

## World Englishes and Culture Wars

Written from a non-Western perspective, this book exposes the inadequacy of oppositions such as *native* vs. *nonnative* Englishes and *English* vs. *New Englishes*. It explains why the label “World Englishes” captures both what the different Englishes share and how they differ from each other. It also criticizes the kinds of power asymmetries that have evolved among the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles of English, while showing the extent to which the Outer Circle has enriched their common language and made it suitable for both its heritage and nonheritage users. The narrative is grounded in a wealth of historical knowledge, especially that of the colonization of the Outer Circle. Readers are invited to compare the spread and differentiation of English with those of Latin, which evolved into the Romance languages. This comparison may leave the reader asking: Could English break up into Anglian languages?

BRAJ B. KACHRU spent most of his career at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, serving also as Head of the Department of Linguistics (1968–1979), Director of the Division of English as an International Language (1985–1991), and Director of the University’s Center for Advanced Study (June 1996–January 2000). He became the Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 1992 and the Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fund Visiting Professor at Hong Kong University in 1998. He cofounded the International Association of World Englishes and the journal *World Englishes*. He coauthored and coedited more than a dozen books on World Englishes and Kashmiri.

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Braj B. Kachru

*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*



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## Foreword

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The Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact (CALC) series was set up to publish outstanding monographs on language contact, especially by authors who approach their specific subject matter from a diachronic or developmental perspective. Our goal is to integrate the ever-growing scholarship on language diversification (including the development of creoles, pidgins, and indigenized varieties of colonial European languages), bilingual language development, code-switching, and language endangerment. We hope to provide a select forum to scholars who contribute insightfully to understanding language evolution from an interdisciplinary perspective. We favor approaches that highlight the role of ecology and draw inspiration both from the authors' own fields of specialization and from related research areas in linguistics or other disciplines. Eclecticism is one of our mottoes, as we endeavor to comprehend the complexity of evolutionary processes associated with contact.

We are proud to add to our list Braj B. Kachru's *World Englishes and Culture Wars*, which sums up, from both a historical and a critical perspective, the scholarship of over the past half-century on the spread of English around the world, its encounters with diverse languages and integration into new cultures, its indigenization and speciation in the process, as well as issues that arise from this particular evolution regarding emergent norms and of course also regarding the ownership of the language. For many people, especially in the Outer Circle, English is now part of their linguascape, and it seems odd that people in the Inner Circle want to keep dictating how this language, now shared by people evolving in different places and producing and practicing diverse cultures, must be spoken and written, and, more specifically, which grammar must be followed. Kachru rightfully compares this differential geographical and demographic expansion of English to that of Latin during the Roman Empire and after the collapse of the latter in the Western Empire.

The comparison highlights both similarities and differences. On the one hand, unlike Latin, English has expanded all over the world in the span of four centuries, since England engaged in the colonial venture in the early



seventeenth century. However, so far, with the exception of English creoles and pidgins, most of its outgrowths, the new emergent national, regional, and ethnic varieties, are still called English. They are thus considered to be the same language. Is it just a matter of time before they evolve socially into, or are stipulated to be, separate languages? Should we wait until they are no longer mutually intelligible? Is this the (only) reason why we seldom refer to the Romance languages as neo-Latin varieties? Are the new English varieties all mutually intelligible? If so, to what extent?

On the other hand, like that of Latin, the speciation of English is evident and still in process. Whether or not one considers a particular new variety as more divergent than another depends in part on what the *terminus a quo* is: a scholastic variety evolving into a vernacular, as in the case of “indigenized Englishes” of the Outer Circle; a scholastic variety, with (significant) substrate influence, being used as an international lingua franca but without having evolved a national or regional norm yet, as in the Expanding Circle; a vernacular that has simply indigenized in the new ecology of its practice (Mufwene 2009), as in the case of “native Englishes” of the Inner Circle; or a vernacular transmitted naturalistically through a rapid succession of “approximations of approximations” produced by nonheritage speakers in exogenous plantation settings or indigenous trade settings, as in the case of, respectively, creoles and pidgins (Chaudenson 2001, Mufwene 2001).

Kachru does not discuss English creoles and pidgins, whose history may be considered closer to that of the Romance languages (Mufwene 2005, 2008), perhaps because they have typically been disenfranchised in linguistics as not being English anymore, despite the speech continua that, since DeCamp (1971), have been identified in the territories in which they are spoken (e.g., Bickerton 1973, Escure 1981, Rickford 1987, Winford 1988). It is indeed from creolistics, including the study of the origins of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), that sociolinguistics has borrowed the distinction between *basilect*, *mesolect*, and *acrolect*, which Kachru also discusses in passing, under the label of *cline*, in *World Englishes and Culture Wars*. Assuming incorrectly that AAVE had evolved from a Gullah-like creole ancestor, Stewart (1965) invoked this lectal variation to demonstrate the putative decreolization mechanism he needed to prove his position (see discussions in, e.g., Mufwene 2000, 2014, 2015a). The debate remains open on whether English creoles (often reduced, for convenience, to their basilects) are not new nonstandard dialects of English that have been disenfranchised simply because the lexifier was appropriated and restructured primarily by populations of non-European descent (Mufwene 2001). After all, they were lexified by nonstandard varieties of European languages (Chaudenson 2001). At a time when there were already indigenous native speakers of English (albeit a small minority in postcolonial elite families) in

Africa and Asia, the characterization of their Englishes as “nonnative” would not have been too easily accepted if the race of the speakers were not a factor.

I accept an anticipated criticism of some readers, to whom Kachru appears still to assume part of this legacy, as much as he actually fights it in *World Englishes and Culture Wars*. He does not seem to be sure whether Caribbean English varieties fit in the Inner or the Outer Circle. Caribbean Englishes are the only vernaculars that most of their speakers have grown up with, just as North American, Australian, and New Zealand Englishes are for their respective speakers. The fact that they coexist with creoles, in relation to which they have been identified as acrolectal, should not matter. The connection of Caribbean Englishes to the local creole basilects is actually comparable to that of the educated/standard varieties to the most nonstandard varieties; and in both cases a continuum obtains between the acrolectal and basilectal varieties. From an ethnographic perspective, Caribbean Englishes are unlike the “indigenized Englishes” of Africa and Asia, as the majority of speakers of the latter use them only or primarily as lingua francas, regardless of the fact that, as correctly noted by Kachru, the relevant interactions are primarily intranational. And Kachru is also correct in underscoring the fact that this primarily intra-national communication, as also in the case of the Inner Circle, shapes the emergence of divergent local/national norms. It is not evident that Caribbean Englishes bear as much influence from African substrate languages as is usually claimed about the corresponding creoles and can also be claimed about indigenized Englishes. So, the race of their speakers set aside, there should be no doubt about the membership of these Englishes in the Inner Circle.

Mutual intelligibility with varieties of the Inner Circle is hard to assess, especially when “native” varieties such as the Cockney in the United Kingdom, the Ocracoke and Newfoundland brogues (in the United States and Canada, respectively), and Australian nonstandard English are introduced into the debate. One is reminded of the greater interest AAVE has aroused among American dialectologists and sociolinguists than, say, Amish English has, because of the presumed putative genetic connection of the former with creoles and certainly with African languages, though the story is undoubtedly much more complex.

Although he often mentions AAVE, regarding its function as a marker of ethnic identity (comparable to using “indigenized Englishes” as identity markers in the belles lettres), not including creoles and pidgins in his discussion enables Kachru to capitalize, without unnecessary conceptual distractions, on why “World Englishes” (WE) is a more adequate term for discussing English globally than various other alternatives are. He wants to capture both continuity and plurality in the spread of English worldwide. He can highlight the unity of a common language and still distinguish between the three “concentric Circles of English” he posited in 1982, which one cannot do with

labels such as “New Englishes” and “Indigenized Englishes.” The latter terms appear to be mere euphemisms for the old “Non-Native Englishes.” In suggesting diversity, the term “World Englishes” also conjures up not only differences among the Englishes of the Inner Circle constructed as national varieties but also a great deal of the intranational variation the varieties exhibit geographically and socially. Thus, the variation between and within “indigenized Englishes” of the Outer Circle need not be constructed as absence of national norms and mere deviations from norms of the Inner Circle, which everybody should be expected to follow, from the point of view of many in both the Inner and the Outer Circles. (See more on norms below.) Other terms Kachru rejects explicitly in this book include “English as an international language” (because it downplays the plurality and diversity of the “English-speaking fellowship”), “English as a lingua franca” (because it overlooks the vernacular functions of English in some parts of the “fellowship”), and “English as a world language” (because it does not factor in the diverse range of functions that the language serves in the different Circles). Yes, Kachru prefers speaking of “fellowship” rather than of “community” in reference to various populations using English around the world, because they are not really united in the same way as in traditional, much smaller and culturally less diverse language or speech communities.

If there are structural and pragmatic changes that account for the divergence of the Outer and Expanding Circles’ English varieties from those of the Inner Circle, the latter themselves have likewise evolved too: those of North America, Australia, and New Zealand have diverged from their British counterparts, and the British varieties themselves have also changed since the seventeenth century. This makes it tempting to invoke degrees of divergence, structurally and pragmatically, to justify the distinction between “native” and “nonnative”/“indigenized” Englishes. Whatever yardstick may be used to assess these degrees of divergence, one cannot deny the fact that English has indigenized everywhere outside its birthplace in England (Mufwene 2009). The term “Indigenized Englishes” becomes more obviously a euphemism for “Nonnative Englishes,” as “indigenized” is not applied impartially when it is restricted to the Outer and Expanding Circles only. “New Englishes” is not a more adequate alternative, because, from a historical perspective, all the modern varieties are new, and all have been affected by contacts among traditional dialects and with other languages, as in the case of Celtic Englishes in the Inner Circle.

Kachru argues that the opposition between “native” and “nonnative Englishes” (as opposed to the legitimate one between “native” and “nonnative speakers”!) appears to be political, rooted in the colonial ideology of subjugation intended to dictate to the colonized how to behave even linguistically. Only populations of the Inner Circle, whose ancestors colonized populations outside Europe, where speakers of Englishes in the Outer Circle live or

originate, claim entitlement to stipulate the norms of English and disavow the divergent adaptations and innovations produced by users in the ecologies of the Outer Circle.

This asymmetrical-relation attitude is of course not accepted by all users of Englishes in the Outer Circle. Thus, Kachru cites authors who either complain against the tyranny of the colonial master or celebrate the domestication and cultural appropriation of the linguistic tool of the former colonizer. *Indigenization* means adapting the otherwise foreign language to serve the communicative needs of the new users in their cultural home (Mufwene 2009). It means that the nonheritage speakers of English are appropriating the colonizer's language as their own and are proud to use it in ways that reflect their cultural identities and their differences from speakers of the Inner Circle. To be sure, as noted above, English has indigenized in every new ecology in which it has been used regularly, in the Inner and Outer Circles alike. The divergence is thus manifold, as every ecology has its historical and cultural peculiarities. Kachru rightly underscores the primacy of intranational communication in the Outer Circle, especially in the postcolonial period, because it, rather than international communication, forges the patterns that the natives produce.

Assuming that evolution is subject to local ecological factors first, it is these ecology-specific communicative dynamics that generate divergence, though there are other reasons that justify the distinction in terms of the three “concentric Circles.” These generally have to do with the variation in the specific ways in which English has spread, including whether or not the colonizers intended to assimilate the alloglot populations. Insofar as the Inner and the Outer Circles are concerned, the distinction between settlement and exploitation colonization applies (Mufwene 2001): nonheritage users of English, the colonial auxiliaries, were expected to interface between the colonizers and the masses of the colonized populations but not to benefit as much as the colonizers from the colonial power structure, which the latter wanted to control alone. That was consistent with Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835 *Minute* articulating how English should be introduced to a segment of the indigenous population in India, to help the British colonial enterprise. That ideology was applied in all British exploitation colonies. The norms to be respected were those stipulated by the metropole; they were enforced by the colonial agents and intended to be spread by their auxiliaries.

Kachru also presents English as a worldwide diasporic phenomenon, which started with the spread of the language in the British Isles, and then to North America, Australia, and New Zealand (the principal other members of the Inner Circle), before spreading everywhere else, first to the Outer Circle (the former exploitation colonies of England or Great Britain) and then to the Expanding Circle. While the status of English has remained that of the dominant vernacular in the Inner Circle, it changed to those of official language and most powerful

lingua franca politically and economically in the Outer Circle, to that of the most important international lingua franca in the Expanding Circle. The color of majority speakers of the diasporic language and the cultures that received it also changed, as the majority speakers in the Outer Circle are non-Europeans, and English is being acculturated in ways that apparently makes it more different from the varieties of the Inner Circle. One can thus see how the issues of power and standards would arise.

However, Kachru also points out that users of English in the Outer Circle now outnumber those in the Inner Circle. Note that they too have contributed to turning English into a true world language and its successful implementation in the Expanding Circle (Mufwene 2015b). Political ideologies have then become intertwined with the “economic power of English as an export commodity.” Who controls the form in which English continues to spread in both the Outer and the Expanding Circles? And who controls the industry of teaching English as a foreign language? While natives of the former exploitation colonies could learn English from natives of the Inner Circle, those of the Expanding Circle cannot always afford teachers from the Inner Circle. Natives of the Outer Circle are less expensive and spread different kinds of live models to learners. They are contributing to the divergence of English from those of the Inner Circle, while there is also polarization between primarily the American and British norms. Also, while Australian English has acquired acceptability in Asia (which is evidence that economic power can sell a particular variety), the prevailing ideology is that varieties of the Outer Circle are deviations that at best should be contained for national and/or regional consumption. Thus, the financial benefits from teaching and spreading English in the Expanding Circle are being reaped by the Inner Circle, chiefly by the British Council and similar American institutions that produce the school materials. All members of the English-speaking “fellowship” are not equal, and Kachru shows that the “pluricentric” English-speaking diaspora does not yet share equal authority on the common but diversifying language. Some “centers” wish to keep more control on it than do others.

It is largely regarding norms and standards that the “culture wars” arise, as Kachru compares the “triumphal” spread of English around the world to a multiheaded Hydra in Greek mythology and to the “Speaking Tree” that understands all languages in Indian mythology. In the first case, English can prevail in any form; in the second, it can absorb influences from diverse languages and cultures. It may be this malleability to other cultures and linguistic influences that accounts for the success of its unprecedented spread around the world, although one must not at all ignore the unequaled success of England’s colonial enterprise, culminating with the British Empire, which evolved into the British Commonwealth. Next to the emergence of the United States as an economic and military superpower, as well as its rise as a

worldwide leader in science and technology, the British Commonwealth crowned, with its geographic and demographic size combined, the importance of English as the foremost world lingua franca.

As a “Speaking Tree,” English is used by members of different nations as “a vital weapon for articulating various positions and visions.” However, some of these positions and visions are in conflict with each other, for instance, whether English is claimed to be degenerating or to be enriched by innovations in the Outer and Expanding Circles, and whether the significance of the demographic size of English, based on which varieties are considered (un)acceptable, is shrinking or increasing. In short, different members of the English-speaking “fellowship” defend different agendas and self-serving interests; they may be said to have family feuds, even about the best form or kind of English to teach in the classroom, and regarding the best way to write: with or without code-mixing, with or without borrowing from the local indigenous languages, and for what particular kind of readership. The English-speaking “fellowship” is also marked by the tension between “the *nativization* of English” and “the *Englishization* of other world languages,” those of “wider communication.”

Is English a language of liberation or oppression in the Outer Circle? English enabled the colonized to liberate themselves politically from the colonizers, through those who had been schooled in it. The question is whether this history should be extended to a form of linguistic liberation, with its speakers in the Outer and Expanding Circles accumulating enough authority to innovate outside the censorship of the Inner Circle. Can the Outer Circle, if not also the Expanding Circle, be acknowledged as linguistically independent territories controlling the evolution of English, structurally and pragmatically, outside the control of the Inner Circle? Kachru’s argument is that the “English-speaking fellowship” is culturally plural and should be decentralized, with more tolerance for the emergence of national and/or regional norms in the corresponding subfellowships of uses. The “culture war” emerging from this issue opposes “deficit linguistics” (reflecting the views of those advocating central norms, thus the prevalence of those of the Inner Circle) to “liberation linguistics” (reflecting the position of those advocating the “linguistic emancipation” of the Outer and Expanding Circles from the Raj). This reflects the fact that English is evolving in cultural ecologies that are not identical across the world.

As an editor and occasional student of “indigenized Englishes” (in the discriminating tradition), I have been very much enriched by the wealth of information Braj B. Kachru provides in *World Englishes and Culture Wars* and hope the reader will share my satisfaction.

SALIKOKO S. MUFWENE, *University of Chicago*

## Acknowledgments

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It is by sheer accident, on the occasion of one of my visits to Braj B. Kachru, then both ailing and grieving the death of his wife and collaborator Yamuna Kachru, that I discovered the manuscript of the present book on the coffee table of their living room. Several searches for its electronic copy on their computers and with CUP, with whom a contract had already been signed, yielded nothing. To save the day, Giuseppe Ciaravino, his son-in-law, undertook to scan the 396-page manuscript and then converted it into a Word file, which I could edit. This book would have taken much longer to materialize without Giuseppe's intervention, for which Braj was very grateful and I no less, for the time it saved me. I simply regret that delays on the part of all the rest of us involved in the production of this book prevented Braj from seeing it published before he passed away. I am likewise grateful to Rakesh Mohan Bhatt for helping me figure out the correct forms of the Kashmiri texts distorted by the multiple conversions explained previously, when I no longer had access to original paper version nor, unfortunately, to the author.

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SALIKOKO S. MUFWENE