kaufman (1988), in a classic book, even argued that they are genetically totally unrelated to their lexifier languages. This is counterintuitive, however, given the high amount of similarities – for example, Schneider (2011: 102–106) shows how a Jamaican Creole text, despite many distinct features, remains basically comprehensible to English speakers. Mufwene (2001) holds that creoles are dialects of their lexifier languages and not independent languages, though many creolists are not ready to accept this position.

ESL ‘New Englishes’ stand in between, being also products of language contact – more so than ENL settler varieties amongst the ‘World Englishes’, less so than creoles; and one question is where to draw a line. Clearly they share properties with creoles (and consequently, Schneider (2007) also includes Jamaican and Barbadian speech forms in a book on Postcolonial Englishes). At the lower end of the cline, it has been questioned (e.g. by Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008) whether it is justified to lump L1 settler dialects together with ESL Outer Circle varieties under a single overarching framework, as the Dynamic Model explicitly does (Schneider 2007). I am convinced it is: these are important sub-types, and there are differences between both (as to the demographic proportion of British-descendant native speakers of English, the amount and nature of the indigenous-language input into the new dialect, etc.), but there are also overarching shared features; this is a question of granularity, of whether a researcher wishes to highlight the shared or the dividing properties. Ultimately, this argument is important for defining the scope of English Language Studies – which, it is argued here, has to encompass all the contact varieties referred to here as well.

In general, the ‘Dynamic Model’ has been a focal point of many discussions in World Englishes for the last decade. It has been applied to new contexts (e.g. Cyprus, Buschfeld 2013; Japan, Ike 2012; Sri Lanka, Bernaisch 2015; the Netherlands, Edwards 2016; and many others), widely discussed, mostly accepted, but also modified and questioned with respect to some details and postulates (cf. Buschfeld et al. 2014). Schneider (2014) surveys many reactions and applications, and further contributions to the assessment process have been

brought forward, both supportive and more sceptical ones. For example, Evans (2014) purports to test the model's claims concerning Hong Kong English by comparing them to historical and sociodemographic data. While his overall conclusion sounds rather critical, a closer look at his data reveals that in fact many of the basic predictions of the model are largely confirmed; it is only details of the dating of phases that appear to be in need of modification.

A controversial point concerns the role of identity in variety formation. It features prominently in the Dynamic Model (Schneider 2007: 26–28 and *passim*): as was stated above, identity-based delimitations between social groups are considered decisive for the patterns of communicative interactions and thus ultimately for the growth of group-specific dialect distinctions. In contrast, Trudgill's (2004) 'deterministic' view of new dialect formation denies that identity plays any role and suggests that the outcome of a dialect contact process can ideally be mechanically predicted, based on the nature and relative strengths of the input components. The issue was explicitly debated by several contributors in a journal issue (Trudgill et al. 2008). In my view, both claims do not really contradict each other (though I believe a fully 'deterministic' process to be too strong an assumption) because they highlight different processual stages: the mechanistic strength of input factor weights is strongest in early dialect contact, i.e. in the foundation and exonormative stabilization phases in settler contexts, while the role of identity kicks in effectively much later, notably during endonormative stabilization in ESL settings. Van Rooy (2010), weighing both alternatives, also suggests that the variability of the input deserves greater attention.

Another interface under debate is the relationship between World Englishes and 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF), the use of English as a link language by (mostly) non-native speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. ELF usage constitutes a popular and fairly new branch of English Language Studies these days (cf. Seidlhofer 2011; Schneider 2012; Pitzl and Osimk-Teasdale 2016). World Englishes and ELF usage show structural similarities, since both are indirectly products of SLA, and of intercultural interactions and often globalization. However, while World Englishes are usually conceptualized as reasonably stable varieties, ELF is not, and is viewed as an interaction type instead.

### *Social outcomes: attitudes and policies*

Not surprisingly, conflicting attitudes towards English prevail in postcolonial societies. Some linguists (e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas 2000) see it as a 'killer language', one which eradicates indigenous tongues and cultures in many countries – a position which in my view overstates the role of a language and disregards internal ethnic tensions and the impact of regional languages (such as KiSwahili in East Africa). In a similar vein, Pennycook (1998) argues that colonialism has permeated the cultures and discourses of colonial and colonized nations, with effects still visible, so that in such countries English can never be seen as a neutral vehicle of communication. These are minority views held by some academics, however. In contrast, many speakers in many countries view English as a tool promising prosperity and economic opportunities, so a process of 'transnational attraction' (Schneider 2014) keeps disseminating it even further, far beyond the social spheres with which it used to be associated (Blommaert 2010; Schneider 2016). For example, an attempt of the post-handover Hong Kong government to reduce the number of English-medium schools met with serious resistance (Schneider 2007: 139).

Quite naturally, attitudes towards 'New Englishes' vary greatly. Politicians, gatekeepers and authorities tend to view them critically, as imperfect, bastardized approximations of a 'good' or 'standard' English which speakers should strive to produce. Many speakers view

that differently, however: for many of them these young and also mixed varieties have a positive indexicality value, signalling new, intercultural orientations. The best-known and most indicative case in point is the ongoing debate about Singapore's 'Singlish' – vigorously opposed by the government in their 'Speak Good English Movement', but enthusiastically defended and used as an expression of regional identity by many Singaporeans.

In practice, nations need to decide on their language policies, and for many young nations in Asia and Africa (postcolonial or not) this implies the need to define the internal status of English. Many options and alternatives are available. The model case of fully embracing English is Singapore – a country basically run in English, moving towards first-language status for the majority of the population, and certainly with English being the uniting band for all. In a similar vein, English was selected as the 'sole working language' of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with only some member states having a British colonial background, and it was chosen as a national language even in the complete absence of such a postcolonial reason and motivation, as in Namibia. In India's 'Three-Language Formula' of the 1960s the intention was to remove English, the former colonial power's language – and this has turned out to be impracticable. Some former colonies, like Tanzania and Malaysia, have decided to replace English with new national languages – and have been struggling to implement this policy since then, with the pendulum swinging back and forth between promoting and curtailing English.

And finally, of course all of this has consequences for strategies of teaching English in many countries. Should English be implemented as early as possible, in elementary education? Many parents and politicians advocate this, but Kirkpatrick (2007) fights for elementary education in the children's native tongue. Should secondary or higher education be conducted in English? Should native speakers be hired as teachers? A growing consensus, though still a minority position, is 'no': teachers who have learned the language themselves are more aware of students' pitfalls and problems.

### **Future directions: colonial processes going postcolonial**

Today, we are confronted with a range of different 'World Englishes': new varieties in their different regional and sociopolitical contexts, with structural properties of their own, and with attitudes towards them and their roles in multilingual nations varying substantially. Globalization continues to feed this process, but it was colonialism that caused the fundamental and multiplying transformation of 'English' to 'Englishes'. The reality and presence of 'World Englishes', and Postcolonial Englishes as a major segment, constitutes an important development and topic not only for linguists, but also for social contexts around the globe. It has been argued many times that English is no longer 'owned' by the British (e.g. Kachru 1992; Widdowson 1994); it is the world language today; it comes in a multitude of varieties, and it is used in an enormously wide range of countries and contexts. Given that the English language, in any of its facets and usage conditions, is now heard and used on all continents and in so many different forms and realizations, English Language Studies as a discipline is no longer conceivable without a perspective on World Englishes. Hence, colonialism and postcolonial developments have transformed the nature of the language in fundamental ways, and for good.

Colonialism laid the foundations for this state of affairs, transmitted English to all corners of the earth and caused it to be transformed in this process. After decolonization it seamlessly found successors – forces which have continued to push, strengthen and disseminate English (see Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017), notably globalization and cyberspace. Colonialism as a historical process is over, but its effects have been transformed and are here to stay.

## Note

- 1 While writing this I notice with interest that the Melbourne tennis tournament is advertising itself as ‘The Grand Slam of Asia/Pacific’ – in my view a remarkable turn, indicative of the country’s changing self-perception and reorientation.

## Further reading

- Belich, J. (2009). *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. This is a very informative historical book on colonialism, focusing on settler colonies and offering a convincing explanation for today’s dominance of the ‘Anglo world’ and English.
- Darwin, J. (2009) *The Empire Project. The Rise and Fall of the British World–System 1830–1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Project. Similar to Belich (2009), this is an engaging historical discussion of the development of the British Empire.
- Schneider, E. W. (2007) *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. This is the classic scholarly study on Postcolonial Englishes, with an extensive theoretical section and practical applications of the Dynamic Model to many countries.
- Schneider, E. W. (2011) *English around the World. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. A textbook which offers an accessible, non-technical introduction to the globalization of English. It contains a large number of sample texts and explains their distinctive structural properties.
- Velupillai, V. (2015). *Pidgins, Creoles, and Mixed Languages: An Introduction*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins. This is the most recent, comprehensive and authoritative textbook on, and survey of, pidgins and creoles.

## Related topics

- World Englishes: disciplinary debates and future directions
- Standards in English
- Contact Englishes.

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