

# ENGLISH FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Edited by

Larry E. Smith

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# Foreword

For several years the Culture Learning Institute of the East–West Center in Hawaii arranged a series of multinational “workshops” which were attended by professionals in the field of teaching English to persons whose mother-tongues are other than English. A wide variety of topics was discussed by the members of these workshops but four questions proved to be of common interest and were raised again and again. Who uses the English language today? In what circumstances is it used? What varieties of the language are used for what purposes by individuals within a country, that is, *intranationally*? What varieties of the language are used by individuals for purposes of *international* communication?

In 1978, at a conference sponsored by the Culture Learning Institute, a group of scholars from 16 countries gave particular attention to such questions and identified a number of related issues which they felt needed to be explored further. Some of these issues are addressed in this selection of conference papers. Others will be examined at the Institute in Honolulu and elsewhere, for example, at a forthcoming conference on varieties of English to be held at the Regional Language Centre, Singapore.

It was in the *Regional Language Centre Journal* (Volume 7, No. 2, December 1976) that the editor of the present volume, Mr Larry Smith, first argued for the “denationalization” of English and suggested that, “since English belongs to the world and every nation which uses it does so with different tone, color and quality”, the Teaching of English as a Second Language and the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language should give way to the Teaching of English as an International “Auxiliary” (later *Intranational*) language. In this book a further attempt is made to determine whether or not it is valuable to make such a distinction when English is taught to help people to communicate effectively across both cultural and national boundaries.

Director  
*East–West Culture Learning Institute*

VERNER BICKLEY

# Notes on the Contributors

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**Braj B. Kachru** is Professor and Head of the Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois, Urbana. He was the director of the Linguistic Institute of the Linguistic Society of America in 1978; has served as consultant to various linguistic research projects; and has published articles, reviews and books on Indian English, bilingualism, stylistics, sociolinguistics and Kashmiri literature. Two of his forthcoming publications are *Some Aspects of Sociolinguistics in South Asia* and *Kashmiri Literature*.

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# Introduction

Braj B. Kachru and Randolph Quirk

In April 1978, the Culture Learning Institute of the East-West Center, Honolulu, invited a small group of scholars for a two-week conference on English for international and intranational purposes, probing issues opened up in Smith (1976a). It was a unique learning experience, where examples of the object under discussion were audibly and automatically used as the medium itself in which it was discussed. There were almost as many varieties of English—native and non-native, western and non-western—as there were participants, including voices from Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India, the Philippines, New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and the USA. Numerous cultural, linguistic, ideological and other differences could be found among the participants, but they all had this one thing in common: all of them used the English language to debate, discuss, and argue questions which concern both native and non-native users of English, as well as the global uses of English in various sociolinguistic contexts in different parts of the world.

This two-week conference was unique in many respects, but one stood out among these. The deliberations of the participants demonstrated the international implications—and consequences—of a linguistic prophecy made on 23 September 1780 by John Adams, the second President of the United States (*Life and Works*, IX:50940). In his far-sighted statement, Adams proclaimed that

English will be the most respectable language in the world and the most universally read and spoken in the next century, if not before the close of this one.

His time schedule was only a little optimistic, and he was quite correct in visualizing that English (Mathews, 1931:42) was

destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age. The reason of this is obvious, because increasing population in America, and their universal connection and



correspondence with all nations will . . . force their language into general use.

Perhaps at that time his fellow Americans did not share his linguistic enthusiasm for English in the same measure; at any rate, in the "succeeding centuries" the American contribution toward fulfilling his prophecy was in fact rather lukewarm. But, in the 19th century, Great Britain powerfully contributed to raising English to the status of an international language. Not all of this was the inadvertent exercise of empire: in 1835, for example, a decision by Thomas Babington Macaulay on the teaching of English in India (so that Indians could have "ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth" available in that language) had a purposeful and profound effect (Quirk, 1968).

It was almost two centuries after the Adams prophecy that at this conference representatives from a wide range of English-using countries were debating its linguistic, educational, and political implications. The aim of the group was to discuss in what sense, after several generations' experience of the use of English around the world, there was need for a new direction and a new orientation in the teaching and learning of English. The emphasis was on considering the implications of English as a language of *cross-cultural* and *cross-national* understanding.

The factors for the spread of English have been varied, but the result has been unprecedented in the linguistic history of the world. During the period since Adams, English has attained a status which other natural languages such as French, Spanish or Arabic have never matched and to which artificial languages such as Novial, Occidental, Interlingua, Volapük, Ido, or Esperanto could scarcely be imagined even aspiring. This status was primarily attained because of the control which English-speaking Britain had over vast areas in Africa and Asia. Since the 1950s the political arms of the *Raj* have slowly been withdrawn, and now in the 1970s the political climate of the world has changed and the sun does now set on the once mighty empire. But the empire has left behind the legacy of the English language, on which the sun shows no sign of setting. In its various forms and functions English is used by well over 500 million people on the four continents of the world. In becoming something close to a universal language English has accomplished something close to a linguistic miracle. In 1582, as Richard Mulcaster put it, the English language was "of small reach", extending "no further than this Island of ours, nay not there over all". But by now we have almost 120 million non-native users of English in practically every part of the world. And (it is especially significant to note) bilingualism in English is being spread especially by those who are themselves non-native users of the language. As a consequence, the native speakers of English may well come to be outnumbered by the non-native speakers. On the scale concerned, this is an unprecedented linguistic phenomenon

and therefore raises questions never asked before: questions with implications that could scarcely have been even conceivable to Adams.

During the two weeks of the conference, the participants set their minds to issues such as the following:

1. What is the position of English in the glotto-political and socio-political context of the countries where it is used as a non-native language?

2. What factors motivated the retention of English after the end of the colonial period?

3. What are the functional and pragmatic contexts in which the new varieties are used?

4. What is the sociolinguistic profile of each variety and how does it contribute to the development of varieties within a variety?

5. What are the linguistic and contextual parameters which result in *nativization* at various levels and in the development of "interference" varieties?

Such issues arise through the extent to which English has its *native* and *non-native* speakers geographically dispersed in practically every linguistic and cultural area of the world. It is one of the world's most important languages, because of the "vehicular load" it carries as a medium for science, technology and literature. And it continues to be associated with those nations which are "powerful", not only in political spheres, but as leaders in technology and science (Quirk et al., 1972: 2-3).

One must, however, emphasize that this diffusion of bilingualism in English does not necessarily imply that there are *intrinsic* linguistic characteristics which entitle English to this enviable linguistic status. It is unfortunate that in many writings on the subject such claims have been made both by linguists and popular writers. For example in Jespersen's justly well-known book *Growth and structure of the English language*, we are told that

The English language is a methodical, energetic, business-like and sober language, but does not care much for finery and elegance, but does care for logical consistency . . . It must be a source of gratification to mankind that the tongue spoken by two of the greatest powers of the world is so noble, so rich, so pliant, so expressive, and so interesting.

In Laird (1970:480) roughly the same position is adopted. While observing that the language "is triumphing because American culture is advancing on a broad front", he is prepared to assume that it is "spreading through the world partly because it is a good language with a simple grammar and a vast and highly flexible vocabulary". Equally controversial beliefs are presented as facts by Barnett (1964:9) who claims that:

contrary to popular supposition, languages evolve in the direction of simplicity. English, being a highly evolved, cosmopolitan, sophisticated language, has been refined and revised, planed down and polished through centuries of use, so that today it is far less complicated than any primitive language.

In any case, irrespective of what truth there may be in assertions that English possesses characteristics such as *logical consistency*, *simplicity* and *refinement*, we have little reason to believe that these qualities contributed to its spread.

The outstanding factor in extending the use of English has undoubtedly been the political power and influence of the English-speaking nations and the superiority they attained in various fields of commerce, technology, military affairs, and the pure sciences. Political power was especially effective during the colonial era, strongly contributing to the position of English as a non-native language. English became a symbol of power, prestige and superiority, and the non-native users of English valued what it did for them socially, attitudinally, nationally and internationally (see Fishman et al., 1977, especially Chapters 1 and 2).

In looking at English in a global perspective, we should note that the use of English around the world does not entail the global emergence of a single, homogeneous and mutually intelligible English-speaking community. Far from it. The users of English differ in their goals regarding their uses of English, in the model of English at which their aim is directed, and in their degree of achieving competence, irrespective of model. There is thus a cline of formal and functional competence across varieties of English throughout the world, and the varieties themselves range from educated standard forms to creolized and pidgin types. But, in spite of this variation, what is striking is not only the extent of bilingualism involving English, but also the mutual intelligibility of the educated non-native varieties of English. This is a vital linguistic fact of modern times to which critical and informed attention must be paid (see the papers by Kachru and by Richards and Tay in this volume).

If we look at the demographic distribution of English, it is clear that its non-native use is not restricted to the erstwhile colonies and dependencies, though it is true that users of English in these territories constitute the largest number of non-native speakers of English. In Asia, there are 60 million; in Africa, almost 20 million; in the Soviet Union, 10 million; in Western and Central Europe, 15 million; and in the Western Hemisphere, 10 million. The Indian subcontinent is one of the areas of special interest where English has attained the status of an adopted language, with almost 25 million people making regular use of it in the course of their daily lives: India (18 million), Bangladesh (3.8 million), Pakistan (1.8 million), and Sri Lanka (1.2 million). The largest of these countries presents an arresting picture of the kind of impact that

English can have in a non-native context, even when compared statistically with countries in which English is the mother-tongue. In India the speakers of English amount to 8.4 per cent of the population of the United States, 32.4 per cent of the population of Great Britain, and 139 per cent of the population of Australia.

In the profession of English teaching, a fundamental and compelling distinction has long been established between

(1) English as a mother-tongue; and

(2) English for speakers whose mother-tongue is other than English. More recently, but with gathering insistence over the past thirty years, (2) has been itself subdivided as between

(2a) English as a Foreign Language (e.g. in Germany or Japan); and

(2b) English as a Second Language (i.e. where English has major functions in daily life, as in India or Nigeria).

The Honolulu conference raised the question as to whether this latter distinction, between (2a) and (2b), adequately grappled with the pragmatic facts of language use—in, for example, ignoring (or tacitly accepting) traditionally established relations between English standards in the countries where English is the mother-tongue (1), and those in countries where it is not (2). Of these latter, those in (2b), where English has unique functions, uniquely related to non-native social, cultural and industrial contexts, we have the phenomenon that is becoming known as “nativization”—a concept with vitally important pedagogical implications, as well as an inherent interest for linguistic theory.

The issue of models in English acquisition was therefore very much on the conference agenda as members focused attention on the new demands being made on English as an *international* and *intranational* language, a reorientation of the distinction between (2a) and (2b) which has far from purely academic interest. There are serious theoretical and pedagogical implications.

The deliberations at the conference resulted in the following statement:

1. As professionals, members of the Conference felt that the stimulus given to the question of English used as an international or auxiliary language has led to the emergence of sharp and important issues that are in urgent need of investigation and action.
2. These issues are seen as summarized in the distinction between the uses of English for international (i.e. external) and intranational (i.e. internal) purposes.<sup>1</sup> This distinction recognizes that, while the teaching of English should reflect in all cases the sociocultural contexts and the educational policies of the countries concerned, there is a need to distinguish between (a) those countries (e.g. Japan) whose requirements focus upon international comprehensibility and (b) those countries (e.g. India) which in addition must take account of English as it is used for

their own intranational purposes. This distinction need not of course supersede the useful terms "foreign language" and "second language", but provides a broader perspective within which we can view the dynamics of the language situation of a wide range of countries.

3. So far as we know, no organization exists that takes account of any language in the light of this fundamental distinction, and we congratulate the East-West Center on having provided the initial thinking that has led to its recognition. The Culture Learning Institute constitutes a very good base for embarking on activities in this area.
4. It is not for us to define or prescribe the policies to be adopted, but the papers and discussions at the Conference have identified a number of fundamental issues. These issues can be considered under four headings:
  - (a) Basic Research
  - (b) Applied Research
  - (c) Documentation, Dissemination, and Liaison
  - (d) Professional Support Activities
5. *Basic Research*: e.g. descriptive and empirical studies of English in different settings; fact-finding (supported by relevant statistics) at international, national, regional, and local levels, in relation to roles, functions, attitudes, expectations, achievement, etc.; studies in the feasibility of devising a core English for international use; development of research techniques appropriate to such investigations as those listed above.
6. *Applied Research*: e.g. studies of the implications of the international-intranational distinction for language learning/teaching; arising from such studies, the elaboration of a framework of concepts and data, leading first to a re-appraisal of goals, approaches, methods, materials, tests, examinations, and teacher training, and subsequently to the necessary curriculum development, with appropriate modes of evaluation.
7. *Documentation, Dissemination, and Liaison*: e.g. promoting and creating resource centres for descriptive linguistic data and acting as a clearing house for the results of such other research as listed in 5 and 6; the interpretation and dissemination of research findings and other relevant information appropriate to specific countries and regions; liaison with relevant institutions, organizations and professional associations.
8. *Professional Support Activities*: the understanding of the findings and consequences of the foregoing research and development activities will require the institution of a well coordinated programme of workshops and conferences as well as advisory and training programmes. These would focus upon particular intra-

national, international and professional questions, and should be organized with flexibility in the choice of location. Meetings should have two crucial aims: (a) assisting in professionalizing the teaching force, and (b) enabling policy-makers and administrators to become familiar with all these developments and to elaborate ways of implementing them in their situations. Future support activities will need increasingly to reflect the new orientation that has emerged.

This statement clearly shows not only the shift in emphasis that we saw as necessary; it also goes some way towards outlining the new directions that are required in the teaching of English on a global basis.

The grounds on which the statement was based emerge equally clearly, we trust, from the selection of Conference papers presented in this volume. Richly representative of the Conference's thinking, these fourteen papers will show the widely ranging consideration that was given to many acutely important issues. It has not been possible to include all the papers presented at the Conference, nor could it have been possible to print the lengthy, provocative and fruitful discussions that followed each; still less the informal but informed talk that flourished outside the Conference sessions.

It is obvious now that English has become a part of the cultural heritage of great populations in Asia and Africa. The uses of English in these areas will differ from the uses of English in America and Britain. The emergent forms of English are creating a *distance* between the native varieties of English on the one hand and the non-native varieties on the other. This naturally raises questions of "intelligibility"—both linguistic and contextual—which have been too much ignored or treated with gross inadequacy. The linguistic implications of using English in non-native *linguistic* and *cultural* contexts are significant and it is encouraging that several studies are already available. The fast-growing lexicon of English is open to the influence not merely of classical Greek and Latin, nor yet of French and Spanish and the other familiar western languages. The impact of Hausa, Yoruba, Hindi, Arabic and Persian is also growing, particularly of course on non-native varieties of English in the relevant areas of the world. The steadily continuing hybridization of the English lexicon is one obvious linguistic manifestation of the uses of English in the international context. The time is therefore ripe to look at the linguistic and cultural processes which are "de-Anglicizing" or "de-Americanizing" the English language as it responds to cultural and linguistic forces in Asia and Africa. But it is not only a question of English being "nativized". The contact of English with other languages has had a wider effect than influencing the English language alone. It has also "Anglo-Americanized" a number of major indigenous languages in Asia and in Africa. After all, linguistic

and cultural contact for a century must take its toll, and linguistic "purity" has been the first sacrifice.

The Conference marked a genuinely new phase in the study of English in the international context. In part, it raised issues which had earlier been fudged if not entirely ignored. In part, the reorientation in international/intranational terms released new insights. Not least, problems previously suppressed were brought into the open through the growing confidence of the fast-increasing numbers of non-native users of English, and of course through the atmosphere of frankness in the face of intractable difficulties that is so characteristic of East-West Center meetings.

No conference was needed to demonstrate that the English language carries the weight of British and American experience; nor that it now also carries an increasing weight of African and Asian experience; nor that this has given birth to new Englishes which are "in communion with [their] ancestral home but altered to suit [their] new . . . surroundings" (Achebe, 1965:222)—new surroundings which include the sociocultural and linguistic contexts of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean nations. But the Conference blazed the trail for a new approach which provides a realistic framework for looking at English in the global context, and for relating concepts such as appropriateness, acceptability and intelligibility to the pragmatic factors which determine the uses of English as an international or intranational language.

## NOTES

1. At the beginning of the Conference, "auxiliary" was used in the sense proposed by the Culture Learning Institute, as a language used within a country. In the course of the Conference it was found that the term can be misinterpreted and it was replaced by "intranational".

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