New Englishes: An Imminent Threat to English? The Example of Modern Standard Arabic

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1. Introduction

Since the important works of Braj Kachru and Sir Randolph Quirk dating back to the early 1990s, concerning the status and possible acceptance of what has come to be technically known as New Englishes, the debate concerning the real impact of such new "dialects" on the mother language has continued unabated. The steady increase in the number of foreign English speakers has but added to the fear of many educated native speakers of what they considered as deviations from and corruption of their language. It is true that the notion of language change is not new and that human languages are in constant metamorphosis in relation to their users' immediate needs and expectations. The emergence of such new varieties of English has, however, been perceived in the West as a general threat essentially aiming at toppling down western cultural values, standards, and current modes of expression, including Standard English (SE).

To shed light on this situation, three main hypotheses relating to the impact of such newly arising Englishes on the "Core Language" were considered:

a. New Englishes are mere deviations from SE caused primarily by unsuccessful teaching methodologies and are expected to disappear given a proper educational system.

b. New Englishes constitute a real threat to the development of SE and will, in the long run, affect and reduce its world hegemony.

c. New Englishes represent completely independent linguistic systems created by their users to serve their needs and fulfil their expectations in a global world.

In order to explore these hypotheses, the present study attempted to ground the whole issue not only in its historical but also in its present context by referring to some foreign countries where such new linguistic forms seem to gradually proliferate and force respect day after day. A comparison between

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and SE was equally drawn in order to pinpoint the similarities and differences concerning the raised issues. The main idea behind this was to show whether the whole matter really bears some truth in relation to what is happening to English or whether it was merely amplified and exaggerated by the media in order to protect the well-established "one world, one culture" motto and maintain the current status quo. The possibility of launching an international language shared and understood by all English users was also considered with a view to setting up new perspectives for future research.

2. Background to the Study

2.1 The origin and evolution of English

The fear for the future of English can easily be understood if we set it into its real historical context. Language change, it should be reminded, is not new and the first Indo European languages are thought to have emerged from the Kurgan Proto-Indo-European language spoken around 5000-3000 BC in areas of Eastern Europe/Western Asia, after its native speakers quitted their initial territories and migrated in different directions. British English was no exception as it primarily developed from the Germanic dialects and later through the Scandinavian dialects introduced into the British Isles by the Vikings during the period c.850-1100. As Burchfield (1985), describing the fate of English on lines with what befell Latin, wrote:

> The most powerful model of all is the dispersal of speakers of popular forms of Latin in various parts of western Europe and the emergence in the early Middle Ages of languages now known as French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and of subdivision (like Catalan) within these languages, none easily comprehensible to the others…English, when first recorded in the eighth century, was already a fissiparous language. It will continue to divide and subdivide, and to exhibit a thousand different faces in the centuries ahead…The multifarious forms of English spoken within the British Isles and by native speakers abroad will continue to reshape and restyle themselves in the future. And they will become more and more at variance with the emerging Englishes of Europe and of the rest of the world. (p.160)

In relation to what has preceded, and throughout history, English underwent many changes and alterations caused essentially by foreign invasions and engendered mostly as a direct response to local needs. The significant reduction of the highly elaborate system of inflections and the omission of the third person plural forms once characterising Old English, the continuous elaboration of morphological, phonological, and grammatical structures to something close to their present patterns are but few illustrations of the

tremendous changes that have spanned more than 15 centuries. (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

In spite of the inevitability of change, linguistic variations have quite often been perceived negatively by conservative-minded chauvinists who would interpret all kinds of change as a danger directly targeting their cultural identity, and a threat aiming at impairing their language. Already in the 18th century, Jonathan Swift (1712) rose against what he called the "corruption of English" in his time:

> *My lord, I do here in the name of all the learned and polite persons of the nation complain to your Lordship as first minister, that our language is extremely imperfect; that its daily improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily corruptness; that the pretenders to polish and refine it have chiefly multiplied abuses and absurdities; and that in many instances it offends against every part of grammar. (para.2)*

Such "abhorrence" of language change recalls to our mind the whole tradition of normative grammarians striving to foster a "prestigious status" between the educated and the rest of the population through the quasi adoption of Greek and Latin philosophy and literary traditions, which prevailed until the beginning of the 20th century.

As a matter of fact, the attempt to defend one's dialect and protect it against all forms of change can even be traced back to the first medieval manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon epic poems and to the Gospel Text which were mostly written by trained scribes whose main goal was to "write in [their] own dialects since there was nothing even close to a standardised English language yet. A monk in the North of England would write completely differently from a monk who lived in a monastery in Cornwall" (Saskia et al., p.92).

Contrary to manuscripts, the first printed documents mainly led to the adoption of the London English variety with some Central Midlands elements. That was the first real attempt to fix and standardise the language. According to Marshall McLuhan (1962): "Print altered not only the spelling and grammar but the accentuation and inflection of languages, and made the grammar possible" (p.231). The printing and publication of newspapers which followed mostly contributed to the expansion of the "prestigious" dialect and the propagation of literacy between the different layers of the English society thanks to the lower cost of books and the profuse diffusion of printed material.

Broadcasting, Computers Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and later, the advent of the Internet, all contributed to the modelling and standardisation of English. This task, it should be explained, was not always straightforward and homogeneous given the different needs of the users and the ongoing changes affecting all aspects of life. Talking about the newspapers, for example, Baumgartner et al. (2004) stated that "there is no such thing as typical newspaper language, the language used in the printed news is adapted to its readership and it reflects the values of a culture. These values and with them the language change over time. Thus, the language used in the printed news is changing as well."

2.2 The dialects of English

The attempt to standardise the language through the mass media played an important role in expanding knowledge and increasing the percentage of literacy among the English people. However, as the remainder of this article will explain, the propagation of literacy was also accompanied with a certain degree of awareness and regional pride to protect what was seen as the past legacies.

In spite of standardisation, and "fixation" attempts, language change went on at a pace even higher than before thanks to the mass media and the new technologies of communication. Today, in Britain alone, many English varieties are well established and can easily be discerned by the novice.[1] Outside of the British Isles, more English varieties such as: American English, Canadian English, Australian English, New Zealand English, and South African English, can also be heard.

Such dialects, it should be reminded, mostly sprang from British English during its expansion outside Great Britain at the time of discoveries and colonialism starting in the early 17th century. The linguistic blending that ensued brought some changes at the level of pronunciation and orthography as can be easily witnessed in American English, for example. Regardless of regional idiosyncrasies and linguistic specificities, such dialects have, however, remained attached to their origins thanks to education, to the mass media, and to the latest means of communication.

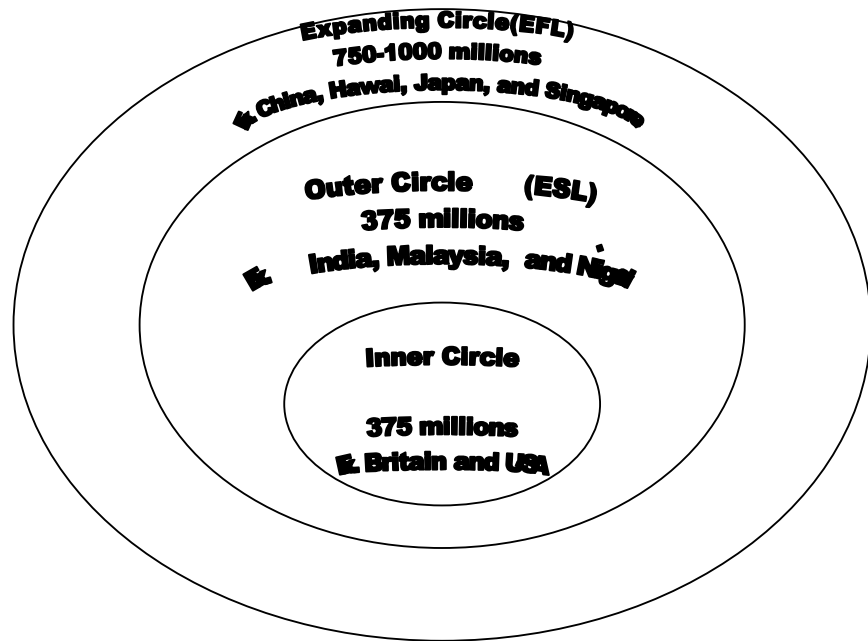## 3 The rise of new Englishes

As was mentioned above, New Englishes basically refer to the new varieties of English mostly resulting from the meeting of two different cultures, two different languages, and two different perceptions of reality. On the one hand, there is the new English-speaking settler who uses one variety of English

as his mother tongue and who is deeply rooted in his Western culture. On the other hand, there is the native or indigenous inhabitant whose language and culture may be of a completely different kind.

The encounter between the two languages whether through land occupation, social or business transactions, and/or education, has ultimately led both sides to gradually relinquish some of their linguistic specificities in their attempt to establish contact and achieve mutual understanding. The concessions made in this regard were essentially formulated through language borrowing, simplifying, blending, reduplicating, and the coinage of new words, as the subsequent sections will illustrate. As can be imagined, the balance was mostly in favour of the new settlers who really did little or nothing to alter their language. The change mostly came from the indigenous who went as far as twisting Standard English in their attempt to use it as a lingua franca to address strangers, traders, and various interlocutors. Preserving the standard variety would mostly be ascribed to the educated or lucky few who have had the chance to visit or live in an English speaking country.

The expansion of English and the proliferation of New Englishes have recently reached unprecedented proportions worldwide. As the following statistics including McArthur's figures indicate: "There are now an estimated 375 million users of English in Inner Circle societies, 375 million in Outer Circle (ESL) societies, and around 750 - 1,000 million in the Expanding (EFL) Circle. Other statistics suggest that in Asia alone the number of English users now totals over 600 million people, including over 300 million in India, and over 200 million in China" (qtd. in Braj B. Kachru et al., 2006, pp.260-61).

As they are represented below, such statistics look both instructing and revealing to a great extent:

Expanding Circle(EFL)
750-1000 millions
E. China, Hawai, Japan, and Singapore

Outer Circle (ESL)
375 millions
E. India, Malaysia, and Niger

Inner Circle

375 millions
E. Britain and USA

The three circles: (Adapted from Kachru, 2006)[2]

Indeed, whereas the number of speakers in the Inner Circle approximately equals the same number of speakers in the Outer Circle, the number of speakers in the Expanding Circle where English is mostly used and/or taught as a foreign language by non-native teachers, is nearly twice or three times the number of speakers in each of the two other circles where English is used primarily as a native and second language respectively.[3]

Such figures are significant if we know that most teachers of English as a foreign or a second language in the world are non-natives. Given their different socio-cultural backgrounds and deep attachment to their cultural particularities, such non-native speakers are, as can be expected, developing their own English varieties, and quite often mingling them with their vernaculars in direct response to their immediate needs.

Whereas Singapore and Malaysian English, to cite but few examples, use an end-sentential article "la" as in the example "Wait here, la", the Japanese add "-ne" as in "I like sushi-ne." (Honna Nobuyuki, p.3). African speakers also use syntactic reduplication as in "They blamed him, they blamed him" to insist upon and stress the nature of the action (Honna, p.3). Singapore English also has a tendency to omit many syntactic features such as plural S, third person S, articles, past tense, and inflection. With reference to number marking, logically countable things such as "fiction", "company", and "tuition" tend to have a plural

–s suffix. The present tense often replaces the past tense when narrating a story in the past. Similarly, the modal verb "will" is often used to refer to regular events (David Deterding, 2007, pp. 43-48).

For their part, people in Hong Kong quite often alternate the use of "he" and "she" as well as the single and the plural pronouns within the same context. Chinese speakers of English, for their part, innovate by employing the particles "la(h)" and "aa/ah" to express emphasis and convey emotion respectively as in:

-"Can you come tonight? Can lah/ cannot lah."

-"You wait me, aa?" instead of "You wait for me?" (Martin Weißer, 2007)

While the New English varieties are being created, the users are, as can be imagined, subjugated to tensions exerted simultaneously by their willingness to communicate with the natives and/or strangers and be understood by them, and their inclination towards preserving their identity and using their own linguistic initiatives and creativity when addressing their fellow citizens. Whereas Standard English would be forced in the first situation, a local variety of this language might be preferred in the second situation.

Judging by what has preceded, New Englishes might, therefore, be considered as completely independent languages, something which the users create to fulfil their own wishes and serve their needs, in accordance with their cultural realities and private identities. As was explained above, they are neither maturating towards a superior linguistic form nor aspiring to imitate a former linguistic state. The users are, indeed, the real creators and, as such, they owe nothing to the initial native speakers. Such a new linguistic reality clearly calls for an autonomous analysis of these emerging linguistic systems far from any restricted or conceited interpretation that might equate them with mere bundles of mistakes or complete deviations from the mother language. As mentioned earlier, such new linguistic systems are tailored to serve their users' everyday needs and to help translate their ideas, feelings, and identities. As such, they reflect the creators' competence, and highlight their uniqueness and singularity in comparison to other language users.

4. The real impact of New Englishes on the core language

4.1 A threat to English?

In the light of the new linguistic reality and the proliferation of New Englishes across many parts of the globe, many linguists have incessantly

warned against the looming danger and uncertain future of SE. For many such linguists, the analogy between what befell former languages such as Latin, Phoenician, and Sanskrit is vividly present in the minds. As English continues to spread, such experts say the last resort will be no other than multiple fragmentations which may ultimately result in the creation of a host of dialects and perhaps eventually fully-fledged languages which are partially or fully unintelligible to the former possessors (Seth Mydans, 2007). What seems more dangerous according to many nostalgic and "loyal partisans" is the complete loss by the native speakers or "real creators" of their privileges and/or control of their well "cherished offspring" and their possible alienation in a Marxist sense.

Talking about the financial gains that the UK derives from the English teaching operation each year, David Graddol (2006) wrote that "the English language teaching sector directly earns £ 1.3 billion for the UK in invisible exports and our other education related exports earn up to £10 billion a year more" (p. 4). If we add to such figures the benefits gleaned by the other dependent sectors involved in designing, training, printing, and translating, in addition to the various industries responsible for the production of multi-purposes teaching aids and highly sophisticated English based technologies, the position of the hard-headed monolinguals then becomes fully understood as the slightest movement away from the epicentre would simply mean the loss of benefits, domination, and supremacy.

Judging by what preceded, two central views concerning the fate of English as an international language were developed in the 1990s. Sir Randolph Quirk (1990) maintained a "purist" view calling for a worldwide teaching and learning of Standard British and American English. Students and teachers aiming at keeping in touch with an international English standard should not deviate from this for matters of stability, wide acceptability, and abundance of academic resources all over the world. As he put it:

> The implications for foreign language teaching are clear: the need for native teacher support and the need for non-native teachers to be in constant touch with the native language […] The mass of ordinary native-English speakers have never lost their respect for standard English, and it needs to be understood abroad too… that standard English is alive and well, its existence and its value alike clearly recognized.[4] (pp. 6-10)

This purist approach had its ramifications deeply stretching to the 1960s and received wide support from other ardent conservative linguists such as Prator

(1968), Chevillet (1999), Oji (in Jibril 1987), Honey (1997), to mention but few names. Such linguists, it has to be explained, not only disdained and dismissed New Englishes as inferior and unworthy of standardisation, but also strongly advocated that only SE should be the norm, especially in international affairs. This position is, at best, expressed by Francois Chevillet (1999) when he argued that "Foreigners often wreak havoc on the stress pattern of English polysyllables, they stress personal pronouns which shouldn't be emphasised and they use strong forms instead of weak forms, thereby jeopardising communication. Should such a state of things be institutionalised or codified?" (p.33).

As it were, this view angered not only linguists living in other English speaking countries who also have their Standard English forms but also the proponents of the "pragmatic" approach supported by Kachru and his followers. The latter, it should be made clear, completely dismissed Prator's attitude (1968) when he refused to grant any special consideration to New Englishes and rejected all sorts of pluralistic orientations, dubbing them as "heretical tenets." One such a tenet that the latter rejected was "the idea that it is best, in a country where English is not spoken natively but is widely used as the medium of instruction to set up the local variety of English as the ultimate model to be imitated by those learning the language" (qtd. in Kachru et al., 2006, p. 459).

Overall, the pragmatic view was essentially calling for a complete recognition of local English varieties and/or standards as they are used by multilingual communities. Because they are created quite independently and without any constraints with a view to helping non-native speakers communicate with one another and express their cultural identities, such new linguistic entities are in fact easier and cheaper to learn, and should, as a matter of consequence, be respected as newly emerging standards.

Not long before the expression of Kachru's firm support of New Englishes, Peter Strevens (qtd. in Alan Davies and Catherine Elder, 2004) also argued for an open TESL and TEFL teaching approach:

In ESL areas where local L2 forms have developed and where they command public approval it is these forms which constitute the most suitable models for use in schools, certainly more suitable than a British or American L1 model [. . .] the native speaker of English must accept that English is no longer his possession alone: it belongs to the world, and new forms of English, born of

new countries with new communicative needs, should be accepted into the marvellously flexible and adaptable galaxy of "Englishes" which constitute the English language. (p.380)

This last quotation, as it appears, seems to indirectly allude to the deep concern of the native speakers who fear an imminent and complete demise of SE. It equally recasts the same short-sightedness about historical evolution mentioned above, especially if we know that the English language itself underwent many changes before actually attaining its current status.

4.2 The example of Modern Standard Arabic

Along the lines with English briefly sketched above, and in order to better understand the situation, history provides us with many instances where languages both spoken and/or used by substantially developed and rich nations very often resist the working of time and even become stronger when they are taken outside their territories. Arabic is such a good example. In spite of being one of the oldest languages still in use and despite its adoption as a first or second language in many countries lying outside the Arab Gulf Peninsula, where it is thought to have originated, this language has even gained more strength and become more prestigious with time. It has equally become the official language of several international organisations including the UN, the Arab League, UNESCO, OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) among others.[5]

Its expansion into territories traditionally using different languages such as, Berber, Phoenician, Roman, Coptic and Hebrew in North Africa and in some Eastern Mediterranean Arab countries led to its full appropriation and adoption by most local populations, contrary to many New Englishes which began prospering after the departure of the occupiers. The linguistic restructuring which followed has led to the birth of several colloquial dialects mostly shaped by the languages in place and often differing in pronunciation, vocabulary, morphology and to a lesser degree in syntax. As M. Paul Lewis (2009) has explained, there are over thirty different varieties of colloquial Arabic including essentially: Egyptian Arabic (Egypt), Algerian Arabic (Algeria), Moroccan (Morocco), Tunisian (Tunisia), Sudanese(Sudan), North Levantine (Lebanon and Syria), Mesopotamian (Iraq, Iran and Syria), Najdi (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria), etc.

As the following examples illustrate, such dialects[6] are essentially used in everyday interactions and may, at times, sound mutually unintelligible[7]. They are

equally unwritten with the exception of few works written in some Arabic dialects such as Lebanese Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, Maghrebi Arabic, etc.

Pronunciation:

- Using two different pronouns in spoken Arabic *"intā"* (You, male) and *"inti"* (you, female) to address one single male speaker in some regions of Tunisia.

- /q/ vs. / ā / and /j/ vs. /g/ (most Arab countries and Egypt respectively), etc…

- Using *sukūn* (i.e. not followed by a short vowel) at the beginning of Arabic names as in   "ḥ'*sā*n", "kh'*lif*ā", "b'*r*āhim", etc... in North Africa counter "ʕā*li*", "ḥā*sā*n", "kh*alifa*", " ibrahim" in the Middle East region.

- Pronouncing "ʕā*lāā*q*āā*t" as "ʕilāāqāāt"   when referring to relationships. (Tunisia and some Middle Eastern countries respectively)

-Uttering /a/ like /e/ in words like *"fãdi"*, *"hādi"*, counter *"fedi"* and *"hedi"* in North Africa and the Middle East region respectively.

Vocabulary:

- Using some words in quite specific contexts which do not seem to be very common in other Arab countries such as *"bārshā"* (a lot of, many) *"ānbubāh"* (lamp), *"kārhbā"* (car), *"mongālā"* (watch) and *"tārābbus"* (a training programme) in (Tunisia), *"zālāmi"* (man), *"ʕāyez"* or *"biddi"*(I want), *"di"* or *"hāidā"* (this) in some Middle Eastern countries etc….

- Some words of a foreign origin can also be heard across many Arab countries, especially in North Africa because of former occupation or as a direct result of globalisation which has made its way into people's homes through the mass media and new information technologies:

"dākurdu" (daccordo: Italian; d'accord: French), *"bāttu:"* (bateau: French), *"kārritā"* (carretta: Italian; charrette: French), *"fishtā"* (festa: Italian), *"tāwlā"* (tavola: Italian), *"fãlso"* (falso: Italian), etc…

Morphology:

- Attachment of some prefixes like *"ha"*, *"ka"*, and the free particle *"besh"* to spoken Arabic verbs to denote the future. (Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia respectively)

- The suffix *–esh* is equally found in North Africa in words like *"kifesh"* (how) contrary to *"kiif"* used in some Middle Eastern countries.

- Using foreign symbols, different abbreviations, and sometimes writing Arabic words in Latin alphabet during chat sessions or in short written messages (SMS)

-Different spelling of Arabic words in addition to the use of Latin characters when writing Arabic SMS messages, etc…

-The verbal markers /-*tu*/ (first singular) and /-*t*ā / (second singular masculine) became /-*t*/, while second singular feminine /-*ti*/ remained.

In spite of such differences which mostly characterise spoken Arabic, the other changes that occurred in MSA, such as the dropping of final declinations in some borrowed words and the simplification at the level of writing, are quite insignificant and using or understanding MSA has, to my knowledge, never constituted an area of controversy or discord between its users. Actually, no other competitive standardised linguistic varieties have, so far, been added to or challenged the main language. Besides, contrary to what we sometimes hear in the media concerning the emerging of regional dialects such as the ones mentioned above, Modern Standard Arabic is still regarded as the most prestigious and unifying language variety throughout the Arab world.[8]

The main reason behind the long-lasting force of this language is not, contrary to what is often being heard, solely political and/or economic. It has essentially been religious. As a matter of fact, Arabic is the language of Qu'ran and the language through which Islam was revealed. It also represents the literary standard in the Arab world. Given this fact, not only native Arabs but also Moslems all over the world strive to learn this language directly or indirectly through the mass media and the various modern information technologies. Their main asset being essentially the cumulative knowledge and past legacies left by the ancestors as well as the significant and steady improvement of education and literacy all over the world.

5. Discussion and Results:

Alongside the lines drawn for MSA, talking about the perversion, degeneracy or imminent death of English essentially caused by the emergence and/or proliferation of New Englishes appears, at least in the foreseeable future, both unlikely and exaggerated. As was explained above, globalisation has significantly contributed to the expansion of English into territories which were formerly closed up to all sorts of foreign intrusion (the former USSR and China

are two good examples). Similarly, the incessant development of the economy, the growing political influence, the unprecedented use of modern technology and powerful means of communication, the increase in the number of English users, especially in the Outer and Expanding Circles where English is used as a second and foreign language respectively, have all sustained and boosted SE worldwide. According to Crystal (2003, pp. 87-88), 85% of international organizations in the world make official use of English, at least 85% of the world's film market is in English, and some 90% of published academic articles in some academic fields, such as linguistics, are written in English.[9]

In the far future, however, the prospects for SE are quite hard to predict. Like any other language, and in congruence with what was indicated above, English already witnessed different stages of development (Old English, Middle English, Modern English, etc…) and will no doubt continue evolving in a similar way. The rise of new aspirations towards democracy and equality may, however, seriously affect the position of an English language that is solely used by a regional elite group. Likewise, the challenges caused by the newly emerging economies (China, India, Russia, etc.) may critically undermine the position of English as an international language, especially if we know that international trade, economic debates and transactions are mostly conducted in English.

The various aspects of scientific research and inherent progress witnessed in the Anglo-Saxon world may also face challenging in the far future in face of the newly rising superpowers such as Russia, China, or India. The latter two countries have already been competing at the level of electronics, communication, economy, and space conquest. Finally, the incessant maturation of the Englishes in both the Outer and Expanding Circles may, as was explained above, significantly impair and even reduce the expansion of SE outside the Inner Circle.

Judging by what has preceded, New Englishes are therefore expected to continue developing and proliferating at a higher rate. If the current status quo is maintained, the demand on non-native teachers outside the Inner Circle will no doubt surpass that on native teachers. This will definitely set the focus on teaching people's own cultures rather than American or British cultures. Gradually, New Englishes will constitute part and parcel of people's everyday

conversations and will as such be used to serve the immediate and disparate needs of the users. This last factor will, as a Taiwanese educator commented in Taipei in 1977, be fostered by the fact that the non-natives will quite often have to interact between themselves rather than with English native speakers:

> Why is it that our students learn in their English classes to talk about the British Parliament but not about our local government institutions? Why do they learn to talk about the British media and cultural artefacts, but not about the Chinese forms of media and cultural expression? (Mark Warschauer, 2000, p. 2).

Those among non-native speakers who still resent past colonialism will even continue pushing forward towards forcing the native speakers to accept their linguistic systems and give them full consideration. For them, it would be quite irrational to reject idioms such as the Japanese idioms below (List A) while at the same time accepting equivalent English expressions (List B) simply because the former are non-native:

List A

Literal English Rendering of Japanese idioms	English Meaning
"Bend your belly-button"	"To sulk".
"Coil your tail"	"Be defeated and demoralized" "Run away with your tail between your legs"
"Make round eyes"	"Be very surprised"
"Beat your chest"	"Feel touched / emotional"
"Dislocate your jaw"	"Laugh loudly"
"Grind sesame"	"Brown nose / Sucking up"
"Flowers to storms"	"Misfortune often follows happiness"
"A snack rather than flowers"	"Practical things are preferred over the aesthetic"
"Without roots nor leaves"	"Groundless" (Dictionary.com)

List B

English Idioms	Meaning
It's raining cats and dogs	- It's raining heavily.
To break the ice	-To do something nice to get over the awkwardness of a first meeting.

It's black and white	-There is no room for disagreeing because there are only 2 options.
It's a grey area	-You can come up with your own opinion.
To brush up on	-To refresh knowledge of something through practice.
To rip someone off	-To cheat someone in money, etc.

One way to reconcile the two contending views described above, probably lies in finding some common ground which may take consideration of what is local and specific (New Englishes) and fairly general and wide encompassing (Global English). At its best, this global or international language has to be quite neutral and exempt from regional and purely idiosyncratic uses. It has to serve as a bridge between the speakers across the three circles described above, especially in matters of business, foreign transactions and world politics. At the same time, purely local and cultural specificities can continue to be channelled through the vernacular English varieties along the lines drawn by Crystal (2003):

> People would still have dialects for use within their own country, but when the need came to communicate with people from other countries they would slip into WSSE [World Standard Spoken English]…People who attend international conferences, or who write scripts for an international audience, or who are "talking" on the Internet have probably already felt the pull of this new variety. It takes the form, for example, of consciously avoiding a word or phrase which you know is not going to be understood outside your own country, and of finding an alternative form of expression…it is too early to be definite about the way this variety will develop. WSSE is still in its infancy. Indeed, it has hardly yet been born. (pp.185-86)

This rather conciliatory view has, it should be added, been adopted by an incessantly growing number of linguists like Jibril 1987, Schmied 1991, Bobda 1999, to mention but a few names. Like Crystal, they all recognised New Englishes as newly arising linguistic systems that have to be fully taken into account. At the same time, they advocated an international intelligible English form that would transcend cultural barriers and help communication between different ethnic groups.

In line with the above and in order to fulfil this objective, English teachers all over the world would have to rethink their teaching methods and reconsider

their standards of linguistic correctness. They should opt for a flexible and simple kind of teaching that might free the target language from all sorts of idiosyncrasies and allow different language users to freely express themselves rather clearly and efficiently.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, studying New Englishes is both instructing and challenging given the contradictory views, conflicting interests and differing needs. The present article has tried to shed light on such issues, comparing the situation of SE to that of MSA and concluding that the current status quo for SE will, at least presently, remain unaffected given the political, economic, and scientific supremacy detained by the most powerful English speaking countries. However, because of the incessantly growing number of New Englishes, an ongoing, neutral and wide encompassing study highlighting their progressive development and explaining their structures and potential impact on SE remains necessary. The criteria for selecting one specific English variety as a lingua franca also need to be worked out and elaborated, given the perpetually changing international economic, political and social policies.

Notes

[1] For a detailed account of English dialects both inside and outside the British Isles, the reader is referred to Dr. C. George Boeree.

2 The representation offered by the three circles is quite interesting through showing the broad diversity of English in the world. It nonetheless looks restricting and reductionist given the plethora of roles that English usually plays within and between the circles, particularly in the Expanding Circle.

3 Such statistics do, in fact, undermine the claims of the Maturational View according to which New Englishes are progressing towards a higher or an earlier status, namely the status of British or American English. Such claims do not seem to hold if we know that Indian English, for example, is "older than some native Englishes (e.g. Australian English)" (Eric A. Anchimbe, 2007, p.151).

4 The position taken by Randolph Quirk seems to be surprising and astonishing given the fact that he lectured and taught seminars at University College, London, in Old English (Anglo-Saxon) and in History of the English and was therefore acquainted with historical linguistic change. His position also came as a surprise after his *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language,* a corpus which comprised one English million words used in everyday life and where communication does not seem to be restricted by a particular usage.

5 Arabic is part of the Semitic language family which also includes Hebrew, Aramaic, Maltese, Amharic, Syrica, Accadian, Phoenician, Punic, Nabatean, etc…It is nowadays spoken ¨by more than 280 million people as a first language, most of whom live in the Middle East and North Africa, and by 250 million more as a second language.¨ (Wikipedia: Arabic Language). Based on standardized and uniform Classical Arabic which is essentially limited to formal usage and religious practices (being the language of the Qu'ran), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the current new form of Arabic which is mostly formalized by the Media and Education and which is used as spoken and written throughout the Arab world.

6 A distinction should be made here between Arabic dialects and other languages such as Berber, Hausa and Kurdish. Such languages must not be equated with Arabic in spite of the substantial amount of words and structures that they borrowed from this language ever since they came into existence.

7 That might have been the same reason that pushed the North African Judge and Chancery Official, Ibn Mandhour (qtd. in Elias Muhanna, 2010) to show concern and worry about the Arabic language used at his time (late 13th century). As he wrote in the preface of his twenty-volume referential dictionary Lisan al-Arab (The Arab Tongue), "In our time, speaking Arabic is regarded as a vice. I have composed the present work in an age in which men take pride in [using] a language other than Arabic, and I have built it like Noah built the arch, enduring the sarcasm of his own people."

8 One major difference between Arabic dialects and New Englishes is that whereas the latter seem to be maturating and developing away from SE, the former remain close to SA and are

often accompanied with explanations in SA aiming at helping communication and understanding, especially between people coming from different regions within the Arab world.

9 At the same time that SE has been consolidated worldwide, the mass media and modern communication technologies have also fostered and locally promoted New Englishes doting them with a special jargon and very often with quite new and unintelligible structures, therefore accelerating their mutation into totally different forms of English (e.g. Singlish in Singapore and the pidgin language in Papua New Guinea.)

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Appendix

A Transcription Key for the pronunciation of Arabic words

pronunciation	Transliterated	Isolated	Transcription	pronunciation
أَلِف	ālif	ا	ā	Like A in Apple
بَاء	bā̕	ب	b	Like B in Baby
تَاء	tā̕	ت	t	Like T in Tree
ثَاء	<u>th</u>ā̕	ث	<u>th</u>	Like the Th in Theory
جِيم	Jim	ج	j	Like the J in Jar
حَاء	<u>h</u>ā̕	ح	<u>h</u>	Like the h in he yet light in pronunciation
خَاء	<u>kh</u>ā̕	خ	<u>kh</u>	Like the Ch in the name Bach
دَال	dāl	د	d	Like the D in Dad
ذَال	zāl	ذ	<u>z</u>	Like the Th in The
رَاء	rā̕	ر	r	Like the R in Ram
زَاي	zāy	ز	z	Like the Z in zoo
سِين	sin	س	s	Like the S in See
شِين	<u>sh</u>in	ش	<u>sh</u>	Like the Sh in She
صَاد	<u>S</u>ād	ص	<u>s</u>	Like the S in Sad yet heavy in pronunciation
ضَاد	<u>d</u>ād	ض	<u>d</u>	Like the D in Dead yet heavy in pronunciation
طَاء	<u>t</u>ā̕	ط	<u>t</u>	Like the T in Table yet heavy in pronunciation
ظَاء	<u>z</u>ā̕	ظ	<u>.</u>	Like the Z in Zorro yet heavy in pronunciation
عَين	ɛain	ع	ݟ	Has no real equivalent sometimes they replace its sound with the A sound like for example the name Ali for علي ع/ali/
غَين	<u>gh</u>ain	غ	<u>gh</u>	Like the Gh in Ghandi
فَاء	fā̕	ف	f	Like the F in Fool

pronunciation	Transliterated	Isolated	Transcription	pronunciation
قَاف	qāf	ق	q	Like the Q in Queen yet heavy velar sound in pronunciation
كَاف	kāf	ك	k	Like the K in Kate
لَام	lām	ف	l	Like the L in Love
ميم	mim	م	m	Like the M in Moon
نُون	nun	ن	n	Like the N in Noon
هَاء	hā'	ه هـ	h	Like the H in He
وَاو	wāw	,	W(aw, au, u)	Like the W in the reaction of astonishment saying: WAW!
يَاء	yā'	ي	Y (ay, ai, ·)	Like the Y in you
		ء	i, u,	Like I in Tin
				Like U in /fut/= Foot
هَمزَة	hamza	أ	ā	Like A in At
		إ	i	Like I in Sit
		أ	u	Like U in Put

Retrieved from http://www.arabic-keyboard.org/arabic/arabic-transliteration.php. (Accessed and adapted on 15 March 2012)