



World Englishes: A Critical Analysis

Author: Mario Saraceni

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Reviewer: Saksit Saengboon

School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development
Administration, Bangkok, Thailand

World Englishes: A Critical Analysis analyzes the multifaceted nature of English in today's increasingly interconnected world. The book covers four major parts: History (Part One); Language (Part Two); Ideology (Part Three) and Pedagogy (Part Four) in addition to an introductory disclaimer as to why another book on World Englishes is needed. Combining theory and practice, the book deserves a serious scrutiny by those concerned with World Englishes—be they sociolinguists, discourse analysts, or ELT professionals.

Focusing on the World Englishes paradigm, the author begins by narrating the extent to which the paradigm successfully presents fresh perspectives on the long-overdue understanding of language as a social practice rather than as a monolithic and bounded system. This truly sets the stage for how one should construe World Englishes. The transition from language as a system to language as a social practice is not without problems, however. This has prompted the author to discuss the scope of World Englishes with its attendant old and new challenges.

In **Part One**, the reader will come to appreciate the English language landscape covering the arrival of English in 449 A.D., the story of 'Old English', and English language ideologies that must necessarily tie themselves to nationhood. After a lengthy discussion on this topic, the author goes on to discuss new Englishes. What stands out in this discussion is the inclusion of the Kachruvian three concentric circles and, more importantly, criticism that has been leveled against them. Also noteworthy is a specific discussion of American English which, according to the author, sets the scene for an ever-increasing power of the English language that we know today, hence the interface between English language and politics.

Part Two focuses on ways in which World Englishes should be perceived. The author rightly points out the importance of recognizing inherent limitations in the paradigm. For example, sub-heading 4.3.2. is titled "How different are Englishes allowed to be?" This question is telling in the sense that mutual intelligibility, which is the ultimate goal of any communication, including World Englishes, cannot be ignored. Moreover, sub-heading 4.4.7. sheds light on World Englishes vis-à-vis dominant discourses, reminding the reader of the fact that the sociolinguistic reality called World Englishes is capable of becoming a site of linguistic, and ideological contests. It is also in Part Two that the author discusses English as a lingua franca (ELF), especially ELF versus ENL. This is crucial, given the fact that ELF is a prevalent sociolinguistic aspect of World Englishes in Kachru's Expanding Circle countries (Ishikawa, 2016). In fact, the author provides clear examples of ELF, taking into consideration an emerging form of English called "Thai English," which might be of interest to the Thai reader of World Englishes. The following Thai phrases are provided to support his arguments *soi*, *minor wife*, and *make merit*, which are found



used in the Bangkok Post newspaper. As the author puts it, "From a classic World Englishes perspective, the regular presence of such words and phrases in English-language texts in Thailand is seen as evidence of an emerging Thai English" (p. 116).

Part Three centers on ideology. The author begins the section by discussing linguistic imperialism and resistance. In so doing, he touches on American imperialism which, compared to the British influence, appears to be more powerful as an economic and political linguistic weapon. Indeed, the author points out that American imperialism is better seen through the global spread of a certain kind of coffee that appears to have driven local coffee owners out of business. This analogy suggests the intrusion of the English language in many a local area, much to the chagrin of indigenous language. That is, English is not always seen as an asset.

In **Part Four**, the author draws the reader's attention to a topic closer to home, that is, English language teaching. Presenting an all too familiar sub-topic (native vs. non-native English speaking teachers), the author delineates myths and discrimination that have shrouded the English teaching enterprise for decades. What makes Part Four all the more important is the inclusion of super-diversity. Super-diversity, which focuses on new patterns of migration and communication accelerated by the heightened connectedness of many strands of the contemporary life, underscores the ubiquitous role of English in today's diverse world (Cogo, 2012).

The four parts discussed above, while enabling the reader to appreciate the width and breadth of World Englishes, still miss another crucial component, contact literature. According to Watkhaolarm (2005), "[t]he term "contact literature," an extension of "contact language," refers to the literatures in English written by users of English as an additional language to delineate contexts which generally do not form part of what may be labeled as the traditions of English literature" (p. 145). That is to say, contact literature addresses creativity, one of the key aspects of World Englishes that has a great potential in generating new insights into World Englishes. In other words, a discussion of contact literature will make the analysis of the book live up to the moniker "a critical analysis" appended in the book's title.

In sum, given the author's effective presentation of theory (e.g., ideology) and practice (e.g., pedagogy) relating to World Englishes, this book is a must-read for those keenly interested in the affairs of the English we speak.

About the Reviewer

Saksit Saengboon, Ph.D. is a lecturer at NIDA's School of Language and Communication. He has taught fundamental English and Global Englishes. His research interests include Global Englishes, teacher development, and instructed second language acquisition.

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