



THE PLURICENTRICITY OF ENGLISH: ANALYZING THE PHILOLOGICAL SHIFT FROM 'STANDARD ENGLISH' TO 'WORLD ENGLISHES'

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Abstract

This article examines the historical and linguistic evolution of English from a monolithic colonial language to a pluricentric global phenomenon. By analyzing the "Three Circles of English" model proposed by Braj B. Kachru, the paper discusses the philological processes of nativization and acculturation. It argues that the traditional pedagogical focus on "Native Speakerism" is being replaced by a more inclusive "English as a Lingua Franca" (ELF) paradigm.

Keywords: World Englishes, Three Circles Model, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Pluricentricity, Nativization, Native Speakerism, Sociolinguistics, TESL.

1. Introduction

In the 19th century, English philology focused almost exclusively on the historical development of the language within the British Isles. However, the 21st-century reality is that non-native speakers now outnumber native speakers by a ratio of roughly three to one. This demographic shift has fundamentally altered the philological landscape. English is no longer a "single" language owned by the United Kingdom or the United States; it has become a "pluricentric" language with multiple centers of authority.



2. The Three Circles Model

To understand the current state of English philology, one must reference the framework established by Braj Kachru. He divided the English-speaking world into three distinct concentric circles:

* The Inner Circle: Traditional bases of English (UK, USA, Canada, Australia). These are "norm-providing" countries.

* The Outer Circle: Countries with a colonial history where English serves as an institutionalized second language (India, Nigeria, Singapore, Philippines). These are "norm-developing."

* The Expanding Circle: Countries where English is learned as a foreign language for international communication (China, Uzbekistan, Brazil). These are "norm-dependent."

3. The Process of Nativization

As English takes root in the "Outer Circle," it undergoes a philological process known as nativization. This occurs when the language adapts to the local cultural and linguistic environment.

* Lexical Innovation: The creation of new words or meanings (e.g., "prepone" in Indian English meaning the opposite of "postpone").

* Syntactic Modification: Subtle changes in grammar, such as the use of the progressive tense with stative verbs ("I am knowing the answer").

From a philological perspective, these are not "errors" but rather evidence of a living language evolving to meet the needs of its speakers.

4. Implications for TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language)



The rise of "World Englishes" challenges the "Native Speaker Myth" in language teaching. Traditionally, the goal of an ESL student was to sound like a BBC newsreader or an American actor. However, modern applied linguistics suggests that intelligibility is more important than accent. If a Japanese businessman and a Brazilian engineer are speaking English to each other, their goal is mutual understanding, not the imitation of a British accent.

5. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

The philological study of ELF focuses on the features that allow for successful communication between non-native speakers. Research shows that ELF speakers often simplify complex idioms and focus on clear turn-taking. This shift requires TESL curricula to move away from culture-specific British/American idioms and toward a more "neutral" global standard.

6. Conclusion

The evolution of English from a national tongue to a global tool is one of the most significant linguistic events in history. Philology must now broaden its scope to include the study of hybrid varieties and the sociolinguistic realities of the "Outer" and "Expanding" circles. In the classroom, this means fostering a sense of ownership over the language, regardless of the learner's country of origin.

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