1 Introduction

1.1 Background and aims

The present book aims to introduce the student of English and general linguistics to the fascinating world of morphosyntactic variation that can be encountered across varieties of English spoken around the world. At the same time, it presents and interprets the instances of structural variation found in English in the context of cross-linguistic variation, as discussed in typological studies of language. The book, thus, intends to build a bridge from sociolinguistics and variation studies to language typology.

Let me illustrate my general approach using a prominent example of morphosyntactic variation. Many regional, especially spoken or vernacular, varieties of English allow multiple negation of the type shown in the examples below.

(1) a. I couldn't find hardly none on 'em. 'I could not find hardly any on them.' [East Anglia, Trudgill 2004: 151]
b. We didn't have no use for it noways. 'We had no use for it in any way.' [Appalachian English, Montgomery 2004: 258]
c. I don't want no dinner. 'I want no dinner.' [Newfoundland English, Clarke 2004: 310]
d. You've not heard of that nothing? 'You haven't heard of that?' [Irish English, Filppula 2004: 82]
e. I couldn't see no snake. 'I couldn't see a snake.' [Australian Vernacular English, Pawley 2004: 634]
f. Mi no bin toktok nating. 'I didn't talk at all.' [Bislama, Crowley 2004: 690]
g. They didn't have no shirt. 'They had no shirt.' [Australian Creoles and Aboriginal English, Malcolm 2004: 670]

In this book – remaining with the example of multiple negation for a moment – I will give you an overview of the properties and the extent of multiple negation in varieties of English. As it turns out, many traditional dialects spoken in Great Britain and North America allow multiple negation. It is also attested in various Pidgin and Creole Englishes spoken in North America, the Caribbean,

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Table 1.1 *Present tense paradigm of English verbs.*

	1	2	3
Singular	*walk*	*walk*	*walk-s*
Plural	*walk*	*walk*	*walk*

Africa, and Australia. In a preliminary way, we may characterise multiple negation as the agreement of indefinite expressions with the negative polarity of a clause. In addition, I will show that multiple negation is rather common cross-linguistically and that the function of multiple negation in varieties of English is very similar to its function in other languages. Similar examples of multiple negation can *inter alia* be found in Spanish and Russian. Many varieties of English here adopt a cross-linguistically pervasive pattern. Cross-linguistic comparison also reveals that multiple negation in varieties of English counts as an instance of 'negative concord' rather than 'double negation'. Since multiple negation is just one instance of non-standard negation, I will also provide a more general introduction to negation to facilitate the proper understanding of the non-standard phenomena.

The book will also familiarise you with morphosyntactic properties of English that are rather uncommon and exceptional from a cross-linguistic perspective. Such properties can be found both in the standard and in the non-standard varieties. A prominent example of standard English is the third person singular subject agreement marker on the finite present tense verb, as in Table 1.1, which is quite unique cross-linguistically and probably best interpreted as an historical relic.

Non-standard varieties also offer exceptional and rather surprising agreement patterns. In the north of England, for example, the verbal *-s* marker may appear on all finite verb forms – singular and plural – except when immediately preceded by a pronoun. Consider the examples in (2).

(2) a. the bird sings, the birds sings, I often sings
     b. they sing and dances

This agreement pattern is known as the Northern Subject Rule. The relevant verbal paradigm may be represented as in Table 1.2, even though it cannot capture the condition on adjacent pronouns, leading to examples like (2b). The agreement patterns found in standard and non-standard Englishes are quite exceptional and difficult to interpret from a cross-linguistic perspective.

Such examples make it clear that not all morphosyntactic properties that we find in varieties of English can readily be matched with cross-linguistic

Table 1.2 *Present tense paradigm of English verbs in areas of the Northern Subject Rule.*

	1	2	3
Singular	*sing-s*	*sing-s*	*sing-s*
Plural	*sing-s*	*sing-s*	*sing-s*

parallels. Languages and their varieties are the result of a multitude of forces, and we cannot expect that everything that we find is typical of language in general. Languages are full of historical accidents, and languages other than English, too, possess idiosyncratic properties. Nevertheless, the cross-linguistic approach adopted here will help us to separate the wheat from the chaff, as it were. Moreover, even such highly atypical phenomena as the Northern Subject Rule are interesting for the typologist, as they inform us about the scope of variation.

In the present book, we will adopt a perspective on varieties of English that takes a selection of grammatical domains as its point of departure. More precisely, it is the range of morphosyntactic phenomena in these domains that is of interest here and that will form the basis for our comparison of varieties of English. The book does not offer descriptive surveys of varieties of English understood as national entities (i.e. British English, American English, Australian English, Singapore English, Nigerian English, South African English, etc.). Such surveys can be found in Burchfield (1994), Kortmann et al. (2004), Siemund et al. (2012), and Trudgill and Hannah (2002), among others.

1.2 Structure of the book and target audience

As pointed out above, in this book we will approach varieties of English through a selection of grammatical domains and morphosyntactic phenomena, dedicating one chapter to each grammatical domain discussed. Thus, the book may also be read as a reference grammar of morphosyntactic variation in English. Each grammatical domain usually subsumes a handful of non-standard phenomena. For example, besides the phenomenon of multiple negation introduced in the previous section, the chapter on negation also includes discussions of non-standard sentential negators, negative contraction, negative tags, and categorial asymmetries under negation. It goes without saying that not all phenomena that are interesting and relevant in principle can be discussed within the covers of a book. A reasonable selection needs to be made, and I have made the selection on the basis of essentially three parameters.

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Table 1.3 *Structure of the book.*

Level	Chapter	Grammatical domain
	1.	Introduction
Noun phrase	2.	Reflexivity and reflexive marking
	3.	Pronominal gender
	4.	Pronominal case
	5.	Determiners
Verb phrase	6.	Tense marking
	7.	Aspect marking
	8.	Modal verbs
	9.	Negation
Sentence level	10.	Subject-verb agreement
	11.	Ditransitive constructions
	12.	Interrogative constructions
	13.	The formation of relative clauses
	14.	Summary and outlook

Firstly, the phenomena representing the grammatical domains need to be prominent enough, where prominence may result from their being widespread in non-standard varieties, a high degree of grammatical sophistication, or substantial scholarly attention.

Secondly, the non-standard phenomena to be discussed here need to be relevant from a cross-linguistic point of view. Such relevance may be due to pervasive cross-linguistic parallels, or, conversely, a high degree of idiosyncrasy that stretches our assumptions on the limits of variation. The phenomena of multiple negation and the Northern Subject Rule may help to illustrate these points.

Thirdly, I have tried to cull phenomena from different linguistic domains so as to provide a good overview of the structural variation found across varieties of English. Rather than just focusing on, say, pronouns and determiners, I will here offer and discuss a selection of phenomena from the noun phrase, the verb phrase, and the sentential level.

The book is structured as follows. With the exception of the introductory chapter and the concluding chapter, which follow their own formats, all remaining chapters essentially have the same structure, each discussing a grammatical domain of English that shows remarkable and theoretically challenging instances of variation. I discuss twelve grammatical domains that should supply sufficient material to fill a university course. An overview of the grammatical domains discussed in this textbook can be found in Table 1.3.

Following a brief introduction, I will provide an overview of the relevant grammatical domain in each chapter, introduce the requisite empirical facts, and briefly discuss the major theoretical problems raised. The chapters will then outline the patterns and limits of variation pertaining to this grammatical domain across varieties of English. For the purposes of this textbook, the term 'varieties of English' is mainly, though not exclusively, understood in terms of its regional dimension. The third component of each chapter is formed by a systematic comparison of variation in English with cross-linguistic variation. The currently known cross-linguistic parameters of variation in the relevant grammatical domains serve as the conceptual grid against which this comparison is performed.

I will also try to provide explanations and motivations for the non-standard phenomena in varieties of English. Accepting the somewhat simplifying dichotomy between formal and functional modes of explanation, I will mainly provide functional explanations.

Each chapter concludes with a brief summary, a list of keywords, a list of references, and suggestions for further reading. In addition, they each contain nine exercises from three levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. The exercises at the advanced level contain ideas for self-contained research projects that go beyond the scope of this book and require additional reading and empirical work.

This textbook mainly targets the graduate level, forming a basis for courses at the Master or even PhD level. It may also be suitable for advanced undergraduate courses provided that the students are part of a dedicated linguistics programme. Its organisation into fourteen chapters of which twelve address coherent grammatical domains makes it suitable for the European, the North American, and also the Asian market. It may be used in all institutions that offer terms of approximately twelve to sixteen weeks. Instructors who are under time pressure may choose to omit a few grammatical domains. Those who have ample time may include additional background reading.

1.3 Varieties of English: an overview

Even though this book focuses on a selection of morphosyntactic properties in varieties of English, we need to say something about the socio-cultural dimensions that determine and identify different varieties of English. This is necessary in order to understand and to approach varieties of English in their respective socio-cultural context.

To give an example, in terms of their socio-cultural histories, the traditional dialects of England have very little in common with Singapore English, which

is essentially a product of language contact and second language acquisition strategies. We noticed above in Section 1.1 that negative concord (multiple negation) is a prominent feature of traditional dialects of English (both in Great Britain and the United States) as well as Pidgin and Creole varieties. Interestingly enough, it is much less widespread in post-colonial varieties (the so-called 'New Englishes'). Even though post-colonial varieties exhibit substantial influence from the relevant substrate languages (e.g. Chinese, Hindi), the traditional feature of negative concord apparently plays no important role in them. It would appear reasonable, then, to look for an explanation of this difference in the distinctive socio-cultural histories of these varieties, i.e. consider language-external factors. For example, we may hypothesise that multiple negation was not a prominent feature of the dialects exported to some colonies. Alternatively, we may assume that in some territories where post-colonial varieties are spoken, the pressure exerted by the standard varieties was too high for multiple negation to survive.

The issue may also be substantially more troublesome, as varieties of English that apparently have very little in common in terms of their socio-cultural histories may manifest very similar non-standard phenomena. A good example is furnished by what is known as 'embedded inversion', i.e. the occurrence of main clause interrogative word order (subject-auxiliary inversion) in embedded clauses. This is shown in (3). A more in-depth discussion of embedded inversion will be taken up in Chapter 12 on interrogative constructions.

(3) a. [Why's that?] I don't know why's – why's they uh done away with the one. [British English, Survey of English Dialects, cited in Paulasto et al. 2011]

    b. Now you could try by experiment to try and . . . allocate them to different variables at different times and see does it work out [Irish English, *ICE*-Ireland, cited in Paulasto et al. 2011]

    c. Witness can you tell the court what colour were your jerseys? [Singapore English, *ICE*-Singapore, cited in Paulasto et al. 2011]

    d. Now can you tell me what is short period? [Indian English, *ICE*-India, cited in Paulasto et al. 2011]

The above examples make clear that embedded inversion can be found in traditional English dialects (3a) and the historical contact variety of Irish English (3b), as well as the post-colonial Englishes of India and Singapore (3c, d). This is unexpected, as these varieties otherwise do not exhibit overlapping non-standard features. For shared phenomena such as embedded inversion, the literature on varieties of English gives us the labels 'vernacular universals' (Chambers 2004) and 'angloversals' (Mair 2003). The idea behind these labels is that vernacular speech and language characterised by second language acquisition processes may give rise to similar surface phenomena. Even though these notions are quite appealing, they carry the risk of oversimplification, as

such angloversals may have different distributions, functions, and origins in each variety (Davydova et al. 2011). We will come back to these problems in Section 1.4.3, when discussing linguistic universals.

1.3.1   Classifying varieties of English

Varieties of English can be classified along several dimensions. The listing below contains the dimensions that are relevant for the present book. It is not exhaustive, and additional dimensions may easily be identified.

- region understood as national entities
- region understood as dialect areas
- historical expansion
- language contact
- language shift
- mode of language acquisition (first, second, third language acquisition)

For example, the distinction between written and spoken varieties is not addressed, as the data discussed here mainly comes from the spoken register. In a similar way, it is not necessary to distinguish between formal and informal (colloquial, vernacular) language, since we mainly deal with vernacular varieties. Moreover, sociolinguistic variables such as age or gender are largely ignored. The dimensions that do play a role for our purposes are region, language contact (resulting from historical expansion), and language acquisition processes.

1.3.2   National entities and dialect areas

Political borders are convenient constructs to identify regional varieties of English, as they are clearly identifiable and relatively stable. They allow us to distinguish British English (UK), American English (US), Canadian English, Australian English, New Zealand English, South African English, Nigerian English, Singapore English, Malaysian English, Indonesian English, i.e. the varieties of the inner and outer circle in the sense of Kachru (1988). Some of these political constructs are very young, even though English has a much longer history in the relevant territories.

We also find political boundaries below the national level, namely states, counties, cities, and similar constructs. They allow us to identify Somerset English, Scottish English, Ulster English, Texan English, Toronto English, Glasgow English, and so on and so forth. Such political classifications will frequently be made use of in the present book when relating non-standard phenomena and examples to specific regions.

Dialect areas, i.e. regions where specific linguistic systems are used within certain political entities, are more difficult to identify, as such decisions are

typically based on linguistic features and not political argumentation. Linguistic features may be unstable, and not all speakers of a dialect area need share all representative features. The inclusion of dialect areas gives us varieties such as Appalachian English, Northern British English, Southern American English, Tyneside English, etc. Frequently, dialect areas overlap or are co-extensive with political boundaries below the national level.

1.3.3   Historical expansion

Without doubt, the development of the English language has been a success story. Starting from modest beginnings as a bunch of dialects spoken along the North Sea littoral, it turned into a global language within approximately 1,500 years. English exists in at least two standard varieties and numerous non-standard varieties. Over 400 million native speakers use it as their first language. An additional 500 million speakers can be assumed to use it as a second or foreign language. English enjoys the status of official or co-official language in many countries (Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Ghana, Jamaica, Liberia . . . Zimbabwe). According to Crystal (1988: 10), 'British English is now, numerically speaking, a minority dialect, compared with American, or even Indian, English.'

English was created when the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes arrived in the British Isles in the fifth century AD. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives us the year 449, which appears astonishingly precise. Starting from the eastern and southern coast, they expanded to the north and to the west. Even Ireland saw English-speaking people as early as the twelfth century. The second big wave of historical expansion went to North America and the Caribbean, beginning in the sixteenth century and eventually resulting in the creation of two big English-speaking countries (i.e. the United States and Canada). A third wave can be tied to the boom years of the British Empire, when English-speaking people penetrated nearly every corner of the world, however remote. The Empire expanded, creating colonies in West, East, and South Africa, India, Australia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. Permanent settlements developed *inter alia* in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. The British Empire imported many valuable goods from these colonies. Among its top-selling products to the colonies was the English language.

To be sure, the fact that the English language has been a great success also means that other languages suffered, as it replaced many of the indigenous languages spoken in the territories to which English was exported. The Celtic languages of the British Isles nearly became extinct and have survived only due to dedicated affirmative action. Many of the languages spoken by the autochthonous populations in North America and Australia have been lost.

Many of the surviving languages are only spoken by a very few people and are bound to become extinct.

Looking at varieties of English in terms of their historical expansions yields the typology of varieties shown in the listing below. It is based on Burchfield (1994) and Algeo (2001), but it is also largely compatible with Kachru's (1988) circle model that distinguishes inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle varieties (even though expanding circle varieties do not play a role here):

  i. English in England
 ii. English in the originally Celtic-speaking lands (Scotland, Ireland, Wales)
iii. the English of North America
 iv. the 'settler' Englishes of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa
  v. the Englishes (largely non-native) of South and Southeast Asia
 vi. the Creole Englishes of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

The Creole Englishes as well as the non-native Englishes of South and Southeast Asia (the so-called 'post-colonial Englishes') have a special status in this typology, as, besides processes of historical expansion, these Englishes were heavily shaped by processes of language contact and language shift, to which we will turn in the next section.

1.3.4   *Language contact and language shift*

English has always been a contact language, as our preceding remarks on its historical development have shown. It is perhaps the standardisation processes that set in with the advent of the Early Modern English period that cloud this fact and make us perceive English as a homogenous construct. In addition, the contact situation shifted away from the British mainland to other parts of the world.

In view of these historical facts, it would appear adequate to make language contact the primary prism for the analysis of varieties of English. This approach has attracted substantial scholarly attention over the past decade, as publications such as Filppula et al. (2009) attest. Peter Trudgill, in a number of recent publications (2009, 2011), even argues for a more general correlation between social structure, i.e. high-contact communities versus low-contact or isolated communities, and the type of language that these communities speak. As high-contact communities may plausibly be expected to be exposed to substantial levels of second language learning, the relevant contact languages may over time be developing into more analytic types. On that view, the appearance of highly fusional or even polysynthetic languages presupposes communities that lived in isolation for extensive periods of time.

The varieties of English that were probably exposed to the highest degree of language contact are English-based Pidgins and Creoles. As a matter of fact,

Pidgin and Creole languages are defined in terms of language contact. The inclusion of Pidgin and Creole languages into the set of varieties of English is not uncontroversial, as these are special languages developing in extreme social constellations. Be that as it may, I here follow Winford (2005, 2008), who holds that the processes of contact-induced change producing English-based Pidgin and Creole languages are similar to those found in other contact Englishes.

There are also less extreme cases, which are no less interesting. All so-called 'New Englishes' or post-colonial varieties involve second language acquisition or learning and are as such contact varieties, since English in these cases is in contact with the respective indigenous languages (Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Malay, Chinese, Zulu, Xhosa, etc.). A special position in the context of contact varieties is taken up by what has come to be known as 'shift varieties', i.e. varieties of English that emerged through a population shifting from their first language to English for reasons of colonial pressure, language planning, or simply prestige. Varieties of English that belong in this group are Irish English, Welsh English, and partially Scottish English (the so-called 'Celtic Englishes'), but also Singapore English, which is emerging through substantial language shift of speakers of Chinese, Malay, and other languages to English.

Taking up the contact perspective also leads to a fundamental contrast between those varieties of English that are learnt as first languages (first language, or L1, varieties) and those that are primarily learnt as second languages (second language, or L2, varieties). It opposes the traditional varieties spoken in the United Kingdom, North America, Australia, and New Zealand to the New Englishes found in India, Pakistan, South Africa, Singapore, Nigeria, and comparable territories where English enjoys the status of an official language, but is learnt and used as a second language by the majority of speakers. One problem of this approach is that speaker populations are not uniform with respect to the distinction between first and second language acquisition and that in a society like, for example, that of Singapore both types of speaker live side by side. Pidgin and Creole varieties of English are also difficult to classify in such a scheme.

For that reason, Schneider (2003, 2007) offers a finer-grained typology of post-colonial Englishes, i.e. those varieties strongly influenced by language contact and L2 acquisition processes, distinguishing five phases in their development: Foundation (phase 1), Exonormative Stabilisation (phase 2), Nativisation (phase 3), Endonormative Stabilisation (phase 4), and Differentiation (phase 5).

1.4   Sociolinguistics and functional typology

Earlier in this chapter, I wrote that the present book aims to build a bridge from sociolinguistic research into functional typology. Both disciplines are