Mario Saraceni/ John Williams/ Sue Wright

Norms and Authority in Language: the Case of UK English

Introduction

This article is bound to contrast with the other papers in this collection. English native speakers differ from the other groups studied in *Sociolinguistica* 28 in at least two major ways: first they are the users of the language that is spreading as a lingua franca and second they are users of a language which has never had a formal language academy.

In this issue we are concerned with norms and authority in language. How are languages codified, standardised and controlled? Who are the norm givers and the regulating authorities? In this article we take the historical *longue durée* approach to explain why this is a very difficult question to answer in the case of English.

1. Codification, standardisation and the lack of academy

The first interesting question that arises in this topic is why there has never been an English language academy. And as soon as one begins to reflect on this issue, other absences spring to mind; English was standardised and spread within the UK without the frame of formal language planning. If we see language planning in Cooper's (1989) terms as status, corpus and acquisition planning, then we shall find that the only extensive top down state intervention in acquisition in the UK was in acquisition planning - through state education for all.

1.1 Status planning

There is no law that sets down in statute that English will be the language of the state in England. In Wales there was a decree in the 16th century, which required those Welsh who held state office to use English for administration and law. Section 20 of the 1535 Act stipulated:

That all Justices, Commissioners, Sheriffs, Coroners, Escheators, Stewards, and their Lieutenants, and all other Officers and Ministers of the Law, shall proclaim and keep the Sessions Courts Hundreds Leets Sheriffs Courts, and all other Courts in the English Tongue; and all Oaths of Officers, Juries and Inquests, and all other Affidavits, Verdicts and Wager of Law to be given and done in the English Tongue; and also that from henceforth no Person or Persons that use the Welch Speech or Language, shall have or enjoy any manner Office or Fees within this

Realm of England, Wales, or other the King's Dominion, upon Pain of forfeiting the same Offices or Fees, unless he or they use and exercise the English Speech or Language.

This is the sole instance of deliberate effort at status planning. There is no written constitution in the UK, and laws develop as custom and practice. The status of the national language is part of this and acknowledged by custom and practice; there is no overt statement that English is the language of the state. Probably for this reason, some tend to see standard English simply as part of the natural fabric of society. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 4), for example, mention “a backdrop of remarkably widespread agreement about how sentences should be constructed for such purposes as publication, political communication, or government broadcasting,” even though they do not identify the source of this ‘widespread agreement’. However, what Schiffman (1992; 1996) has called covert status planning pertains. There is general consent that English is the language of the public space in the UK and that it will be the language used for interaction with local administration and national government.

This language normalisation was achieved as a part of nation building. Achieving and maintaining cohesion in a speech community requires effort. Bakhtin (1981) argued that standardisation goes against the natural tendency towards diversification as a speech community grows in size. Speakers are constantly pushing the language of their group towards heteroglossia. So if, in the UK, there were no institutions authorised to monitor usage and promote cohesion, how was the standard language introduced and how is it maintained? There were several processes that promoted the development and adoption of the national language:

- the centralisation of power and bureaucracy began as the Tudor dynasty brought feudalism to an end and the language variety of the capital and court became the medium of law and bureaucracy;
- 19th century industrialisation required a more educated workforce and triggered primary education for all, delivered in the national language (Gellner 1983);
- the growing consumption of mass media in the national language promoted competence in both written and spoken forms of the national language (Anderson 1991);
- the move from an army of foreign mercenaries to national armed forces aided linguistic convergence¹;
- general suffrage and the requirements of democracy encouraged a community of communication.

¹ As with most armies of the time, the British armies of 18th century had more foreign mercenaries than national soldiers. In the 19th century the British army moved slowly towards being a national army and national service was introduced during the First World War (1916). In the trenches, the melting pot situation, the pressures of patriotism and sheer necessity for survival combined to aid the spread of standard English.

No one involved in these phenomena had as a prime goal a change in language behaviour; the linguistic shifts which resulted were a side effect (Wright 2004). They were, of course, welcome, since language became in the 19th century one of the defining criteria of national belonging. There was strong normative pressure to move to English; to do otherwise was to call into question one's patriotism. As Ammon (2003) remarks there could be strong social forces to determine language standardisation in place of legislation. This describes the situation in the UK.

1.2. Corpus planning

Just as there was no state status planning in the UK, there was no state corpus planning. Many 18th century writers called for such an academy. This was in part a desire to take steps to stabilise the language so that posterity could read their works. Jonathan Swift was one of the most energetic and advocated a language academy in his *Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* which he sent to Queen Anne in 1712. He was supported by other literary figures, such as Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison and Alexander Pope. Although the queen was favourable to the idea, she died in 1714, and the new monarch was George I who spoke German and had thus very little interest in any language management in English. The idea was shelved.

However, the idea that a dictionary was needed - on the model of the French Academy dictionary - had taken hold. Samuel Johnson took on the task. In 1755 he published his two volume dictionary of the English language. This was a prodigious achievement, since he worked with very little help or collaboration. The task of producing a dictionary with 43,000 entries took him seven years. His approach was to search for illustrative examples of a word in the literature he knew and to which he had access. Like Addison and Pope before him, Johnson took as his authorities literary "writers of the first reputation", his intention being to "preserve the purity ... of our English idiom" (Johnson 1755). It was, of course, a very personal interpretation of the English language. He freely admits in his preface that the words he does not understand he has omitted and left for future lexicographers (Johnson 1755). Thus the dictionary lacks some technical and professional vocabularies. Nor was he willing to explain terms he considered bawdy or vulgar and excluded items accordingly.

Before the late 20th century, dictionaries in all countries were elite productions. The influential Johnson dictionary is exceptional in that here the elite was essentially one man relying on his own reading.

Advice on grammar and syntax also came from individuals rather than state institutions. The influential *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, for example, was produced by the schoolmaster Henry Fowler (1926).

1.3. Acquisition planning: Education

The one area where language management was actively pursued in the UK was education. Schooling was the key agent in spreading standard English throughout the state. The Elementary Education Act 1880 insisted on compulsory attendance of children from the age of five to ten. Subsequent acts raised the minimum leaving age to eleven, then twelve and by 1893 to thirteen. Thus by the end of the 19th century all British children were experiencing at least eight years of schooling in an English which would have been the standard or close to the standard.

There was intense pressure on those in the British Isles who did not speak a variety on the English language dialect continuum to shift language. An enquiry into education in Wales, undertaken in 1847 attacked the Welsh language and Non-Conformist religion as the cause of Welsh ‘underdevelopment’ (Price Jones 1978). A carrot and stick approach was adopted: the move to English was billed as a prerequisite for social promotion; the use of Welsh in school brought punishment. The Education Act (Scotland) 1872 made no mention at all of Gaelic (MacKinnon 1991). Monolingual English teachers intensified the shift to English already taking place because of the need for seasonal migration to supplement incomes in the Highlands and Islands. In short, education was the one place where there was explicit government policy promoting English and muscular linguistic unification. In the schools we can see the classic nation building aim of one people, one territory and one language.

1.4. Acquisition: Literacy

One of the key events in the shift to English (and indeed in the codification and standardisation of the language) was the Reformation. In the Protestant church, reading the Bible played a central role in worship. Relations with God were no longer mediated by the clergy but rooted in knowledge and study of the sacred text. Literacy grew in 16th and 17th Britain with Bible study, and not only among a male elite. The rising middle classes learnt to read, and this included the women as well as the men. The new technology of printing made access to the key religious texts relatively affordable. Even quite modest families could purchase a printed Bible. The translation published as the King James Bible in 1611 provided the English with the text through which they became literate and a model for their own production. Four centuries after its publication this version of this Bible continues to have an enduring effect on the English language. A great number of current turns of phrase, common sayings and proverbs are derived from the dictionary. A recent work by Crystal (2010) tracks their usage in English authors; he finds hundreds of examples both from the past and the present day.

The remarkable thing about the spread of standard English as the national language of the UK has been how little explicit top down language policy is to be found². There has been relatively little official intervention in the codification, standardisation, acquisition and normalisation of English as the official language of the UK. However, the language outcome in the UK has not been so different from the linguistic unification of European nation states where there was strong interventionist language policy, enshrined in law.

2. The spread of English – a pluricentric language

English only became a language for intergroup communication relatively recently. Richard Mulcaster, writing in 1582 to promote the use of English instead of Latin admitted how little use English was to the traveller: “Our English tung ... is of small reach. It stretcheth no further than this Iland of ours, naie not there ouer all” (Mulcaster 1582: 256).

2.1. The English language and colonialism

This was to change. The adventurers, colonists and soldiers who established the British empire ensured the spread of English (for an overview, see Crystal 2003). This took place in two distinct ways in relation to two main types of colonisation: settlement and exploitation. In the former, the British settlers took over land, ousting the original inhabitants. Where autochthonous peoples survived the military onslaught and/or contact with carriers of diseases from which they had no immunity, they were corralled in reservations or otherwise marginalised. Their languages were eclipsed along with their culture and social structures and the language of the territory became English. This was the case in present day United States, anglophone Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where English became *de facto* if not *de jure* the state language. It is the language of the law, of governance, of education, and the most common language among citizens.

In the second form of colonisation, the principal aim was to annex territories to the empire primarily for exploitation purposes. Colonists from Britain did not force out the autochthonous population but employed them as labour in plantations, mines and factories. English became the language of contact between colonialists

² It is noteworthy that citizenship tests introduced a formal linguistic obligation for those applying to become UK citizens. The Life in the UK Test brought in in 2005 required skill in reading and writing English as well as knowledge of British culture and history. It has frequently been compared to a ‘pub quiz’ in the national press. In October 2013 the test was made more difficult and the level of English competence required was made explicit (European framework B1 level).

and those bilinguals among the colonised peoples who acted as their bureaucrats and managers. Other interaction between coloniser and colonised was likely to be in a pidgin. During the colonial period, English remained largely an elite language in these territories, with limited or no penetration in society. It was only after decolonisation in the mid twentieth century that this changed. English spread in part because many post-colonial states had no historic unity to which they could return. Frontiers drawn by European powers with no regard for linguistic, religious or cultural divisions had brought together disparate groups. As these new state boundaries were conserved after decolonisation, there was often no autochthonous language that would be accepted by the whole population as the official state language. Thus English often remained – sometimes adopted as an official state language (e.g. Zambia; Zimbabwe), sometimes recognised as a default option among competing groups for whom no local language was universally accepted (e.g. India). This led to the use of English as an official language in schools, universities, and government offices and thus to a situation where English became cultural capital and an advantage for social mobility.

2.2. Kachru's model

These two ways in which English spread in the world have been termed respectively “First Diaspora” and “Second Diaspora” by Kachru (1986). On the basis of this distinction, Kachru developed a model describing the geo-historical spread of English: the so-called “three circles of English”. According to this model, the Inner Circle refers to territories where English spread as a result of the First Diaspora, the Outer Circle to territories where English arrived with the Second Diaspora, and the Expanding Circle to the rest of the world where English has no colonial history, but is growing in importance as an international lingua franca.

For our present argument, Kachru's model is relevant because of the way he positions the different categories of speaker in relation to ‘norms’. He defines the Inner Circle as “norm-providing” in the sense that it is primarily in Britain, North America and, to some extent, Australia, that the norms of the English language have been historically established and exported to the rest of the world. He defines the Outer Circle as “norm-developing” since in Second-Diaspora territories English has achieved such a depth and range of use that it is becoming nativised in local sociolinguistic contexts. And as Outer Circle varieties of English acquire stable local features and norms, they move away from Inner Circle influence. He would argue that English in the Expanding Circle, by contrast, has not yet reached the same level of autonomy and that is the reason why he defines it as “norm-dependent”.

Kachru's model has been extremely influential and has enabled a paradigm shift in the ways in which the spread of English in the world has been understood and studied. On the other hand, there has been criticism of the idea and some (e.g.

Bruthiaux 2003; Pennycook 2007; Park/ Wee 2009; Yano 2009) argue that the definition of the circles in terms of their status with regard to language norms is not as clear-cut as the model suggests. Bearing this in mind and accepting some of the criticisms, we think, nevertheless, that it is still valid to work with Kachru's broad distinctions for our present argument. Three key questions develop from the model: how does the Inner Circle play the norm-providing language gatekeeper role and is there a clear attempt at top down status, corpus or acquisition planning? Does the Outer Circle accept Inner Circle gatekeeping and what planning takes place? What are the attitudes in the Expanding Circle towards norms emanating from native speakers?

2.3. Norms and the Inner Circle

Just as in the national situation, norm-giving is not organised formally at international level by state institutions. There is no equivalent, for example, of the Cervantes institute that has as one of its *raison d'être* the maintenance of intercomprehensibility in the Spanish speaking world (Mar-Molinero/ Stewart 2009). The British Council set up in 1935 was never given an explicit language management role. In the first instance its aim was to promote British culture and values in the intellectual battle against fascism in 1930s Europe (Pennycook 1994). It might have acquired an overt language planning dimension had Winston Churchill remained prime minister. During World War II, he made several pronouncements on the utility of promoting English, as an instrument for gaining and maintaining soft power³ And to achieve the spread of English he lent support to the system of Basic English developed by Charles Ogden⁴. In the wake of his electoral defeat in 1945 support for Basic English evaporated and there was reduced funding for the British Council.

In the period since World War II the British Council has focussed on acquisition: teaching English, training teachers of English and providing examinations in English. It is a profit oriented organisation, a quango sponsored by the Foreign Office but required to be mostly self-financing. It has been commercially very successful⁵.

3 'Such plans offer far better prizes than taking away other people's provinces or lands or grinding them down in exploitation. The empires of the future are the empires of the mind' Winston Churchill's speech at Harvard 1943.

4 Basic English was an English-based controlled language created by linguist and philosopher Charles Ogden in the 1930s as an international auxiliary language. It did not find success except as an aid for teaching English as a Second Language.

5 Some scholars argue that the British Council sells English (e.g. Phillipson 1992), but it is more accurate to say that it has capitalised on the spread of English and makes money from it. It is not UK policy initiatives to spread English enacted by the British Council that have made English an international lingua franca (ELF). The rise of ELF has to be understood as the outcome of the conjunction of complex political, economic, military, technological, cultural factors.

Together with Cambridge Examination and IDP, the Australian equivalent of the British Council, it owns and administers IELTS (International English Language Testing System). IELTS and the American based TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) are internationally recognised English language examinations, and are the main linguistic gatekeepers for international students who wish to register at an anglophone university or for applicants for jobs in English-speaking transnational corporations. Such language tests act as agents of Inner Circle language prescriptivism, reinforcing the linguistic *status quo*. In this role the British Council is a norm enforcer.

Another domain in which Inner Circle linguistic norms are promoted and protected is international academic publishing. The guidelines that many scholarly journals offer often explicitly recommend that “non-native speakers” or scholars for whom English is ‘not their first language’ seek assistance from first-language or native speakers of English. In the academy there is dissension over this: some are concerned that rigid language norms exclude important work from scholars whose contributions are discounted because of language issues (Canagarajah 1996; Englander/ López-Bonilla 2011; Tietzel/ Dick 2013) but there is also a body of opinion that is strongly against making space for localised forms of English on the premise that scholarly exchange needs an agreed standard language in order for there to be maximum intercomprehensibility (Milroy 2007).

2.4. Norms and the Outer Circle

As Kachru noted it is possible to see new features and norms developing in post-colonial settings. However, such innovation does not usually receive recognition in official circles. On the contrary, there is often explicit policy to promote Inner Circle models. Prescriptivism is frequent, especially at the level of education policies. In Malaysia, for example, the new curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education states that “Teachers should use Standard British English as a reference and model for teaching the language. It should be used as a reference for spelling and grammar as well as pronunciation for standardisation.” (Malaysian Ministry of Education 2012: 4)

Malaysian English, about which sociolinguists have written abundantly (see, among others, Bolton/ Hashim 2011) is completely unacknowledged here. The specific mention of “Standard British English” considerably restricts the scope of what is deemed acceptable to the norms emanating from just one, relatively small, subsection of the Inner Circle. Additionally, the term “Standard British English” is used in a way which suggests an official denomination and a level of precise codification neither of which exists.

Even more evidently than in Malaysia, in nearby Singapore there is a situation in which the local variety of English has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention

among sociolinguists (see, e.g. Lim/ Pakir/ Wee 2010; Alsagoff 2012; Leimgruber 2013) and, at the same time, been actively discouraged by the government. The “Speak Good English Movement” (SGEM), launched in 2000, has sought to eradicate ‘Singlish’, the name popularly given to the basilectal variety of Singaporean English (Rubdy 2001). Tellingly, in a letter to the *Straits Times*, the national newspaper, two important government representatives, from the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Education, defended the SGEM by asserting that “While Singlish may be a fascinating academic topic for linguists to write papers about, Singapore has no interest in becoming a curious zoo specimen to be dissected and described by scholars.” (*Straits Times*, 12 December 2008)

The English Language Syllabus produced by the Ministry of Education in Singapore indicates “internationally acceptable English” as the model for teaching and learning, but the only mention of variation is made exclusively with reference to differences between British and American English:

Teachers will also help pupils become aware that they have to adjust their choice of words, including terms of address and tone, when they interact with their peers and others from different cultures and background. For example, what the British call the boot of a car, the Americans call the trunk. Such awareness will take into account social norms and cross-cultural values and sensitivity. (Ministry of Education, Singapore 2010)

Once again, the possibility that such awareness and sensitivity might include the local variety of English is not even contemplated.

The idea that English belongs to those who use it (Smith 1976) has not spread widely in official spheres of the Outer Circle. Appropriation may exist at grass roots level and in literary production, but most authorities favour policing standard English, in order to conserve what they conceive as national cultural capital in a globalising world, where English has spread.

3. English as a lingua franca

Let us turn now to the question of the spread of English. Why has it spread? Why is there a so-called Expanding Circle? And how are norms developed and spread among the ever-growing number of ELF users?

3.1. Why do lingua francas spread?

When the native language of a group becomes a lingua franca this is always a barometer of power relations. The use of Greek and Latin in Antiquity, Latin and Arabic in the medieval period, French and German in the early modern era, the centuries long spread of Mandarin, all derive from the political and economic power of the

group and/or the desirability of accessing their technological or cultural production. Where languages are linked to a religion, they may spread as it spreads, acquired with the doctrines and beliefs of the religion. It may be very difficult to limit lingua franca use where users believe knowledge and practice is to their advantage, e.g. the long battle against the use of French in 18th and early 19th century Prussia. On the other hand, when the utility of a lingua franca is seen to be exhausted, it can very soon disappear, e.g. the eclipse of Russian in the 1990s in the former Warsaw pact countries.

The rise of English as a lingua franca derived from all the factors mentioned above. Politically and economically, the English-speaking states have played major roles in world affairs over the last two centuries. Technologically, they were the site of much innovation from the industrial revolution to the internet. Their popular culture (particularly film and music) has been marketed successfully world-wide. Christianity was and is propagated using the English language for religious worship⁶. The basis of the rise of English as a lingua franca thus comes from all the usual reasons. However, its longevity as a lingua franca derives from its double centre - by the fact that the power of the English-speaking US rose as the power of the English-speaking UK waned.

3.2. Is ELF different?

Although the origins of the spread of ELF were classic, we could argue that the way it is currently expanding in the early 21st century is unprecedented. All the data for patterns of contact (cf. Jenkins *et al* 2011) suggest that many instances of current ELF acquisition are not driven by the desire to interact with English native speakers, but by the need to have a language in one's repertoire to deal with the flows, contacts and networks of a globalising world. The configuration of many aspects of political and commercial activity entails transnational communication. International regulation requires military and/or legal cooperation. The global penetration of the new e-technologies allows inter-connectedness on unprecedented scales. Widespread knowledge of ELF allows interaction among linguistically disparate groups and individuals, and English native speakers may or may not be part of the mix.

Given these developments what is happening to the forms of ELF? There are competing ideas about lingua franca spread and we can identify three main groups: those who are trying to maintain English native speaker norms, those who see emerging norms in ELF interaction and those who believe that ELF is more linguistic

⁶ The Summer Institute of Linguistics is an exception since their policy is to translate the sacred texts into local languages. However, other proselytising groups from the Anglo-Saxon world use English – e.g. Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses etc.

approach than linguistic code. The first group includes all those for whom the conservation of native speaker models contributes to the maintenance of their own cultural capital, whether English was acquired as first or second language. Here the old paradigm of second language acquisition, (where the aim was to learn a different national language system) remains in place. The second group see the emergence of a new language variety that can be described. They are amassing vast corpora in order to be able to track the new patterns of usage that characterise ELF (e.g. House 2002; 2010; Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011; 2012). The third group argue that such codification will encourage unhelpful standardisation and models (e.g. Saraceni 2008; 2009; 2010; Canagarajah 2013; Rubdy/ Alsagoff 2013). They suggest that ELF cannot be seen as a set of norms and constraints, nor even a set of alternative models. Rather it should be conceived as a new approach, where negotiation allows the mutual shaping of the language that will be used in that particular community of communication. In the enormous, amorphous mass of ELF users, we have bottom-up agency rather than top down structure; language form is less predictable and more flexible as users regulate the language in whatever way fits their purposes. In order for communication to take place the features need to be universally recognisable but, without normative pressure, can be moulded in each individual instance of communication of ELF.

Moreover, the interaction in globalisation is now so different in scale and speed that a number of scholars have suggested that we need new concepts to understand what is taking place. Vertovec (2010: 86) has coined the term superdiversity to characterise the complexity of face to face encounters as ‘more people are now moving from more places, through more places, to more places’. Jørgensen *et al* (2011) applied the concept to virtual settings arguing that individuals constantly face superdiversity on the internet since they are likely to meet an immeasurably wider range of resources than was the case just a few decades ago. Blommaert and Rampton (2011) maintain that these superdiverse conditions are changing transnational communication and thus language. We have in much internet interaction – particularly social media - examples of what Agha (2005) has termed ‘enregisterment’, the acknowledgement that non-elite speakers now play a major role in the generalisation of the recognition of linguistic signs. And we are beginning to witness ‘languageing’, the Hallidayan notion that people exchange meanings by negotiating with their interlocutor and accommodating to difference (Halliday 1978).

4. ELF and changing norms for English native speakers?

If ELF is indeed not only moving to be a different variety from standard English but also implying a different approach to transnational interaction, there are consequences for English native speakers. In the UK is there any indication of awareness of change, any evident attempts to counter change or to prepare speakers for it? In

this last section we look briefly to see how English native speakers are reacting to the norms of ELF and whether education in the UK is taking account of them.

4.1. Changing practices in lexicography

Although the multi-volume (and now online) *Oxford English Dictionary* is popularly regarded as a prestigious and prescriptive authority on English usage, its compilers – from the earliest pioneers onwards – have tended to reject this role, seeing themselves rather as ‘historians’ and ‘recorders’ of the language (Brewer 2010). The tradition of determining usage by collecting citations from multifarious sources, rather than relying on a single authoritative body, that we described above as the *modus operandi* of Dr Johnson, is arguably maintained today by the corpus-based approach in lexicography.

The first systematic attempt to compile an entire series of dictionaries using a thoroughgoing corpus-based (corpus-driven) approach was the COBUILD (Collins Birmingham University International Language Database) project (1980-1997), under the direction of Professor John Sinclair. During the lifetime of the project, the corpus (known as the Bank of English) grew from an initial 20 million words to 200 million or more by the mid-1990s (Sinclair 1995: viii), and was always eclectic in its choice of content.

A number of aspects of the COBUILD project are quite revealing with regard to the nature of the linguistic authority that was being constructed at that period. Firstly, it is noteworthy that COBUILD was a public-private partnership – and indeed one of its major competitors at this period, Longman Dictionaries, was a fully commercial enterprise – and expected to make a profit. Such fierce commercial imperatives are a relatively unusual state of affairs in the world of dictionary publishing. Very few languages in the world can support a well-developed, multi-player commercial market for monolingual dictionaries. (To the list of COBUILD’s and Longman’s competitors one can add the names of Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and latterly Macmillan Dictionaries.)

In most other states, major lexicographic projects tend to be organized through government agencies or university departments, and may require substantial financial input from public funds. This state of affairs favours a degree of centralization of linguistic authority that is quite far removed from the situation in the UK. Moreover, the COBUILD and Longman dictionaries were produced away from the established English cultural centres of Oxford, Cambridge, and London. COBUILD was based in Birmingham and Longman in Essex, and lexicographers from these two publishers prided themselves as recorders of English as it was being used by ordinary people. They would occasionally set themselves up in opposition to the Oxbridge tradition, and engage in ‘knocking copy’ against their lexicographic rivals, painting

them as elitist, out of touch, or behind the times (see Rinvolutri 1999; Williams 1996)

However, the enormous market for corpus-based English dictionaries has been driven not by a desire for authoritative norms and standards on the part of native speakers, but to cater for the English language learning (and reference) needs of millions of non-native speakers. Corpora, by their very nature, can reveal quite detailed information about the syntactic and collocational behaviour of high- and medium-frequency lexical items – precisely those that are of most practical interest to non-native speakers. Native speakers, by contrast, are more likely to consult dictionaries to find out about low-frequency items (definition, spelling...), i.e. the words they are least familiar with. Corpora are much less helpful in this regard; consequently they have had a much lesser impact on monolingual dictionaries designed for native speakers. It was thus of immense commercial importance that the advent of corpus-based dictionaries in the late 1980s and 1990s coincided with a major expansion in the market for English language learning materials (fall of communism in Europe, liberalization in China...)

The creation of large, institutionally held corpora in the 1980s and 1990s may seem to have unwittingly resuscitated the idea of the dictionary as an authority on usage, simply displacing the sources of that authority from literary “writers of the first reputation” onto science and technology. The front matter of the second COBUILD dictionary (1995) contains statements such as these:

Using computer techniques to build a substantial corpus... has moved the science of lexicography into a new phase. The power of the machine ... liberates the study of language, much in the same way as the technology of the electron microscope opens new vistas for the researcher into physics and the natural sciences.

The techniques ... are new and use advanced computer technology... With our textual evidence it is possible to be precise about ... the relative importance of different senses of a word; and the typical environment in which a word or phrase is used. Even when statements like this are already familiar, they are made with a different kind of authority in this book... We expect these examples to do quite a different job from invented examples; something like the job done in Dr Johnson's dictionary and the OED. They are examples of good practice... They provide a reliable guide for speaking and writing in the English of today.

However, this moment of top-down scientific neo-prescriptivism proved to be relatively short-lived. Hard on the heels of the corpus revolution came the internet revolution. Up till the late 1990s, computerized corpora could only be held and compiled, at great expense of time and resources, by large institutions such as universities and publishing companies. The language was back in the hands of those who had the financial means to control cultural capital. Then, almost overnight, copious amounts of electronic text became available to anyone with an internet-linked computer. Within a few years, anyone with any kind of interest in language could check authentic usage using Google searches, and could even download

and investigate their own corpora using software such as BootCat⁷ and AntConc⁸. Anyone could be their own corpus linguist, their own Dr Johnson.

The twist in the tale is that the success of the internet has led to the decline of the traditional dictionary and the authority it represented. There are so many free online dictionaries and linguistic resources that fewer and fewer people are willing to pay for paper dictionaries (or even electronic dictionaries) any more. Several prestigious dictionaries, from the *OED* to the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* have ceased paper publication altogether (Flood 2012). In parallel with these developments, there has been a growth in the number of crowd-sourced resources, from the amusing but unsystematic Urban Dictionary, to much more reliable and overtly managed projects such as Wiktionary and Macmillan's Open Dictionary (Rundell 2013).

Thus a point has been reached, in English lexicography, where linguistic authority has been thoroughly dispersed and democratized. In common with ELF as discussed above, the main impetus for development is very much bottom-up. It is unclear where norms and authority reside. Interestingly, this question does not appear to have generated a great deal of interest among English native speakers.

4.2. Lack of awareness or lack of interest in education?

This lack of interest – or perhaps awareness - is to be noted in education as well as among the general public. Educationalists in the UK in their vast majority, still act on the assumption that the world is learning the English of the Inner Circle. British children are given little preparation in how to interact with the great mass of ELF users.

In order to test this assertion we posted the following set of questions on various internet discussion boards set up for teachers of English in UK and US:

Is there anyone who is looking at the forms of English that are used on the internet? In particular I am interested in finding some examples of teaching English native speaking pupils to communicate in English with non-native speakers of English. Anyone doing that? How do you teach English as a lingua franca? Anyone trying to teach cross linguistic negotiation and accommodation? Anybody think that we should be thinking about this?

In the three months since we started doing this there has been no response to the core question and where there has been a post in reply, there has been some misunderstanding of the intended meaning of the question: discussion, for example, of the need to learn foreign languages.

⁷ <http://bootcat.sslmit.unibo.it/>

⁸ <http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html>

Conclusion

In summary we can say that the question of linguistic norms in the UK is not clear cut. There is no doubt that a certain kind of ‘correct’ English provides cultural capital, but it is difficult to pinpoint the source of the authority that adjudicates usage. Norm-making is not overseen in any academy or government department. Norm-enforcing is largely the province of education (and editors). In the UK it may be more accurate to use the term ‘models’ rather than ‘norms’. Such an approach has very deep roots. Already in the 18th century, Joseph Priestley of the Royal Society was pre-empting modern descriptivist tradition:

Those who wrote in the language while it was a living one will be accounted the standards of it; and *even their imperfections* must be adopted by all who use it after them (Priestley 1762, cited in Walker Read 1986, our emphasis).

In this respect, Priestley can be seen not only as an ancestor of corpus linguistics, but also in the mainstream of British attitudes towards their language. Although departure from the norm in grammar or orthography still attracts censure (e.g. letters of complaint if ‘mistakes’ appear in the written press) and books on correct usage are widely read (e.g. Lynne Truss’ *Eats, shoots and leaves*, a work on punctuation mistakes, was a recent bestseller in the UK), there seems to be a high level of tolerance for novelty.

Finally, we should note the large degree of insouciance within the English native speaker community for what is taking place outside the Inner Circle. Little preparation is being made to take advantage of the growing currency of ELF in global interconnectedness and there is little evidence of linguistic preparation for the trans-national world that is emerging. Perhaps because they see their lingua franca in ascension, English native speakers have not paid much attention to developing practices. If - or perhaps more accurately when - the advantage of being an English native speaker wanes in the context of international ELF, it will be interesting to see whether this insouciance continues.

References

- Agha, A. (2005): Voice, footing, enregisterment. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15 (1): 38–59.
- Alsagoff, L. (2012): The development of English in Singapore: Language policy and planning in nation building. In E. Low/ A. Hashim, (eds.) *English in Southeast Asia: Features, Policy and Language in Use*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 137–154.
- Anderson, B. (1991): *Imagined Communities*. 2nd edition. London: Verso.
- Ammon, U. (2003): On the social forces that determine what is standard in a language and on conditions of successful implementation. *Sociolinguistica* 17: 1–10.
- Bakhtin M (1981): *The Bakhtin Reader*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Blommaert, J. / Rampton, B. (2011): Language and Superdiversity. *Diversities* 13 (2).

- Bolton, K./ Hashim, A. (eds.) (2011): *Malaysian English Language and Literature*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Boon, L.C./ Peng, H. (2008): Good English the Way to go. 12 December.
- Brewer, C. (2010): Prescriptivism and descriptivism in the first, second and third editions of OED. *English Today* 26 (2): 24-33.
- Bruthiaux, P. (2003): Squaring the Circles: Issues in Modeling English Worldwide. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 13: 159-178.
- Canagarajah, S. (1996): Nondiscursive Requirements in Academic Publishing, Material Resources of Periphery Scholars, and the Politics of Knowledge Production. *Written Communication* 13 (4): 435-472.
- Canagarajah, S. (2013): *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Cooper, R. (1989): *Language Planning and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2003): *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2010): *Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Englander, K/ López-Bonilla, G. (2011): Acknowledging or denying membership: Reviewers' responses to non-anglophone scientists' manuscripts. *Discourse Studies* 13 (4): 395-416.
- Flood, A. (2012): Macmillan Dictionary to go digital after publisher announces final print editions. *The Guardian*, Wednesday 7 November.
- Fowler, H. (1926): *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gellner, E. (1983): *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Halliday, M. (1978): An interpretation of the functional relationship between language and social structure. In U. Quastoff (ed.) *Sprachstruktur – Sozialstruktur: Zur Linguistischen Theorienbildung*, 3–42.
- House, J. (2002): Communicating in English as a Lingua Franca. In S. Foster-Cohen/ T. Ruthenberg/ M-L. Poschen (eds.) *Eurosla Yearbook 2*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 243-261.
- House, J. (2010): The Pragmatics of English as a Lingua Franca. In A. Trosborg (ed.) *Pragmatics across Languages and Cultures*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 363-387.
- Huddleston R./ Pullum, G. (2002): *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jenkins, J. (2007): *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins J./ Cogo A./ Dewey M. (2011): Review of developments in research into English as a lingua franca. *Language Teaching* 44 (3): 281–315.
- Johnson, S. (1755): Preface to a Dictionary of the English Language. (<http://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com>)
- Jørgensen, J./ Karrebæk, M./ Madsen, L./ Møller, J. (2011): Polylinguaging in Superdiversity'. *Diversities* 13 (2).
- Kachru, B. (1986): *The Alchemy of English: the Spread, Functions, and Models of Non-native Englishes*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Leimgruber, J. R. E. (2013): *Singapore English: Structure, Variation and Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lim, L./ Pakir, A./ Wee, L. (eds.): (2010) *English in Singapore*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Malaysian Ministry of Education (2012): *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah*. Putrajaya: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Mar-Molinero, C./ Stewart, M. (2009): *Globalization and Language in the Spanish Speaking World*. Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- MacKinnon, K. (1991): *Gaelic a Past & Future Prospect*. Edinburgh: Saltire Society.

- Milroy, J. (2007): The ideology of the standard language. In *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*. London: Routledge, 133-139.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore (2010): *English Language Syllabus 2010*. Singapore: Curriculum Planning and Development.
- Mulcaster, R. (1582): *The First Part of the Elementarie which Entreateth Chefelie of the Right Writing of our English Tung*. London: Vautroullier.
- Park, J./ Wee, L. (2009): The three circles redux: a market-theoretic perspective on World Englishes. *Applied Linguistics* 30 (3): 389–406.
- Pennycook, A. (1994): *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. Harlow: Longman.
- Pennycook, A. (2007): *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. London: Routledge.
- Price Jones, F. (1978): The Blue Books of 1847. In J. Williams and G. Hughes (eds.) *The History of Education in Wales*. Swansea, 127-44.
- Rinvolucris, M. (1999): The UK, EFLese Sub-Culture and Dialect. *Folio* 5 (2).
- Rubdy, R. (2001): Creative destruction: Singapore's Speak Good English movement. *World Englishes* 20 (2): 341-355.
- Rubdy, R./ Alsagoff, L. (eds.) (2013): *The Global-Local Interface, Language Choice and Hybridity*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Rundell, M. (2013): Who needs dictionaries? How dictionaries are dissolving into the larger world of "search" and what that means for language users.
(http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/sites/ec/files/MR_BC-Seminar_9%20Oct%202012_0.pdf. Accessed 22/12/2013)
- Saraceni, M. (2010): *The Relocation of English: Shifting Paradigms in a Global Era*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Saraceni, M. (2009): Relocating English: towards a new paradigm for English in the world'. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 9 (3): 175-186.
- Saraceni, M. (2008): English as a Lingua Franca: Between Form and Function. *English Today* 24 (2): 20-26.
- Schiffman, H. (1992): Resisting arrest in status planning: structural and covert impediments to status change. *Language and Communication* 12 (1): 1-15.
- Schiffman, H. (1996): *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy*. London: Routledge.
- Sinclair, J. et al. (eds.) (1995): *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*. London: HarperCollins
- Seidlhofer, B. (2011): *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2012): Corpora and English as a lingua franca. In K. Hyland/ M. Chau/ M. Handford (eds). *Corpus Applications in Applied Linguistics*. London: Continuum, 135-149.
- Smith, L. (1976): ESOL → EIAL: A position paper on the teaching/learning of English as an International Auxiliary Language. *TESL Reporter* 10 (1): 1-15.
- Swift, J. (1712): *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue*. London: Benj. Tooke.
- Tietze1, S./ Dick, P. (2013): The Victorious English Language: Hegemonic Practices in the Management Academy. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 22 (1): 122-134.
- Truss, L. (2003): *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. London: Profile.
- Vertovec, S. (2010): Towards Post-Multiculturalism? Changing Conditions, Communities and Contexts of Diversity. *International Social Science Journal* 61: 83-95.
- Walker Read, A. (1986): The history of lexicography. In R. Ilson, (ed.) *Lexicography: an Emerging International Profession*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Williams, J. (1996): Enough Said: The Problems of Obscurity and Cultural Reference in Learner's Dictionary Examples. *Proceedings of the 7th EURALEX (European Association for Lexicography) Conference, Göteborg, Sweden*, 497-505.
- Wright, S. (2004): *Language Policy and Language Planning: from Nationalism to Globalisation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Yano, Y. (2009): The future of English: Beyond the Kachruvian three circle model? In K. Murata/ J. Jenkins (eds.) *Global Englishes in Asian contexts: Current and future debates*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 208-225.

(Mario.saraceni@port.ac.uk/ john.williams@port.ac.uk/ sue.wright@port.ac.uk)