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### **СУЩЕСТВУЕТ ЛИ МОДЕЛЬ НОСИТЕЛЯ ЯЗЫКА?**

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### **IS THE NATIVE SPEAKER MODEL DEAD?**

The slightly dramatic title of this paper highlights a discussion held in the pages of the *World Today*, a journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, London, earlier in 2015, which posed the question, ‘Who owns English?’ Subtitled ‘the Perilous Lot of the Monoglot’, it mourned the diminishing role of the native speaker’ stuck in his/her monolingual comfort zone and exhorted all native speakers of English to learn foreign languages in order to compete in an increasing polyglottal world.

The article also referred to the multiple varieties of English around the world and seemed to suggest that they or a standard international variety of English might replace the native speaker model as an arbiter of the ability to speak and work in English, much to the discomfiture of traditional ‘little Englanders’.

This discussion is not new but the debate seems to be gaining pace and it is therefore perhaps relevant and useful to address the role of the native speaker model of English as an arbiter of English language excellence in global communication today and to explore what its future might be.

To discuss this we need to understand the concept of native speaker English as a model and its limitations, how globalization and the spread of English has spawned a huge variety of accents

and ways of using the language, how the English language has moved away from its native speaker shores to become a global vehicle of communication and a 'lifestyle' subject in general education, how the majority of English users in the world have been for decades non-native speakers of English and what the implications of this are for world communication in business and diplomacy.

### **The native speaker model and its spread**

According to the writer and expert on the English Language, Professor David Crystal an estimated 1.5 billion people on the planet use English (Crystal, 1997). Professor Edgar Schneider puts the figure even higher at 2 billion (Schneider E., 2010). In spite of this, the number of speakers in countries where English is the official medium of communication has remained relatively stable at about 3-400 million. In other words, there are more than three times as many non-native speakers as native speakers.

And yet native speaker English has remained a world standard for international comprehension and communication. What English do they learn?

If learners are studying standard British English they study a variety known formally as Modified Received Pronunciation or sometimes informally as 'The Queen's English' or 'BBC English'. Modified Received pronunciation, or modified RP, as it is known, are defined as the accent of English used by educated speakers of the language in education, in broadcasting and in business. In fact, Her Majesty's variety of English is not what the majority of the world studies – that is known as 'received pronunciation' – and 'BBC English' is now used by announcers using a variety of accents.

Furthermore, as we know, native speaker English is not confined to Britain. In The USA and Canada, traditionally, the other major centres of what is known as American English, standard American English is taught. Standard British English and standard American English are distinguished by fairly minor

differences in grammar but quite significant differences in vocabulary and pronunciation.

The very term 'modified RP' tells us that familiarity with accent is the key to understanding different Englishes, as David Crystal describes them. Not only do we have standard British English and standard American English used internationally, we also have Australian, New Zealand, South African and other English used, as well as in countries in Africa and Asia where English is taught as the national language.

#### **Limitations of the native speaker standard**

However, even within the 'native speaker world' we have different varieties of English, notably differences of accent. A Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish accent, for example, can cause huge problems of comprehension for native speakers from other regions and non-native speakers alike, not to mention the accents of cities like Newcastle or Liverpool or from the southern states of the USA.

So even if native speakers claim to 'own' the English language, the language they own is spoken probably by a minority of speakers.

#### **Native speakers and non-native speakers**

Native speakers working with non-native speakers tend to do themselves no favours. Non-native speakers constantly complain that even as fluent speakers of English they barely understand 75% of what they hear. This is because native speakers tend to speak at speed and are unaware of or intolerant of the issues this can cause non-native speakers. They use idioms and colloquialisms without explaining them. They use banter and jokes between themselves which excludes non-native participants in conversation. And they spray acronyms liberally without explanation. They need to learn to articulate, to pause, to avoid jokes that no-one understands, to explain idioms and acronyms and to keep their sentences shorter and simpler. Keeping your sentences to 25 words or less is a good aim.

Attempts by language training organisations to introduce ‘offshore English’ training to help organizations to adapt to a global audience have been partially successful at best. Secure in their dominance of the language, ‘hardwired into their brains’ there has been little sensitivity to the needs of non-native partners in spite of evidence that their failure to learn other languages has cost money – a lot of it.

Surveys carried out by James Foreman-Peck and Yi Wang of Cardiff University in Wales estimated that 3.5% of national income was lost because trade was slower with Britain’s key export partners in the EU as well as China and Brazil than it might have been with greater language proficiency (Foreman-Peck J and Wang Yi, 2013). The CBI (Confederation of British Industry) conducted a survey in 2006 and discovered that 94% of the companies did not require ‘a high level of language fluency as an essential core competence of their operations.’ (Who Owns English?)

There is considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that European firms often prefer to trade with each other as they find each other easier to understand in English than they do native speakers.

#### *Mono-glottalism*

A further problem arises with the limited language learning facilities provide in the UK. Since 1997 when language learning in schools was made optional after the age of 13, the learning of languages at school level has plummeted. This has led to university language departments closing their doors, faced with falling numbers of students and rising costs of running courses.

Britain and to a considerable degree the United States and Canada have become increasingly mono-glottal nations, secure in a world that speaks English and will come to them. That may be less and less the case. The life of the monoglot may be a perilous one.

### *The world role of English*

There is no doubt of the importance of English on the global stage. Apart from being the official language of the world's second largest economy by GDP, the USA, it is the common language of a great many international organisations. It is one of the six official languages of the United Nations and one of its three working languages (alongside French and Spanish). It is the official language of international air traffic control and of the International Maritime Organisation and of many international transport management organisations. Significant numbers of multinational corporations now use English as their language of internal communication as well as external communication with clients and partners.

### *Standardisation of English assessment levels*

Moreover, in order to ensure that a common standard of English is adhered to by students and workers seeking to operate professionally in English speaking countries, America, Australia the UK and the Council of Europe have all developed language assessment strategies designed to ensure objective assessments of levels of English.

The first, from the Educational Testing service, based in New Jersey near Princeton University, offers a world recognized indicator of English language proficiency in American English, called TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) originally introduced in 1964 and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) in 1979.

The second, from the UK University of Cambridge is the Cambridge English as a Foreign Language suite of exams, including the Cambridge First Certificate and the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English is still an important qualification, especially for teachers of English as a foreign language.'

The third is IELTS (International English Language Testing Service) developed by the Australian International Development

Program of Australian Universities and Colleges, Now IDP Education Australia, (IDP) in collaboration with the British Council and UCLES (the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) now Cambridge English, launched in 1989. IELTS has now become the de facto English language proficiency recognition scheme for universities and many companies using modified RP British English as their working language.

The fourth, and potentially most important instrument is the Council of Europe Framework of Reference (CEFR), a language specification. Created for all the European Union languages and compiled over an eight year period from 1989-1996, it established a six level specification of proficiency (A1/2, B1/2 C1/2) corresponding to elementary intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. CEFR incorporated previous specifications generated by the Council of Europe, notably Threshold level, now B1, and Waystage (now A2).

Although intended as a reference framework, not a recommended syllabus the CEFR has become a de facto specification of what users of English need to know, not just in Europe but internationally and is one of the most influential instruments for language course design and assessment in use.

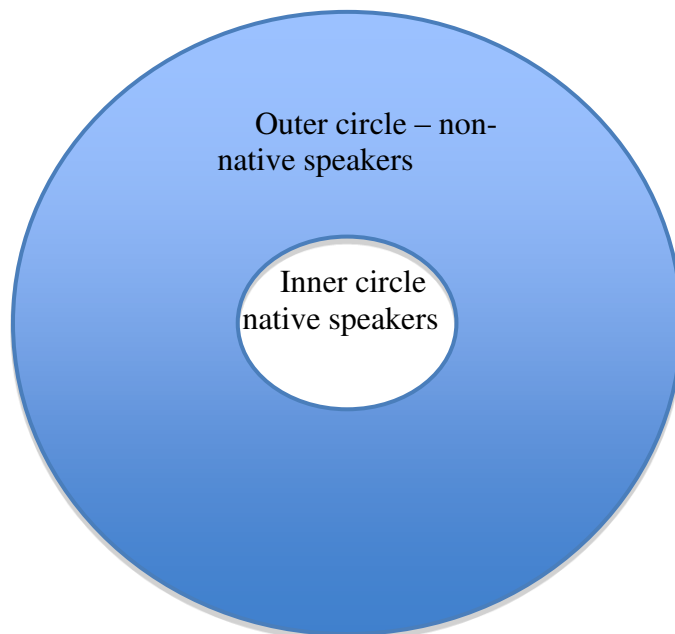
The reason that these instruments are important is that they present for English a clear and unambiguous criterion for English proficiency at different levels and include indications on vocabulary, grammar and even pronunciation, based on standard modified RP and standard American English.

#### *Varieties of English*

In 1982, Professor Braj Kachru of the University of Urbana in Illinois identified the key differences between native and non-native speakers of English – there are more non-native speakers than native speakers (Kachru Braj 1992)

Non-native speakers have different accents, have differences in pronunciation, differences in grammar and vocabulary.

Hitherto regarded as dialects of English, Kachru established the principle of varieties of English. Varieties of English or 'Englishes' were separate to a degree but equal. He established the differences through a simple but classic diagramme of inner and outer circles in which the inner circle of native speakers remained constant but the outer circle of non-native users of English, including speakers of English as a second language, grows ever larger.



This profoundly influential concept put all varieties of English on a level plain and did away with the snobbery and particularism that had attached itself to certain dialects.

The concept of varieties of English was partly a response to the rising importance of Indian English worldwide and the fact that English in India itself was subject to immense variety itself, partly due to the influence of different English mother tongues,

principally Hindi. Some years later an Indian linguist Balhinder Singh published a small but entertaining work called 'The Queen's Hinglish', in which she identified the number of Hindi origin words in common use in English both in India and increasingly internationally.

Through his research, Kachru firmly established two principles. First, the new 'owners' of English by majority were its non-native speakers and second that any superiority in one standard of English over another could be overcome by the substitution of the word 'variety for the word 'dialect'.

*The model of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)*

The argument was taken further by linguists such as Jennifer Jenkins at the University of Southampton (Jenkins J. 2000), Professor Henry Widdowson and Dr Barbara Seidlhofer at the University of Vienna in Austria put forward the hypothesis that no variety of English is inherently superior to any other and that all are equally acceptable. This means that the concept of 'interference' between one language and another causing misinterpretation is no longer valid and that all such differences must be negotiated between interlocutors.

All varieties of English from Chinglish (Chinese English) to Spanglish (Hispanic varieties of English) must be considered equal and treated as acceptable international linguistic currency.

*How training in English has moved away from 'ideal' models*

David Graddol is an applied linguist and researcher who has researched the regional use of English in a number of influential pamphlets entitled, *The Future of English* (1997) (Graddol D) and *English Next* (2006) (Graddol D) and *English Next India* (2010) (Graddol D) for the British Council and most recently, *Profiling English in China, The Pearl River Delta 2013* (for Cambridge English) (Graddol D).

In these pamphlets he demonstrates how training in English is gradually moving away from the UK and the US and localizing in non-native speaker centres ranging from Germany to China.



In particular he identifies the trend to offer university courses in a range of subjects but taught in the medium of the English language by proficient non-native speakers of English. This means that fewer students may come to the UK or the US or Australia to study because they can do so at home. China for example is training over 450,000 students a year to graduate in English. There may be more English speakers in China than there are native speakers in the rest of the world.

Graddol goes further. He estimates that the reach of English will peak in 1919, in under five years' time and thereafter slowly begin to diminish as other languages are more widely used on the global stage.

This in turn could mean that over the next hundred years the current dominance of English as the world's language franca could be replaced by a number of languages forming a core of general international linguistic competence.

If so the pressure on the UK and the US to boost the level and opportunities for training in Mandarin, Hindi and Arabic as well as Spanish, Russian and Portuguese might well grow exponentially.

Alternatively, English might cede its current primacy as a means of spoken communication but remain the leading international language of cybercommunication.

We should not forget that the most used language in the world on the Internet is Mandarin Chinese but the most used language in international Internet traffic is English. This is unlikely to change in the short to medium term.

*The opportunities and threats provided by global varieties of English in world communication*

The Lord Quirk, formerly Randolph Quirk, Quain Professor of English at University College London, Vice Chancellor of London University and Chairman of the British Academy once warned against the danger of international misunderstanding caused by the lack of a single recognized standard. There is a

danger that this could be the case, especially since more and more international communication is undertaken not face to face but over the Internet and by teleconference and video conference between members of virtually distributed teams. One of the key issues of project management is how to successfully manage different expectations, communication styles and management styles in teams spread over many different countries. The results of failure are misunderstandings leading to delays, failure to meet product specification, penalties for late delivery and in the worst cases cancellation of contract.

*The importance of cultural awareness*

In global business and in global communication an awareness of the other person's way of doing things is crucial. This is partly because a positive attitude to other cultures promotes harmony and is an enriching experience in itself between, on a narrow business front, embracing uncertainty and on a personal and business front, building good relations. Your tolerance and willingness to embrace ambiguity and flexibility when things are not going obviously to plan is a business critical asset.

Experts recognize that the incorporation of cultural training into language courses and the training in cultural awareness as part of relocation planning or dealing with overseas JV partners, branches and clients is important. They also see the process of cultural due diligence (studying the business and national/regional culture) of your partner is as important as financial and organizational due diligence (studying the finances and organizational differences). Using cultural, financial and organization due diligence to harmonise potential operational differences that can waste time and money in new projects is increasingly, although still insufficiently, recognized part of any cross-border JV (Joint venture) or M&A (merger and acquisition) agreement.

It seems that one of the necessary conditions of successful management of pluralistic avenues of communication using

varieties of English is an enhanced cultural awareness. This involves understanding the key drivers of international communication, how they apply to ourselves and to the communities we deal with and how to adapt our communication strategies to harmonise with theirs.

It also involves understanding their expectations of the business relationship and the way they go about their work, particularly in terms of keeping to specification, keeping within budget and observing timely delivery.

Above all it means cultivating the qualities of good international management, identified by research done by Michael Byram at the University of Durham in the UK in the 90's and entitled the INCA project. The qualities of good international management (Byram M 2004) include, being curious about and interested in learning about other cultures, reserving judgement, being prepared to embrace ambiguity and wait when necessary, being flexible about possible solutions, and being interested in and prepared to try out foreign languages.

Embracing principles of cultural awareness could be the way that the native speaker lives to fight another day.

*The future of English as an international language*

But what of the language itself? In 'Empires of the Word', the researcher and writer Nicholas Ostler identifies three possible futures for English as an international language (Ostler Nicholas 2005)

1 First, it retreats and becomes a national or regional language as many lingua francas have done before it, although it is unlikely to become extinct.

2 Secondly, it retains pre-eminence as a cyberlanguage of international communication via the Internet.

3 Thirdly, it retreats to become one of a group of leading working languages together with Mandarin, Hindi and Spanish to name three alternatives. There may well be more.

### **Conclusion**

One thing is highly probable. The ‘native speaker model’ is under threat and is gradually on the way out. Native speakers will have to adapt by learning to use ‘offshore English’ in international dealings with non-native speakers where appropriate and, most importantly, by changing from being a largely monoglottal to a polyglottal business community.

Users of English worldwide will have to get used to listening to and working with different varieties of English. This may lead to miscommunication and eventually the replacement of one or two internationally recognized standards by a large variety, likely to lead to economic and quite possibly political difficulties as international communication may become prone to increasing misunderstanding.

The development of cultural awareness of tolerance and appreciation of others’ cultures will help native speakers and world users of English to adapt more successfully to the world of different varieties of English they may find themselves faced with on an increasing basis.

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УДК 811.134.2

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### АНГЛИЦИЗМЫ В ИСПАНСКОМ ДЕЛОВОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

*В статье обсуждается вопрос влияния английского языка на испанский язык, а именно механизмы проникновения англицизмов в испанский деловой дискурс. Также определяется само понятие англицизма в испанском языке. Приводятся примеры разных видов англицизмов в испанском в зависимости от степени их закрепления в языке.*

*Ключевые слова: лингвистическое заимствование, испанский деловой дискурс, англицизмы.*