MAKING SENSE OF "BAD ENGLISH"

Why is it that some ways of using English are considered "good" and others are considered "bad"? Why are certain forms of language termed elegant, eloquent, or refined, whereas others are deemed uneducated, coarse, or inappropriate? *Making Sense of "Bad English"* is an accessible introduction to attitudes and ideologies towards the use of English in different settings around the world. Outlining how perceptions about what constitutes "good" and "bad" English have been shaped, this book shows how these principles are based on social factors rather than linguistic issues and highlights some of the real-life consequences of these perceptions.

Features include:

- an overview of attitudes towards English and how they came about, as well as real-life consequences and benefits of using "bad" English;
- explicit links between different English language systems, including child's English, English as a lingua franca, African American English, Singlish, and New Delhi English;
- examples taken from classic names in the field of sociolinguistics, including Labov, Trudgill, Baugh, and Lambert, as well as rising stars and more recent cutting-edge research;
- links to relevant social parallels, including cultural outputs such as holiday myths, to help readers engage in a new way with the notion of Standard English;
- supporting online material for students which features worksheets, links to audio and news files, further examples and discussion questions, and background on key issues from the book.

Making Sense of "Bad English" provides an engaging and thought-provoking overview of this topic and is essential reading for any student studying sociolinguistics within a global setting.

Elizabeth Peterson is an Associate Professor at the University of Helsinki, Finland.

MAKING SENSE OF "BAD ENGLISH"

An Introduction to Language Attitudes and Ideologies

Elizabeth Peterson

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2020
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2020 Elizabeth Peterson

The right of Elizabeth Peterson to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at www.taylorfrancis.com, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Peterson, Elizabeth (Professor of linguistics) author.
Title: Making sense of 'bad English': an introduction to language attitudes and ideologies/Elizabeth Peterson.
Description: London: New York, NY: Routledge, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019025824 (print) | LCCN 2019025825 (ebook) | ISBN 9781138237469 (hardback) | ISBN 9781138237476 (paperback) | ISBN 9780429328343 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: English language–Social aspects. | English language–Usage. | English language–Variation. | English language–Errors of usage.
Classification: LCC PE1074.75.P48 2019 (print) | LCC PE1074.75 (ebook) | DDC 427–dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019025824
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019025825

ISBN: 978-1-138-23746-9 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-138-23747-6 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-32834-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

Visit the eResources: www.routledge.com/9781138237476

To my students and educators
who are often one and the same

CONTENTS

List of illustrations *xii*
Acknowledgments *xiii*
Rationale for this book *xv*
Terminology used in this book *xix*

Introduction to Part 1: Making sense of "Bad English" **1**

1 English speakers in outer-circle and expanding-circle settings 3
  1.1 The English language sandwich 3
  1.2 Comparing attitudes about English 7
  1.3 "Bad English" in the outer circle 11
  1.4 "Bad English" in the expanding circle 13
  1.5 Conclusion to Chapter 1 14
  Acknowledgments 15
  Discussion questions for Chapter 1 15
  Notes 15
  Cited in this chapter 16

2 Where does "Good English" come from, and what does it have to do with Santa Claus? 17
  2.1 Standardizing English 18
  2.2 Where does the notion of Standard English come from? 19
  2.3 Here comes Santa Claus 23
  2.4 Folklore, fact and tradition: "Good English" 25
  2.5 Conclusion to Chapter 2 25
  Acknowledgments 26

Discussion questions for Chapter 2 26
Suggested reading 27
Cited in this chapter 27

3 "Bad English" in inner-circle settings 28
3.1 Youth, young women, foreign influence 28
3.1.1 The role of young women 29
3.1.2 Foreign influence 30
3.1.3 Social class 30
3.2 Talk like us, think like us 30
3.3 The top-down approach to language 33
3.4 What's "bad" is relative: US vs UK 34
3.5 When "bad" really means "foreign" 39
3.6 What does "Bad English" mean? 39
3.7 Conclusion to Chapter 3 40
Discussion questions for Chapter 3 40
Acknowledgments 41
Note 41
Suggested reading 41
Cited in this chapter 42

4 How "Bad English" works against us: Linguistic discrimination in the USA 44
4.1 Introduction 44
4.1.1 What can you take for granted? 45
4.2 What's with the attitude? 46
4.2.1 Is it race, or is it language? Or is it race and language? 47
4.3 Access to education 50
4.3.1 Ann Arbor Decision 51
4.4 The (in)justice system 53
4.4.1 The hallowed halls of justice 53
4.4.2 Wrap-up of the justice system 57
4.5 The workplace 57
4.6 Conclusion to Chapter 4 59
Acknowledgments 59
Discussion questions for Chapter 4 59
Note 60
Suggested reading 60
Further references on Chicano English 60
Cited in this chapter 61

5 Why does "Bad English" still exist? 62
5.1 Introduction 62

5.2 Access and isolation 64
5.2.1 Historical ties 65
5.2.2 Social segregation 66
5.2.3 Geographical segregation 69
5.2.4 Reason 1: Why do people speak "bad" varieties? Access to standard language culture 70
5.3 Covert prestige 71
5.3.1 Reason 2: Why do people speak "Bad English"? Covert prestige 73
5.4 Identity and language 74
5.4.1 Reason 3: Why do people speak "Bad English"? Identity 76
5.5 Conclusion to Chapter 5 77
Acknowledgments 77
Discussion questions for Chapter 5 77
Recommended reading 78
Cited in this chapter 79

Introduction to Part 2 **81**

6 Acquisition of English as a mother tongue 85
6.1 The study of first language acquisition 86
6.1.1 How do children learn their first language? 87
6.1.2 The Critical Age Hypothesis 88
6.2 Stages of acquisition 89
6.2.1 Stage one: Babbling 89
6.2.2 Stage two: One-word stage 90
6.2.3 Stage three: Two-word stage 91
6.2.4 Stage four: More than two words 91
6.3 Acquisition of linguistic features 92
6.3.1 Acquisition of phonetics/phonology 92
6.3.2 Acquisition of morphology 93
6.3.3 Acquisition of syntax 94
6.3.4 Acquisition of vocabulary 95
6.3.5 Acquisition of pragmatics 95
6.4 Conclusion to Chapter 6 96
Discussion questions for Chapter 6 97
Cited in this chapter 97

7 African American English 99
7.1 The historical context of African American English 100
7.2 Distinct discourse styles of African American English 103
7.2.1 Discourse and communication 103

7.3 Distinct grammatical features of African American English 105
    7.3.1 Verb forms in African American English 106
    7.3.2 Morphosyntactic features of African American English 108
    7.3.3 Phonological features of AAE 111
7.4 Conclusion to Chapter 7 113
Acknowledgments 114
Discussion questions for Chapter 7 114
Recommended reading 115
Cited in this chapter 115

8 Competing explanations for linguistic features in the outer circle 117
8.1 Introduction 117
8.2 Singapore English 118
8.3 Indian English 120
    8.3.1 Delhi English 123
8.4 Conclusion to Chapter 8 127
Acknowledgments 128
Discussion questions for Chapter 8 128
Cited in this chapter 129

9 English as a lingua franca 130
9.1 Introduction 130
9.2 The groundwork: Deficit versus empowerment 131
9.3 The "empirical and contrived core" 134
    9.3.1 The consonant inventory 134
    9.3.2 Additional phonetic requirements 135
    9.3.3 Vowel sounds 136
9.4 Subsequent observations of ELF: Grammar and morphology 139
    9.4.1 Lexicogrammar 139
9.5 Conclusion to Chapter 9 141
Acknowledgments 141
Discussion questions for Chapter 9 141
Further reading and information 143
General reading on English as a lingua franca 143
Cited in this chapter 143

Summary of Part 2 **145**

10 Conclusions 151
10.1 Aims and goals, revisited 151
10.2 What is the take-home message? 152
10.3 Has the take-home message been taken home? 153
Cited in this chapter 154

Bibliography *155*
Index *161*

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

0.1 Three Circles Model of English. xxii
1.1 Everyone should speak Standard English at all times. 8
1.2 Compared to Standard English, dialects are a simpler form of language. 9
1.3 Generally, young people do not speak as well as the older generation. 9
1.4 I hate it when people say 'like' all the time. 10
1.5 Most Americans speak bad English. 10
1.6 Most Finns speak bad English. 11
3.1 Linguistic and social variability in the UK. 35
3.2 Results for social attractiveness from 43 years of language attitudes research in English. 36
3.3 Results for prestige from 43 years of language attitudes research in English. 37
4.1 Mapping attitudes about US dialects. 47
5.1 Majority African American population by US state. 67
5.2 Relationship of social isolation, covert prestige, and identity. 74
8.1 Mean TRAP to STRUT angles. 125
P2.1 Morphological Angloversals. 147

Table

9.1 General recommendations for phonology of ELF. 138

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous people have offered valuable input and advice throughout this project. People who have helped with specific topics in the book are acknowledged in the relevant places in the text. Professor Sali Tagliamonte offered generous advice and encouragement about getting this project started. Thank you, Sali. I wish to thank Professor Jeff Reaser, my host at North Carolina State University, who offered not only tremendous support and suggestions, but also involved his colleagues and students. Thank you to the North Carolina State University people for this help.

I also thank numerous friends, colleagues, and especially my family for all kinds of support throughout this long process. I was fortunate to receive funding from the University of Helsinki for two separate sabbatical periods to write this book. Two research student research assistants, Katariina Pyykkö and Maisa Heinola, helped me at the early stages of the project. Thank you.

Thanks, too, to the editors at Routledge who offered enthusiastic but also critical support from the earliest stages throughout the entire process. I am indebted to a number of blind reviewers whose comments and suggestions were instrumental in giving the book its current form … and instigated the idea for a second book. Thanks, too, to the production team at Routledge, whose professionalism and attention to detail helped improve the quality of the book.

The publisher and I would like to thank the following for permission to reprint their material: the poem “Roots” Chys Salt; Figures 3.2 and 3.3 (Social attractiveness/Prestige of English dialects), Palgrave Macmillan; Figure 4.1 (Mapping attitudes about US dialects), Taylor & Francis; Figure 8.1 (Mean TRAP to STRUT angles, Raphaël Domange; Figure P2.1 (Morphological Angloversals), Taylor & Francis. Detailed copyright information can be found accompanying each figure.

While I have made every effort to offer a fair and truthful representation of the research and input from other people in various subfields of linguistics, I may not have succeeded. Several experts have reviewed this manuscript at various stages. I thank them for their input, but I take full responsibility for any errors or omissions that have made it through into this edition.

RATIONALE FOR THIS BOOK

"Yes, but why don't you write about Chinese?" someone asked at a dinner party shortly after I signed the publishing agreement for this book. "Chinese," he continued, "is a much bigger language than English."

Chinese is a much bigger language than English? Well, yes and no. Chinese—or, rather, the group of languages and sub-varieties spoken by people in various regions of China, collectively referred to as Chinese—represents the world's largest group of mother-tongue speakers. To consider these speakers as one large language community is problematic, as the designation of a single language in the context of China is not something most language scientists would agree on. The different ways of speaking Chinese do not even constitute dialects, as, by a commonly held definition, they are not mutually intelligible. The status of languages in China is an issue which can be—and is—taken up in other contexts. This major point aside, the fact remains that the world's most populous nation at the moment is China, which, following the logic of my dinner companion, means that the language(s) they speak in China is the "biggest." Even if we count the total population of people who live in places like Canada, the United States, Ireland, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia, we still come up with a mere 430 million speakers. This is not a small number, for sure, but it falls far short of China's estimated population of 1.4 billion people.

So, does this make Chinese a bigger language than English? Let's put it this way: there is a chance you are reading this book somewhere in Europe, South America, Africa, or Asia. The fact that you are reading this book—about English, written in English—implies that you are a speaker (not just a reader) of English, yet, given your location, you might not be someone who speaks English as a mother tongue. For you, English might be a language you have learned somewhat later in life. You are not alone. In fact, far from it: in today's world, people like you, who speak English as a second, third, or fourth language, far outnumber English speakers who live in places like the United States and the United Kingdom, or, in other words, places where English is a dominant mother tongue. The current ratio is about 3:1, and this is a conservative estimate.

This is not new information. In today's world, it is well established that English serves as a tool of mutual comprehension among speakers of all kinds of languages. This phenomenon, known as English as a lingua franca, is the topic of Chapter 9 in this book. The purpose of this book is not to inform readers about how they should or should not speak English, but rather to offer some social, historical, and cultural information, and thereby enhance understanding about this language that seems to be on the tip of so many tongues.

The motivation to write this book comes from a course I have taught for several years at the University of Helsinki. The students who take the course are English majors, meaning that I am not teaching them how to speak English, because they are already fluent. Some, in fact, are mother-tongue speakers of English, but this fact is superfluous: all have achieved comparable levels of fluency in English, otherwise they would not be in my classroom in the first place. I teach in English, and I teach about English. The reason I devised this particular course is because I noticed, from years of living and working in Finland, that even though the students are, like many Finns, fluent in English, they harbored viewpoints and ideologies about English that, as a US-trained doctor of sociolinguistics, I found overly simplistic. For example, I sometimes encountered surprisingly strong views about the superiority of one variety of English over another—say, UK English over US English—which led to all sorts of questions, such as: which variety of UK or US English?

It became clear that, although the students were highly adept users of English, they lacked a strong sociolinguistic foundation about the varieties of English and how these varieties are viewed in their home territories. They lacked the historical and cultural knowledge to back up their opinions about English. They had clear notions about what counted as "good" or "bad" English, but they were not able to back up their judgments with grounding in the science of language. An opinion without anything to back it up is, well, just an opinion. It is shouting into the wind. I wanted to give students some linguistic facts and background about English to back up their claims and give them a more robust understanding of the language (a topic taken up in Chapter 1).

With all due respect to students in Finland, there is nothing particularly special about them and their relationship to English. The same gaps in their knowledge about English apply to other users of English, as well, even in its home territories, and that is why you have this book. The book is written especially for readers who use English in their daily lives, but use it in addition to other languages that are a mother tongue or a national language where they live. With this book, I aim to contextualize English in a way that gives further insights into what it means to be an English speaker in different parts of the world.

Specifically, the aims of this book are to:

1. Address a lack of sociolinguistic understanding about varieties of English among users of English worldwide.
2. Present a resource for students and other users of English that reflects their changing role and relationship with English.
3. Connect users of English in different settings to the attitudes, uses, and ideologies that exist about our shared language in different locations around the world.
4. Offer some strategies for understanding and working around linguistic prescriptivism.

For readers who are mother-tongue speakers of English, this book is for you, too. Even people who grow up in an English-dominant territory do not tend to have a linguistic (as in the *science of language*) perspective of their language. As pointed out in Chapter 1 of this book, mother-tongue speakers in English-dominant regions can (and do) have opinions about English that differ vastly from the views of those who have training in the science of language. That is one issue, but another issue is that it does not hurt mother-tongue English speakers to learn something about how 1 billion other people use English, too.

For example, let's be honest: for many readers, at least part of the reason you opened this book in the first place could be because of the term "Bad English" in the title. Based on the litany of other books and publications that exist for the sole purpose of shaming uneducated or undervalued users of English, you might have assumed this would be another addition to this pile of work. (It is not.) You might have thought this book would contain a diatribe about how the English language is being destroyed through misuse and abuse. (It does not.) Also, considering that the book is written by a language scientist, you might have hoped that you would learn some insider tips about how to foster your inclusion in the pact of people worldwide who know how to use the semicolon, who never spell *harass* with two "r"s, who would never use singular *they,* never confuse *literally* and *figuratively,* and who would not be caught dead with a sign on their door reading "Welcome to the Peterson's"—and who want to make darn sure that no one else does, either.

Those English users who constitute the educated and elite group who are familiar with the list of English features just described can consider themselves extremely fortunate. What this indicates is that they have access to the highest level of written and spoken norms of English, which opens all kinds of doors for them (a topic taken up in Chapter 2 of this book). They participate in *standard language culture*—and they have probably worked hard to achieve such status. This means they have the assurance of knowing that when they apply for a job, the job application will most likely be written in a variety of English they already know. They do not need to decide whether to alter the way they speak rather than face ridicule when they are in public places like work or schools. In short, they are not likely to face discrimination based on the way they speak or write English. In fact, they may be such privileged users of English that they have never had the opportunity to notice what they gain from their aptitude in English, and the opportunities which others do not have because they are not part of the standard language culture.

This book aims to demonstrate how attitudes concerning English came about, and some of the consequences for those who do not, for whatever reasons, have access to standard language culture. Because I have spent the bulk of my academic career in Finland, the starting point for this story is Finland-focused. The rest of the book is not Finland-focused, although, to some extent, because this is the language situation I am most familiar with, I tend to draw examples from it. While I have aimed to be as inclusive as possible, an overview of world varieties of English is not the chief aim here. Critical readers will be quick to point out that southern hemisphere Englishes (and others) are underrepresented in this book. Keeping the scope of this book to a digestible size has been a consideration. Varieties of English not represented in this volume will, I hope, soon be under scrutiny in another volume.

Back to the topic of the dinner conversation: as you can plainly see, I did not take the advice of my fellow dinner guest. This book is not about Chinese. It is about English. I argued my case, offering linguistic facts, definitions, and demographics to support my case, and the dinner discussion soon moved on to other topics. After you have read this book, written by a language scientist who draws from the wealth of scholarship produced by other language scientists, it is my sincere hope that you will also have some facts, definitions, demographics, and a further arsenal of defenses to back up your claims and attitudes about English.

Elizabeth Peterson
Helsinki, Finland
March 2019

Discussion question

A frequently cited quip for language scientists is “A language is a dialect with an army and a navy.” What do you think this statement means? How would you explain it in light of the information about China presented at the beginning of this section?

TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS BOOK

As with any writing that deals with topics like those in this book, decisions have been made about terminology and definitions. Some of these decisions have been relatively painful, others more straightforward. In this overview I list some of the main terminology employed in the book, and offer some explanations for the choices.

"Bad English"

First and foremost, the book's author, editors, and publisher are all aware that the use of the term "Bad English" in the title is potentially inflammatory, and it is certainly not a term used in an academic way by language scientists. The reviewers to the manuscript have pointed this out, friends and colleagues have pointed this out, and the author and editors have spent a fair amount of time and energy trying to come up with a better alternative. The greatest risk is that readers will see the title and assume that the label "Bad English" is a judgment assigned to the English language systems described in this book. This is not our aim. In the end, we stuck with the original term, the reason being that this book is intended for people who are not experts in language science. As demonstrated repeatedly in the work of the language scientist Dennis Preston[1] (see Chapters 3 and 4), everyday speakers of English have an immense capacity for insights into their own language, and they have a clear understanding of what they mean by "Good English" or "Bad English." In fact, one of Preston's own contributions to a volume on variation in English is titled *The Story of Good and Bad English in the United States* (Preston, 2002). Rather than confounding things in the title with more "linguistic" sounding terms, we opted to use a term that is meaningful to the intended audience. The title is still a bit risky, in that it might at first glance seem to confirm the prejudices people have about English rather than to address them. We can only hope that actually reading the book will be a suitable remedy for any initial false impressions.

"Good English," standardized English

A related challenge in using the term "Bad English" is that we are then obliged to use its antonym, "Good English." It turns out that this is not an easy term to define, either. Language scientists have turned gray and old trying to come up with neutral but adequately descriptive means of succinctly identifying this concept.

In this book, I use the term "Good English" as a grossly simplified term to mean more or less the same thing as the more official term *Standard English*—which, even if it is an official term, is no less troublesome than "Good English." Without getting too far off the mark, it suffices to point out a few problems with the term *standard*: *whose* standard? The United Kingdom? If so, what part of the United Kingdom? The London area? If so, who in the London area? The Queen? But the Queen does not speak a "standard" variety, she speaks a distinct form of Received Pronunciation, a social variety—and there we go, round and round. An important point to establish, then, is that the term "Good English" and even Standard English is always relative and is always on the move, following the social changes in its community of speakers.

Standard Language is a term that might be less troublesome to readers in Europe and other locations where there are official organizations, a language council, for example, whose job is to determine what the local standards of language are. For countries where there is no such language council, the idea of a standard language is perhaps more elusive.

A further problem with the term Standard English is that it implies there is just one standard. In fact, there are many. There are different standards for academic written texts than there are for written WhatsApp chats on a phone. There are different spoken standards for addressing Parliament or broadcasting television news than there are for chatting with friends over drinks.

In addition, the word *standard* has a heaviness and permanence to it. No language, not even a standard language, sits still. One of the duties of languages councils around the world is to assess and offer advice on new terms that enter the standard language, for example words such as new inventions (WhatsApp) or phenomena (Brexit). It is never going to be the case that a language council can state, "Our standardizing work is done. We now declare our language complete."

For linguists, educators, policy makers, and so on, Standard English means the version (or versions) of English that serves as a model, for example, in written formats (a topic which is taken up in Chapter 2). In this sense, "standard" does not equate to something of nonsuperior quality, as one might say, for example, of a restaurant: "How did you like the food at Chaucer's Bar and Grill?" "Oh, I would say it's rather standard." Instead, standard in the context of language means that there is perceived uniformity of use, and that this uniformity is recognized through some sort of social pact, the same way we, as citizens of the world, implicitly agree upon a uniformity of distance or weight through the metric system, how time zones throughout the world are arranged according to Greenwich Mean Time, or that paper money has tradable worth. These important aspects of our joint society are socially constructed; they are not universal truths in the same sense that it takes the earth a year to orbit the sun, or that it takes a sperm and an egg to create a human zygote.

A term that began to circulate amongst language scientists in recent decades (see e.g., Charity Hudley and Mallinson 2011; see also Milroy and Milroy 1999) is *standardized English.* This term has its problems, too, but it carries with it a different set of implications. For example, the term *standardized* implies that someone (or, as is normally the case, many "someones") has actually done the standardizing: it is not an agentless concept like Standard English*,* a noun phrase that makes it appear as if the standard version landed in our laps. In addition, the term *standardized* captures the notion that this is part of a process, implying, as is always the case, that it is still going on.

In this text, the use of the terms *standardized language* and *standardized English* are used to mean what everyday readers might readily think of as "Good English."

Language scientist, linguistics

For many English speakers, *linguist* is a term that means someone who speaks many languages, or in other words, it has the same meaning as the word *polyglot.* This means that, as a person who conducts research within the academic field of linguistics, I have become accustomed to people asking, "Oh, you're a linguist. How many languages do you speak?" This often leads to a confusing (and, for my conversation partners, a disappointing) discussion, because the truth is that I only speak one language with a high level of aptitude: English. That is, I am a linguist by trade, but I am not a polyglot. To circumvent this mismatch when it comes to the definition of *linguist,* many people working in the academic field of linguistics have moved toward the more transparent term *language scientist,* which is the term I use in this book. With the term *linguistics*, I am referring to the scientific study of language, or in other words to the academic field of linguistics.

The Three Circles Model, mother-tongue speaker

One of the most influential figures in the study of worldwide English was Braj Kachru, a Kashmir-born linguist who died at the time this book was being prepared. Given its special status as the most used language worldwide, Kachru proposed a new way of thinking about the relationship English has with its users. His model, called the Three Circles Model, shows three concentric circles, like a bull's eye target (Figure 0.1). The smallest circle, in the center, represents speakers who live in a setting where English is a dominant language used in most day-to-day settings by the majority of the population. Kachru's idea was to

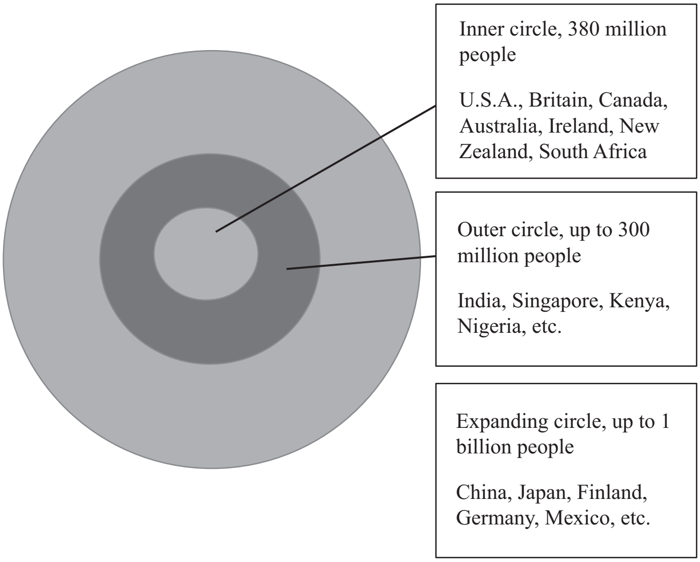
Inner circle, 380 million people
U.S.A., Britain, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa
Outer circle, up to 300 million people
India, Singapore, Kenya, Nigeria, etc.
Expanding circle, up to 1 billion people
China, Japan, Finland, Germany, Mexico, etc.

FIGURE 0.1 Three Circles Model of English (inspired by Kachru, 1982).

assign nation states to his model, so, for example, Australia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom qualify as "inner circle" settings. The number of English speakers who live in such places is roughly 350 million (based on Kachru's figures), and this number holds quite steady; that is, worldwide, the number of mother-tongue speakers of English who live in inner-circle settings does not change drastically over time. The number of English speakers in inner-circle settings tends to do with natural population growth and movement of people rather than learning English.

The next circle in Kachru's Three Circles Model, called "the outer circle," represents nation states where English normally has second-language status, meaning that many people speak English as a language in addition to a home language; in other words, people are bilingual. These settings tend to be former colonies of Britain, and many still are part of the British Commonwealth. However, for the majority of people in such settings, English tends to be used in more official settings such as schools, courts, and administration. That is, some part of the population might speak English as a home language or a mother tongue, but they tend to be the exception. Representative locations include India, Singapore, Kenya, and Nigeria. At the time Kachru created his model, the estimated number of English-speakers was about 300 million, and, like the inner circle, this figure is relatively stable—at least compared to the expanding circle.

The outermost circle in the model is referred to as the "expanding circle," so named because it represents populations around the world where English is gaining rapid ground as an additional language used for lingua franca purposes.

Whereas the number of speakers in the inner circle and outer circle has held relatively steady for generations, the number of speakers in places where English has no official status has been growing exponentially for decades, and it continues to grow. Thus, the expanding circle refers to English users who have English as an additional, not as a first or, often, even as a second language.

Kachru's model has been criticized for, among other shortcomings, being overly simplistic in its divisions. For example, the model seems to support the general notion that native speakers of English live in the inner circle, second language speakers live in the outer circle, and people who speak English as a foreign language live in the expanding circle. This division erases all kinds of realities about communities of speakers, multilingual settings, and the fact that language situations are constantly evolving within a given community (a fact addressed, for example, by subsequent World English authors such as Schneider 2007).

In this book, the term *inner-circle setting* is used as a way of referring, in the most general sense, to a location where the majority of the population of a given nation state speaks English as a mother tongue and where the major language background as they go about their daily life is also in English. For the intended readership of this book, my aim is clarity, and *inner-circle setting* is a useful frame of reference. The term *outer-circle setting* is used to describe a nation state where, in most cases, English is used as a second language in specific domains. English may or may not be a mother-tongue language for certain segments of the population. (This is a topic taken up in Chapter 8.)

Furthermore, the model suppresses the fact that a "native speaker" of English can be from any of the locations of any of the circles, a situation which is an increasing reality along with increased mobility and the exponential growth of English (discussed in Chapter 9). The meaning of "native speaker" has been further blurred by the sheer level of aptitude in English that is now nothing short of commonplace worldwide. The rarified status granted to native speakers of English from places like the United Kingdom and the United States has been a strong issue of debate in fields such as second language acquisition (of English) in the past decades. For now, it is enough to state that it is an extremely complex issue, with plenty of ideology on all sides (see eResource). For issues of transparency, I opted to use the term *mother tongue* and *mother-tongue speaker* in this book, which is still not without its problems. By using these terms, I aim to suggest someone who has grown up speaking English as a language of the home rather than someone who has managed to acquire native-like proficiency in English later in life. In other words, I am referring to the distinction between a concurrent versus a consecutive bilingual (also known as simultaneous and sequential bilingualism).

Note

1 Dennis and Carol Preston, in fact, were two people who gave valuable input on the title. Thanks, Prestons.

Citations

Charity Hudley, Ann H. and Christine Mallinson. 2011. *Understanding English Language Variation in U.S. Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kachru, B.B. 1982. *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Milroy, James and Lesley Milroy. 1999. *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard Language*. London: Routledge.

Preston, Dennis. 2002. The story of good and bad English in the United States. In: Richard Watts and Peter Trudgill (eds.) *Alternative Histories of English*, 134–151. London; New York: Routledge.

Schneider, Edgar W. 2007. *Postcolonial English. Varieties around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Introduction to Part 1

Making sense of "Bad English"

This book is divided into two parts. The first part, Making sense of "Bad English," consists of five chapters intended to offer readers some perspectives on what constitutes "good English" or "bad English" in different settings, how these notions developed, and why they continue to exist. This part of the book focuses more on social explanations for "Bad English." As such, it is meant as a complement to the language descriptions that follow in Part 2. The first chapters of Part 1 discuss how the notion of "Bad English" differs according to setting. Chapter 1 looks at attitudes about English in expanding-circle settings. Chapter 3 focuses on inner-circle settings, especially the UK. Chapter 4 draws most of its examples from the United States.

Chapter 1 introduces concepts relating to speakers of English as an additional language, meaning speakers in the expanding circle. Chapter 1 may be especially revealing to readers from inner-circle environments of English, who might not be used to thinking about how English is used and what it means personally to people in the expanding circle. This chapter highlights who the English speakers of today are, how they differ from those of 50 years ago, and the kinds of attitudes they have about English. The chapter makes an example of the setting of Finland and its relationship with English, but the information presented can be considered representative in many ways to English in other settings, as well.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the historical processes relating to the standardization of English. It offers an explanation of how English came to be split between "good" and "bad." The chapter draws parallels between two different cultural phenomena relating to English speaking communities: the codification of English, a process which began in England in the 1400s, and the Santa Claus custom, a process which began in its modern form in the United States in the 1800s. This comparison is meant to demonstrate that notions of "Good" English, like other cultural manifestations, have a clear beginning point in history, and that they are shaped by society over time, eventually losing their status as social constructions in the common consciousness.

The main point of Chapter 3 is to highlight the important relationship between social class and attitudes toward varieties of English in the United Kingdom, especially in England. In addition, the chapter includes information about the complaint tradition of English, considering in particular the role of youth, gender and foreign influence in language-related complaints.

The main focus of Chapter 4 is the relationship of ethnicity, race, and notions of "good" and "bad" English, and the relationship to language denigration and language rights. The chapter includes three case studies which are meant to illustrate some of the real-life consequences of language attitudes, as they relate to important issues such as school, the workplace, and courts of law. The examples used in this chapter are mostly from the United States, especially relating to African American English.

Chapter 5 follows up on some of the social issues presented in Chapter 4 by answering the question "Why would anyone choose to use 'Bad English'?" Some of the explanations offered include identity, segregation, lack of access to standard language culture, and covert prestige.

The second part of the book presents several case studies, including two inner-circle case studies, two examples from the outer circle, and one from the expanding circle. These case studies were carefully considered for inclusion in this book with the aim of discovering what they do and do not have in common. An investigation of these language systems involves a learning exercise on the type of linguistic features that are often associated with "Bad English." The concept of *vernacular universals* is a key feature of this section of the book.

1

ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN OUTER-CIRCLE AND EXPANDING-CIRCLE SETTINGS

The aim of this chapter is to offer some insights about the role and relationship English has with people in places where it has no official language status, but where it is still used as a widespread language in addition to the region's mother tongues. This description, of course, applies to a number of places in the world today—more than can be represented in one book. For this reason, the example of English in Finland is presented, not particularly because the use of English in Finland is special or unique, but because it is, in fact, relatively representative of many other settings, especially when it comes to younger generations. The chapter first presents some information about how young people acquire English and what it means in their lives. It then moves on to present information comparing attitudes about English between Finnish university students and American university students. The chapter ends with an overview of perceptions about what "good" and "bad" English means in different locations.

1.1 The English language sandwich

This book tells a story about "Bad English," a large and tangled topic. The main goal is to unearth some basic truths about English, and to demonstrate that what most people believe about English is not the same as what language scientists know about language through their years of work and study. In particular, this book responds to changing circumstances among speakers of English worldwide. Around the world, younger generations of English speakers have a relationship with the language that distinguishes them not only from learners of other languages, but from the English language learners of 20 or 30 years ago. Today, it is not uncommon for a child in Finland, Singapore, Nigeria, or Japan to hear English via media such as television or YouTube at the same time they are still acquiring their mother tongue(s). Such exposure to English is maintained through the time when they start formally learning English at school, sometime between the age of 6 and 12 for many children—depending, of course, on the location and the school system.

While Finland is not a focal point of this book, it is where I have spent the last 15 years of my academic career, and in many ways it serves as a representative case study of the relationship younger generations have with English today. In Finland, like in many European countries, students start to learn English in the classroom as early as 8 years of age. Depending on the academic route they choose, they may study English for 10 to 15 years—maybe longer, if they take university programs with English as the medium of instruction, which they are increasingly likely to do.

At the same time, students are engaging in social activities where they use English, meaning they are actively producing English through computer-mediated communication such as online games, forums, YouTube, or other forms of social media, or they are engaging in English through films, music, reading, and so on. As the number of English speakers grows worldwide, people who come from different language backgrounds find themselves using English as a practical communication choice—a phenomenon known as *lingua franca* (discussed in Chapter 9).

For younger generations in many places in the world, this experience with English, both from formal academic domains and informal personal domains, makes a kind of language sandwich, pressing in from both sides. There is strong social pressure for people to become comfortable using English at an increasingly younger age. School English is not enough. To be part of certain online gaming cultures, for example, it is not enough to be a good gamer. The gaming language is English, and to be part of the culture, even the youngest players have to keep up in English. At the same time, proficiency in English is a de facto expectation for citizens of the European Union. It is interesting to point out that the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe,* prepared by the Council of Europe (the advisory council that informs such policies as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), strongly espouses the view of European citizens as “plurilingual,” meaning that they should show proficiency in several European languages. In the 51-page document prepared by the Council of Europe (2007), English is singled out as a language which is a modern-day necessity, but it should not be seen as a replacement for proficiency in other European languages. Despite this advice, the reality at the moment seems to be that English is the practical choice at the expense of other languages. In Finland, 90 percent of the population between the ages of 18 and 64 claim to speak at least one foreign language, with English as the main foreign language for those surveyed (applying to nine out of ten respondents) (Statistics Finland 2017).

What this means in practice is that many young people become used to navigating their use of English between two extremes: their personal life on the one hand, and their public and schooling life on the other, with a whole continuum of other uses in the middle (Leppänen et al. 2009). I use the image of a sandwich to describe this phenomenon, with the pressures inherent from both the formal and informal sides of English like pieces of bread simultaneously squishing together on the same language user. All of this makes for a complex set of capacities and engagements with the English language, and it also implies that—even for those who are using English as a second, third, or fourth language—there are multiple competencies in English, including informal registers and vernaculars, as well as formal registers such as academic spoken and written English.

This complex set of proficiencies leads to challenges for both teachers and students in English language classrooms around the world. English language teachers face a peculiar predicament that teachers of other foreign languages typically do not. All around the world, students come to the English language classroom with aptitudes for and attitudes about English that students of other languages do not normally have. That is because students are exposed to English from many sources at an early age; they have an integrated and personal relationship with the language. For many students, English might even constitute a major component of their personal identity, which can either be an enormous challenge or a brilliant resource for a teacher of English, depending on the situation. At any rate, students are not likely to have neutral feelings about English.

By the time they come to the university to study English, students often demonstrate aspects of both confidence and insecurity with regard to their knowledge of the language. On the one hand, they are good enough at English to gain a spot in a highly competitive university program. Among their family and friends, they are likely to be regarded as the "expert" on English. In fact, many English majors at the University of Helsinki report that they find themselves fending off such accusations as, "Why are you studying English? You already know English! *Everybody* knows English. What's the point?" Yet at the same time, the students' views of English can be underdeveloped and lacking nuance in some ways.

After 10 to 15 years of studying English in a foreign-language classroom, the students in university English programs know the grammar, spelling, and vocabulary of the language in a way that puts many native speakers to shame. Why? Because whereas native speakers rely on instinct to help them speak English, students of English in the foreign language context had to learn the rules formally in the classroom, which entails learning labels and terms for all the units of grammar. Just try asking a native speaker of English what an object pronoun or a passive construction is, and watch their brows furrow with wonder, but Finnish students know those terms and how to apply them. The point is not to make fun of mother-tongue speakers of English, but rather to illustrate that when we speak our native language(s), we don't *need* to know what the rules are; we use them naturally and instinctively. To be fair, you should see the troubled expressions on Finnish students' faces when I ask them if a noun in Finnish should be in the partitive or the accusative.

These changes in the relationship with English have led to a situation where younger people in all sorts of locations are willing to converse in English at a pace and ease that contrasts sharply with their parents and grandparents. In fact, this ease with English makes some of these younger speakers a bit difficult to classify in terms of their status with English; they are usually not mother-tongue speakers because they haven't grown up speaking English at home. At the same time, they are not really foreign speakers of English either, as English imbues their daily existence and has done so for nearly their entire life. Many have reached a level of proficiency that equates to nativeness.

Students in Finland are increasingly aware of the varieties of English—that is, the varieties of English spoken in the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Canada, for example, in addition to the English used in places such as India, Nigeria, and Singapore. In fact, knowledge of the English varieties has recently become part of the school curriculum in Finland. However, it is still the case that, overwhelmingly, students are more familiar with two main target varieties: the standardized varieties of American and British ("British" here referring to the standardized norms of southern England). It is interesting that given its status as a European variety of English, as well as being considered the "birthplace" of English, the British standardized variety is often associated with school and formal learning for students in Europe, whereas American English seems to evoke more personal and private realms of use (see, for example, Carrie 2017).

With this mixed background of English exposure, then, what do students know? It is safe to state that for the majority of students, impressions about the social life of the English language are mediated through Hollywood films, the television industry, and various forms of media. Anyone who grew up in the United States—even in California—knows that what gets shown in Hollywood films is not always representative of American life. It is entertainment; it is the suspension of disbelief. Yet media consumers in foreign countries do not always distinguish the messages and language in films from real life.

Despite what people around the world think they know about English, and the societies where it is spoken as a mother tongue, some gaps nonetheless become evident. For example, my students are often surprised to learn that African American people constitute less than 13 percent of the total US population, and that this number has been more or less steady for years; when asked, my students often guess that the figure is as high as 40 percent. This misperception is due to the representation of African Americans in the music they listen to, the sports teams they watch, and other forms of media that appeal to them, which often starts in cartoon form such as Disney (see Bloomquist 2015 and forthcoming).[1] Here, the students' overestimation of the African American population points to a lack of knowledge about the social context in the United States. As discussed in Chapter 7 of this book, African American English seems to hold a particular allure for young English users around the world—which is one reason why it merits a high degree of attention in this book.

1.2 Comparing attitudes about English

I have taught about the social aspects of language in university classrooms in the United States and Finland for 20 years. In the United States, the biggest obstacle in covering the course material was to first convince students to step outside their preconceived notions about English; they had to work to overcome their natural baggage as mother-tongue speakers of English. Such preconceived notions about language are called *language ideologies.* After all, the students had spent an entire lifetime building up ideologies not only about language, but about other aspects as part of their participation in their social and cultural milieu. It was only after they could shake those "but-everybody-knows-this-is-true" notions that we could start to talk about how language works as a system. Such ideologies are normal, and they are associated with early development and long-term socialization. They are acquired over time, and they often tend to be implicit, below the level of conscious awareness. As such, they are notoriously difficult to get at (see McKenzie and Carrie 2018).

language ideologies: *preconceived notions, beliefs and/or emotions that people hold about certain social styles, varieties, or features of a language*

In Finland, there was a different kind of obstacle. The students in Finland obviously grew up speaking Finnish—or, for 5 percent of the population, Swedish, which is also an official language in Finland. They have all kinds of attitudes about Finnish and Swedish, or maybe about Russian or other neighboring languages, but English is still remote enough that they do not have the same opinions or "everybody knows" ideologies as the American students. In many ways, this *tabula rasa* beginning offers opportunities to discuss language in a refreshingly neutral way. Finnish students, for the most part, are accepting and uncritical when I present the inherent logic of nonstandardized verb forms (see Part 2 of this book), or when I discuss the historical explanations for pronouncing *ask* as *aks* (see Chapter 7), because they have a personal distance from the material.

Each year during the first session of my university class on *language attitudes*, students fill out a survey pertaining to their conceptions about language. A language scientist at Ball State University, Indiana, devised this survey (along with the help of her colleagues).[2] The survey comprises 30 questions, presented as statements such as "You should pronounce a word according to its spelling," and "People who speak dialects are not very smart." Students rate these statements using a 5-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." (See eResource.)

***language attitudes**: (a related concept to language ideology) beliefs or judgments people have about certain social styles of language, features of a language, or varieties of a language*

The most interesting outcome from these surveys is to compare the Finnish students' responses to those from the students in Indiana (Figures 1.1 through 1.6; also refer to eResource). For example, the first question is "Everyone should speak Standard English at all times." The notion of "Standard English," discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, often maps onto the general mainstream understanding of what "good" English is. In the survey, neither the US nor the Finnish students overwhelmingly agreed with the statement that everyone should speak Standard English at all times, but the US students disagreed at a lower rate: 70 percent of the US students "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement, while 95 percent of the Finnish students did (see Figure 1.1). In other words, the mother tongue speakers of English appear to have stronger attitudes about using a "standard" form of English.

In response to the statement, "Compared to Standard English, dialects are a simpler form of language," the US students "disagreed"/"strongly disagreed" 39 percent of the time, but Finnish students "disagreed"/"strongly disagreed" 82 percent of the time. Again, the Finnish students demonstrated a higher level of acceptance for nonstandard use of English. These results all seem to support the same hypothesis: the Finnish students appear to be more accepting of English in all its various forms, including nonmainstream dialects and nonstandard usage—harking back to the *tabula rasa* notion mentioned earlier.

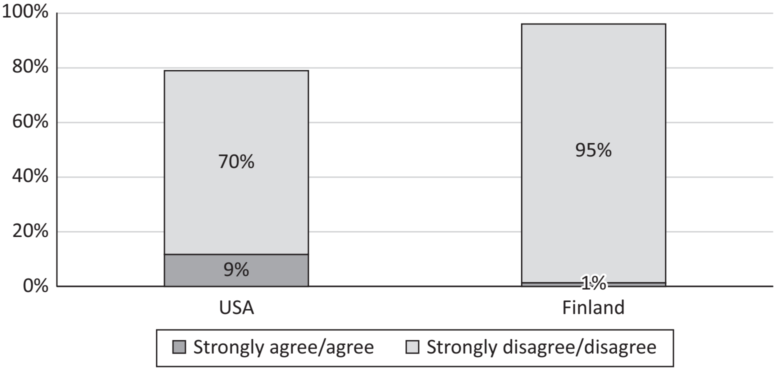

FIGURE 1.1 Everyone should speak Standard English at all times.

Figures 1.1–1.6 show responses to student surveys at Ball State University, Indiana, and the University of Helsinki, Finland, regarding English language use. Responses have been adjusted to compare negative versus positive assessments. For full survey responses, see the "Bad English" eResource.

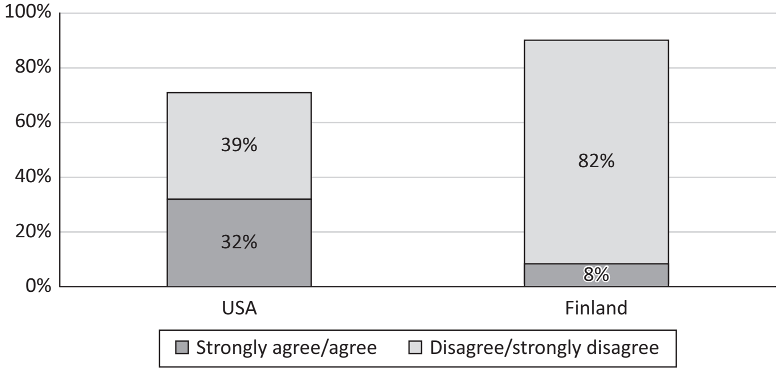

FIGURE 1.2 Compared to Standard English, dialects are a simpler form of language.

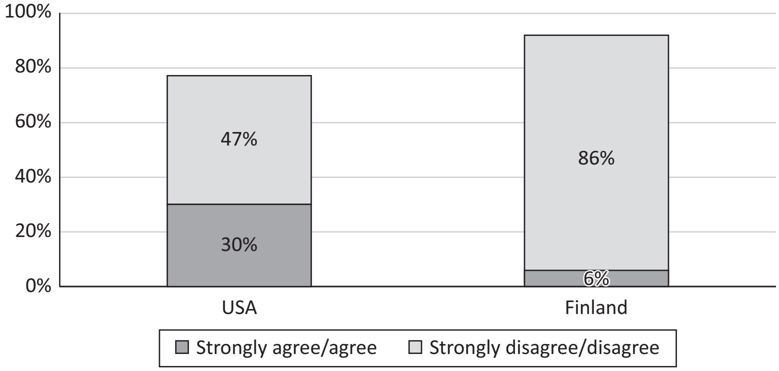

FIGURE 1.3 Generally, young people do not speak as well as the older generation.

As seen in Figure 1.3, the American students exhibited a higher degree of insecurity about how well young people speak English compared to older generations. Thirty percent of the US students agreed with the statement that younger people do not speak as well as older people, while only 6 percent of the Finnish students agreed with this statement. With this statement, as with others in the survey, there is a flaw in that we cannot be sure if the Finnish students were thinking about better Finnish or better English when they answered this question, which might account for some of the differences between the two sets of students.

With regard to Figure 1.4, it can be seen that neither the American students nor the Finnish students are particularly keen on the use of the word *like*, although the Finnish students seem more accepting of it than the US students. This finding hints that Finnish students have internalized some of the negative attitudes associated with *like* in inner-circle settings, but not to the same degree as the mother-tongue English speakers (see D'Arcy 2017).

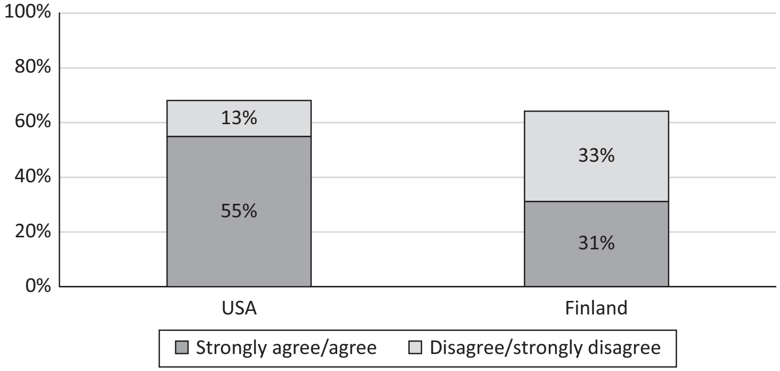

FIGURE 1.4 I hate it when people say 'like' all the time.

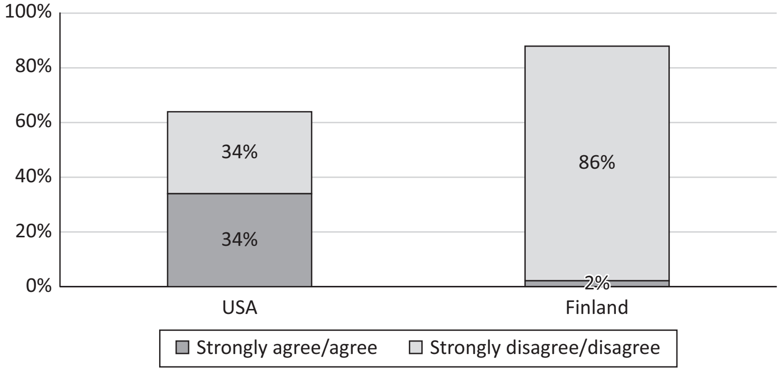

FIGURE 1.5 Most Americans speak bad English.

Perhaps the most revealing results stem from this statement, as shown in Figure 1.5: "Most Americans speak bad English." More than one third of the US students agree with this statement while less than 2 percent of the Finnish students agreed. When the survey results were shared with students in my classes in Finland, they were fascinated, but also incredulous that US speakers of English would hold themselves in such low regard. For one thing, the variety of US English that tends to be spoken by university students in the Midwest is upheld by the Finnish students as an ultimate target for their own use of English. Furthermore, the Finnish students tend to find it incredible that people who speak English as their mother tongue could consider themselves to be imperfect speakers. Here it might be helpful to consider the enormous contrast between the language profiles of English speakers versus Finnish speakers. For Finns,

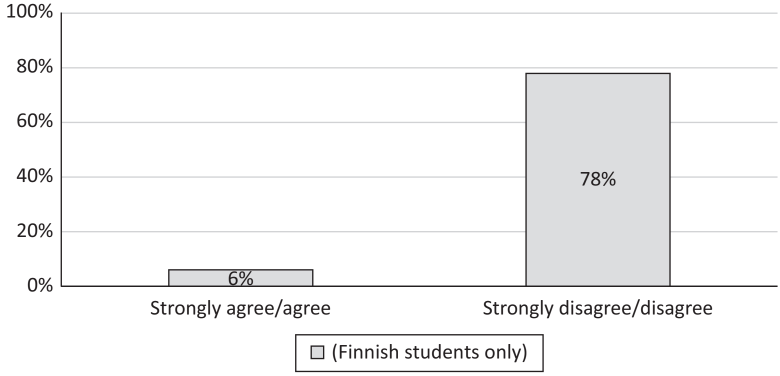

FIGURE 1.6 Most Finns speak bad English.

the Finnish language is a major contributing factor to a Finnish identity. The language is seen as their wholesale possession. For Americans, English, a hugely pluricentric and widespread language, cannot be considered a component of their identity in quite the same way. This explanation might lend some insight into Figure 1.5, but what about Figure 1.6?

Oddly enough, when the Finnish students were presented with the statement "Most Finns speak bad English," the overwhelming majority, in stark contrast to the mother-tongue speakers of English, disagreed. These results imply that the Finnish students are proud and confident about their English skills, but the mother-tongue speakers of English from the United States are not. How is it possible, my students ask, that Americans could consider themselves to speak bad English—the mother tongue of the majority of the US population, and, furthermore, a model of use for English speakers around the world? What happened to these Americans to make them so insecure about their language? The author Lynne Murphy refers to this known insecurity from Americans as *American Verbal Inferiority Complex*, and cites several examples of how Americans tend to favor British use over their own English language (Murphy 2018).

This survey brings to light some of the attitudes English users in an expanding circle setting have in comparison to an inner-circle setting. What about attitudes toward varieties of English in other English-speaking settings?

1.3 "Bad English" in the outer circle

For outer-circle environments, English often serves as an official language, yet, for parts of the population, it is not a mother tongue. English functions in multiple roles in such settings, making it difficult or even impossible to generalize how English is judged by different segments of the population (see Chapter 8). Furthermore, in many outer-circle settings, there is a tension between speaking a localized variety of English versus the model set from afar by inner-circle speakers. In many outer-circle environments, because of the colonial links to Britain, the inner-circle model is British English, or, more specifically the standardized variety of British English.

In outer circle settings, it is helpful to think of English as occupying a broad spectrum, much broader than is generally found in inner-circle settings. What this means in practice is that in many outer-circle settings it is possible to hear a person speaking English that is extremely different from the standardized variety; in fact, it may not be readily recognizable nor comprehensible to many listeners as English. Many outer-circle settings are characterized by having a local form of English, often a Creole, which is mixed with elements of local languages. Examples include Nigerian Pidgin English, Jamaican English Creole, and Singlish, which is presented in Chapter 8. At the other end of the spectrum, there are speakers who sound similar to standardized English speakers from the United Kingdom. In the middle of the spectrum, there are speakers of all ranges of ability and character. In outer circle settings, variety not only in English but also in other languages tends to be a basic fact of life.

Furthermore, an individual speaker in outer-circle settings can—and often does—change the mode of English they use to match the social setting. Thus, not only is there a wide range of English styles spoken at the societal level, but also at the individual level. English speakers in outer-circle settings often have a wider range of stylistic choices in English than inner-circle speakers do. For example, in Singapore, a speaker might choose to speak Singlish, a local mixed language not comprehensible to outsiders (in its most extreme forms) while socializing with friends, but can readily switch to a variety of English closer to the standard while in the workplace or at school. Singlish, although widely spoken by the majority of the population in Singapore, often holds negligible value for politicians and the social elite. The persistence of Singlish is a divisive topic that is regularly at the forefront of public discourse in Singapore. Even among native speakers, it is often considered "Bad English," yet at the same time, there is a sense of pride and solidarity in continuing to use it as an insider resource (Tan and Tan 2008). In fact, this tendency for insiders to value their own variety is quite common; the issues of "covert prestige" and identity are taken up in Chapter 5.

Within outer-circle settings, local varieties of English very seldom hold overt prestige, especially among social elites. For this reason, even among those who speak local varieties as their mother tongue, such varieties are rarely regarded as fully-fledged languages in their own right. They are routinely given names such as *dialect*, *pidgin*, *Creole*, *patois/patwa*, *bad English*, *slang*, or some kind of localized name such as *Singlish*. In addition, attitudes toward these varieties can be very strong, even among mother-tongue speakers who use the varieties on a regular basis.

1.4 "Bad English" in the expanding circle

The expanding circle comprises the fastest growing and, in many ways, the most diverse users of English in terms of their skills and their relationship with English. Within expanding-circle settings, there are all sorts of intervening factors that influence the way English is used. For example, it is routinely reported that the countries with the best English in Europe (other than the UK and Ireland, obviously) are Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. According to the English Proficiency Index (2018), these countries, along with Luxembourg, rank as the highest in English skills in Europe. Reports from previous years show similar rankings. While it would be easy to state that other languages from the Germanic family of languages might have an advantage, which includes, for example the Scandinavian countries, this does not tell the whole story. Finnish, for example, is not part of the Germanic language family, nor is it an Indo-European language. Its classification is part of the Finno-Ugric language family. Yet Finland is still routinely placed in the list of the "best" skills in English in Europe, despite the genetic distance of Finnish from English. Likewise, it might be easy to cast an eye on the list of "most skilled in English" countries and maintain that it must have something to do with northern Europe—perhaps all that *hygge* in Denmark or the *fika* in Sweden, which have been so much in the popular ideology in recent decades. However, a look at the next places on the index shows a regionally dispersed list of countries: Slovenia, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Poland. Further down the list are places like Italy, France, and Russia.

Perhaps the best point to be taken from such lists—in addition to asking the very pertinent question of the judging criteria—is that proficiency in English is a mixed situation in the expanding circle, depending on any number of factors. For example, some claim that there is an extra openness to learning English among small populations because of its practicality, compared to bigger nations such as France or Italy. The implication is that people from Denmark, for example, have to learn English to communicate globally, as they cannot expect others to communicative with them in Danish (Cenoz and Jessner 2000). A relatively small population cannot be the only explanation, however, as other smaller populations, such as Croatia and Lichtenstein, do not rank among the best English speakers in Europe (according to rankings such as the English Proficiency Index 2018).

Another explanation sometimes offered is that countries that tend to have a high aptitude in English subtitle, rather than dub, media forms such as television, games, and film. In practice, this means that children in Sweden, for example, are hearing English before they are able to read the accompanying Swedish subtitles. They have a high level of input in English starting early in their linguistic development. Later in life, this incidental learning is supplemented through formal language learning, as well as being complemented by further personal use. The level of input in English is believed to have an effect especially on pronunciation—in fact, in Spain there has been a campaign to reduce the amount of dubbed English-origin programming in an effort to increase proficiency in English. The nondubbing explanation does not offer a wholly satisfactory explanation, either, as it is well known among language scientists that language learners do not acquire language through noninteractive media such as television. That is, we do not talk back to televisions—or, if we do, they do not talk back to us. Acquiring a language requires interaction, and at this point, there is no known substitute for human interaction (the topic of first language acquisition of English is explored further in Chapter 6).

Continuing with the example of Europe, the generalization that English is better in the north hardly seems fair, given that personal proficiency varies enormously, regardless of location. Some of the most adept speakers of English I have encountered are from Greece, Italy, Spain, and Bosnia, all countries in the south of Europe. This drives home the point that within the expanding circle, it is impossible to make accurate assumptions about English: the most relevant factor is language acquisition, or in other words, how successful individual users are at learning English. Even amongst their own compatriots, Europeans are known to poke fun at those who sound too "foreign" when they speak English.

Indeed, in Finland there is a special name given to a style of English which sounds overly Finnish to Finnish ears. "Rally English" is the name given to a heavily accented version of English spoken by, for example, competitive drivers—hence the name "Rally English"—when they are interviewed by international media in English. "Rally English" has become such a widely used term and notion that it is a recognizable variety. In recent years, entire columns for Finland's main daily newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat,* have been written in "Rally English." (See eResource.) The purpose of the columns is to poke fun at the stereotype of a certain type of Finn—Finnish men, in this case—who leads a simple life, void of excessive social contact, and speaks a localized form of English. The fact that low competence in English is a source of ridicule even in a nonnative setting offers an important perspective on the ideologies and expectations about English.

1.5 Conclusion to Chapter 1

The main aim of this chapter has been to offer some kind of demonstration of the up close and personal role English has, especially for young people, in settings around the world. For readers who live in outer-circle and expanding-circle settings, the information presented in this chapter comes as nothing new, and they could no doubt enrich the content with all kinds of personal stories and insights. Readers from inner-circle settings may have found some surprises in this chapter. For example, people from outer-circle and expanding-circle settings begin to acquire English at a very young age, and often it is associated with leisure time, rather than (or in addition to) the language classroom. This chapter demonstrated that at least for the university students in Finland, attitudes toward dialects of English and nonstandardized features of English are relatively well accepted, compared to the level of acceptance among US students. The chapter also presented a brief overview of attitudes relating to outer-circle and expanding-circle uses of English. The rest of the chapters in Part 1 focus on inner-circle settings, starting with an overview of where notions relating to "good English" come from.

Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to Dr. Mai Kuha and her colleagues for devising the survey used in this chapter and for allowing me to adapt, use, and share it. Responses from the students at Ball State University and the University of Helsinki are collected and released according to the ethical guidelines of these universities.

Discussion questions for Chapter 1

1. Do you speak a foreign language (other than English)? If so, what is your target in that language? For example, if you speak French, are you conscious of trying to sound like you are from any particular region of France? How does this compare to your use of English?
2. An occupational hazard of my profession is that I am sometimes asked to evaluate the way others speak English. A Finnish newspaper once asked me to listen to and compare the English of several Finnish politicians who were head of their respective political parties. I agreed to the interview, but felt extremely uncomfortable about the task I was asked to perform. What would you have done? Is it ever ethical to evaluate how another person speaks a foreign language? Why or why not, and under what circumstances?
3. How old were you when you first started to be aware of the English language? What was your first exposure to the language? Do you remember what kind of input you had, or your first words? How does your experience relate to the English language users in Finland, for example?

Notes

1 The work of such scholars as Alastair Pennycook and H. Samy Alim highlight the irony and also the power involved with "disenfranchised African Americans who are spearheading the global dominance of North American language and culture" (Pennycook 2007, 3) through hip-hop and hip-hop linguistics (Alim 2006). This global appeal stands in contrast, for example, to the 2016 social media campaign #oscarssowhite.

2 Thanks to Professor Mai Kuha for devising this survey and for allowing me to use and modify it. Responses from both her students and mine are released according to the ethical guidelines of our respective universities.

Cited in this chapter

Alim, H. Samy. 2006. *Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture*. New York; London: Routledge.

Bloomquist, Jennifer. 2015. The minstrel legacy: African American English and the historical construction of "Black" identities in entertainment. *Journal of African American Studies* 19(4): 410–425.

Bloomquist, Jennifer. Forthcoming. *From Dumbo to Donkey: Linguistic Minstrelsy in Children's Animated Films*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carrie, Erin. 2017. "British is professional, American is urban": Attitudes towards English reference accents in Spain: Attitudes towards English reference accents in Spain. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 27(2): 427–447. doi:10.1111/ijal.12139.

Cenoz, Jasone and Ulrike Jessner. 2000. *English in Europe: The Acquisition of a Third Language*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. 2007. *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. Executive Version*. Available at: www.coe.int/lang

D'Arcy, Alexandra. 2017. *Discourse-Pragmatic Variation in Context: Eight Hundred Years of LIKE*. Studies in Language Companion Series 187. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

EF EPI: EF English Proficiency Index. 2018. Available at: www.ef.com/__/~/media/centralefcom/epi/downloads/full-reports/v8/ef-epi-2018-english.pdf

Leppänen, Sirpa, Anne Pitkänen-Huhta, Arja Piirainen-Marsh, Tarja Nikula and Saija Peuronen. 2009. Young people's translocal new media uses: A multiperspective analysis of language choice and heteroglossia. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 14: 1080–1107. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01482.x

McKenzie, Robert M. and Erin Carrie. 2018. Implicit–explicit attitudinal discrepancy and the investigation of language attitude change in progress. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 39(9): 830–844. doi:10.1080/01434632.2018.1445744

Murphy, Lynne. 2018. *The Prodigal Tongue: The Love-Hate Relationship between British and American English*. London: Oneworld.

Official Statistics of Finland (OSF). 2018. *Participation in adult education* [e-publication]. ISSN=2489-6926. Language skills 2017. Helsinki: Statistics Finland [referred: 2.4.2019]. Access method: http://www.stat.fi/til/aku/2017/04/aku_2017_04_2018-12-12_tie_001_en.html

Pennycook, Alastair. 2007. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. London; New York: Routledge.

Tan, Peter K.W. and Daniel K.H. Tan. 2008. Attitudes towards non-standard English in Singapore. *World Englishes* 27(3/4): 465–479.

2

WHERE DOES "GOOD ENGLISH" COME FROM, AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH SANTA CLAUS?

As explained in the previous chapter, a chief aim of this book, and especially this section of the book, is to offer readers a social perspective of varieties of English. With this chapter, we lay some social and also historical groundwork. Before further pursuing the topic of "Bad English" in the next chapters, it is first essential to lay out some details about how "Bad English" and "Good English" became opposing forces in the first place. How did these notions actually emerge? One thousand years ago, in the northwestern European islands where the English language eventually morphed into its modern form, there were no notions of "good" and "bad" in relation to English. Rather, the language was a collection of different regional dialects, each influenced by their own origins and language contacts. As a collection of regional dialects, the notion of English did not have much social prestige. French was considered more prestigious in England at the time, and there was ample debate about French being used as an everyday language instead of English (see Crowley 2003). What happened in the intervening years, then, causing English speakers to hold such convictions about what constitutes "good" and "bad" use of the English language? How did we reach a point in time when even mother tongue speakers of English can consider themselves "bad" speakers, as discussed in Chapter 1?

This chapter begins with an overview of the standardization process of English, and, with it, the social changes that resulted in English no longer serving simply as a means of communication, but being lifted up as an object of scrutiny, dysphony, and division. The purpose is not to give a detailed overview of the standardization process (other books do just that, and very well—see some suggestions at the end of this chapter), but rather to set up the circumstances that eventually led to the current polarization in ideology about English. In doing so, the chapter makes use of a parallel cultural phenomenon to create an analogy. While analogy is not always the best means of presenting an argument, here it is seen as a useful exercise because it offers readers the opportunity to contemplate equivalent stages in a known and established cultural phenomenon and how it relates to ideologies about English. For this particular analogy, we use the rise of the Santa Claus/Father Christmas phenomenon in the United States, which, like ideologies about English, arose from other cultural inputs, was morphed into a new form in a particular time and place, and then spread. If the Santa Claus phenomenon is not a good fit for your particular setting or mindset, any cultural phenomenon that has an identifiable beginning point and stages will serve as a comparison.

2.1 Standardizing English

The language standardization process tends to be a long one, and is much more comprehensive in its scope than is presented here. In many ways the standardization process is a healthy sign that a language is vital, viable and meaningful for its speakers. For one thing, languages with a standardized variety tend to have a writing system based on a unified standard, which in turn opens up opportunities for literature, communication, and other cultural manifestations.

For English, like for other languages, the standardization process is viewed as having four general stages, as introduced by the linguist Einar Haugen (1966): (1) selection (2) codification (3) implementation (4) elaboration (see also Moessner 2017).

Selection refers to the emergence of one dialect which gains recognition as a model, for example, through gaining widespread social prestige. In the case of English, this dialect was London English in the Middle Ages, having to do with the seat of government and population rise in London as people moved to the city from other parts of England (see, for example, Schaefer 2017). **Codification** means the creation of a code, or in other words, written grammars and dictionaries appear, including those that discuss how the language should or should not be used, what words mean, and how they should be spelled and used. For English, there was wide variation in spelling (Milroy and Milroy 2003) up until about 1650—and any student of English still today may have doubts about how to spell either *gray* vs *grey* or *queue* or *cue*, among myriad other examples. The codification of English grammar and punctuation came much later, up through the late 1700s, with the apostrophe, for example, serving as a particular sticking point—persisting to this day (Griffin 2016). For example, in 2017 a series of news stories circulated in the British press about the "Grammar Vigilante," a man who prowled around Bristol, England, at night using a self-constructed contraption to correct the use of apostrophes and other perceived written mistakes on local signs. (See eResource.)

The English language saw a huge increase in published work about "correct" grammar after the mid-18th century, which led to a marked rise in prescriptivist attitudes. Once the English language was codified, it was ready for defenders of its valor to emerge: it was during this time period that the "complaint tradition" (Milroy and Milroy 2003) began in earnest (see also Shea 2014).

This system of prescriptivism coincides with the next stage of standardization, which is **implementation**. Implementation ties in with growing prestige and pride in a language variety. Various decision makers and influential figures and organizations adopt the new norms in their own communication. Prior to about the 1700s, Latin was considered the prime language for any discussion of higher education or learning, not just in England but in much of Europe. When written English was more or less fixed, due to codification, it meant it could be upheld as a language of learning and science. The final stage of standardization, **elaboration**, refers to widespread use and acknowledgment of the particular variety in elite forms such as science, technology and, for example, higher education. This is also where the common-sense notions and ideologies come to full force: because the variety is widely viewed as the unquestionable, de facto medium of communication, it is effectively cleaved from the process that brought it to this status. The variety is viewed as something that just "is," with little appreciation for the fact that it is just one of many varieties, and that a social process led to its unquestioned high status. At this stage, the language as a whole is often perceived as one and the same as the standard (see Preston 2017), rather than as another variety. At the same time, authority over language is shifted from the mouths of its everyday speakers and into the care of language pundits, many of whom proclaim responsibility over English on their own volition (see Lippi-Green 2011).

A strange thing about language-related notions is that, because they are seen as "common sense" and "normal," they seem to have always been there. It is difficult to conceive of a time when the standard would not have been in existence, with its adherents telling us how to use apostrophes, how to spell "I before E except after C," and so on. In folklore studies, there is a long tradition of exploring the relationship between behavior and beliefs. Classic reading in the field of folklore asserts the function of folklore in maintaining conformity to accepted patterns of behavior, especially as "a means of applying social pressure and exercising control" (Bascom 1954, 346). Folklore, of course, refers in large part to traditional customs that people uphold. When we think of folklore, we might imagine dances or sayings or other cultural rituals. This chapter presents evidence that standardized English falls into this general area of traditional rituals, as well. For the remainder of this chapter we contrast and compare two separate customs and ideologies that emerge in their current form from Anglo-American culture: Standard English and Santa Claus. At the end of the chapter we return to notions from folklore to support our findings.

2.2 Where does the notion of Standard English come from?

In today's world, language critics decry the effect of new technologies on language—for example, how texting applications and messaging are destroying punctuation and causing users to violate the basic rules of English. Ergo: the demise of civilization is certainly nigh. In fact, complaints about language are nothing new. At the end of the fifteenth century, a man named William Caxton is credited with being the first person to print a book in English. Prior to this time, around 1476, books in English were written by the hands of scribes using pen and ink. A few books had been printed in French and Latin on the main continent of Europe, where Caxton learned his trade, but Caxton's edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was the first known book printed and published in the English language. This issue of *Canterbury Tales* was soon followed by *The Bible* and *Aesop's Fables,* the latter which Caxton hastily translated into English from French.

Many scholars who write about the history of English bring up Caxton. He was a tradesman—why does he deserve such a prominent place in the history of the English language? Like so many people who become important figures in history, he was probably in the right place at the right time. Caxton had been working in Bruges, West Flanders, where he learned to use a new invention, the printing press, which had been developed by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany, in about 1440. Caxton saw a business opportunity to create books in English, and he subsequently introduced the printing press to London. How was he to know that in doing so, he and his predecessors would contribute to permanent changes in how English was used, perceived and judged?

In offering up his contributions, Caxton had no professional translators or editors to turn to. Those jobs did not yet exist, obviously. He had to do that sort of work himself. He was an educated man, but even educated men were hard-pressed to answer questions relating to how *written* English should appear on the printed page. Therefore, in translating written texts from, say, French into English, Caxton found himself in a quandary when it came to supplying the equivalent term in written English — because those written terms simply did not exist. In fact, as a preface to many of his printed works, Caxton wrote at length about the choices he faced in creating a written version of English (see inset). From this dilemma arose one of the first known examples of fury over how English was used — and it is important to note that it had to do with *written*, not *spoken* English. In the decades following the first use of the printing press, pundits from across England complained about what they termed "inkhorn terms," or in other words, what they considered the gratuitous incorporation of terms from other languages into English.

In the preface to his translation *Eneydos* of Virgil's 'Aeneid' (1490), produced late in his career, Caxton still bemoans the difficulties he faces as a translator and publisher: "I doubted that it sholde not please some gentylmen whiche late blamed me sayeng yt in my translacyons I had ouer curyous termes whiche coude not be vnderstande of comyn peple/and desired me to vse olde and homely termes in my translacyons. and fayn wolde I satysfye euery man/

and so to doo toke an olde boke and redde therin/and certaynly the englysshe was so rude and brood that I coude not wele vnderstande it."

The complaints about foreign elements from French, Latin, and Greek, labelled "inkhorn terms" in English, have come full circle. Today, language watchdogs around the world are just as likely to complain about the influence of English and its infiltration in the terminology of their language as critics of English were to complain about foreignisms in English in the Early Modern period.

Furthermore, even when printers such as Caxton published directly from English texts or tried to represent spoken English, they faced a mess of decisions. How should they settle on the spelling of a word such as *through*, which showed up with no fewer than 500 variations from the various documents prepared by scribes around England (according to Milroy 2001)? Caxton and others like him had to make fast and often under-informed decisions, as once the demand for published material started, it was insatiable.

A few lasting legacies of English arose from this stretch of history. One of them is that English spelling is unpredictable, at best. Due to mass-produced written text, as well as other factors, written English is left with an inheritance of lasting decisions that were made when one publisher did not have the time or resources to negotiate with another—"Hey, how are you going to spell 'knight'? What about 'neighbour'?" There was no grand plan or schema by which those who reproduced written language could consider or mediate their choices. For a lasting example, look no further than the various ways of depicting the [k] sound in today's written English: *cat*, *kit*, *queue*, *chasm*, *school*, *axe*, *khaki*.

Many languages have a writing system that more closely corresponds to the language's pronunciation than English has. Normally, this entails coming up with an alphabet that has a one-to-one correlation with the phonemes, or distinctive sounds, of the language. A few examples are the writing systems for Turkish, Devngari, Korean, Georgian, and Finnish. The writing system (or *orthography*) of Finnish, for example, was mostly designated by a single person, Mikael Agricola, in an attempt to translate the Bible into Finnish in the 1500s. His writing system, which, like English, makes use of the Latin alphabet, was later improved upon by other individuals. A transparent system writing is clearly an enormous advantage for children when they are first learning to read and write, as well as people learning to write in a foreign language.

A second legacy has to do with the now irretrievable permanence of written English. Prior to the introduction of the printing press, English was a collection of dialects spread out across a relatively sparsely populated island. Historical linguists demonstrate that these dialects differed greatly from each other. Prior to about 1400, not much was written in English—most written material tended to be in French or Latin—and, when it was written, scribes did their best to render in Latin script the way English was spoken around them, or, in many cases, what they considered to be the right way of using English.

When the printing business began to boom in London, naturally the printed, written version of the language reflected the speech of those who lived in London. The London variety of spoken English became the permanent, visually recorded norm. It is important to note that London English itself was influenced by an influx of migrants from other parts of England. By 1640, there were more than 20,000 English language titles in print. The written representation of London speech, then, was spread across the nation and then beyond, with some alterations eventually taking place in the United States, Canada, and other English-speaking populations—including in England itself. A look at the text written by Caxton in this chapter offers a clear indication that even written English in England has continued to change in the past 600 years.

One of the outcomes of having a written representation of a language is that it often begins to serve as a model of how a language should be spoken. Indeed, there is a common fallacy that the "best" speakers of English should speak English like it is written. A quick survey of even the previous sentence in this paragraph shows the improbability of this belief. For example, most speakers of English would not pronounce the "l" in the word "should," nor would they pronounce the "w" sound in the word "written." Clearly, then, the English language is not pronounced as it is written. At the same time, however, other idiosyncrasies of language are frozen in time due to the standardization process. Many examples of these idiosyncrasies will be presented in the second half of this book. The point is that when English speakers could point to a document and see with their own eyes how their language was represented in writing, it became a sort of contract, with the outcome that eventually the written version of the language, because of its status and permanence, was lifted up as an almost deified entity. Rather than seeing written language as a less robust representation of spoken language, written language, with all of its intricacies, inconsistencies and rules of use, is regarded as superior to spoken language.

At the moment, there are some 7,000 languages that we know of in the world. Of these, less than half have a written form. It should be clear by now, based on the example from English, that languages without a written form are not likely to have a standard language culture. In other words, a written form of a language is a prerequisite for standardization, which in turn is a prerequisite for prescriptivism about language. While it might be possible to find a language with a written version that does not exhibit linguistic prescriptivism, the reverse is not true:

it is not likely that a language exists that has no written version but still exhibits linguistic prescriptivism.

2.3 Here comes Santa Claus

In this chapter, we use the custom of Santa Claus as a means of comparison for a socially constructed norm. In establishing a starting point to the Santa-related traditions, much as we did for standardized English in the previous section, we can draw parallels between the stages and beliefs that go along with both phenomena. The Santa Claus custom is typically associated with Christian people in Westernized environments, but at the same time, it has become commercial enough and popularized to the extent that it serves as a familiar touchstone across multiple societies, even those that do not celebrate Christmas. Because of their localized relevance and entrenchment, it is actually difficult to come up with customs that apply cross-culturally. Another point is that this particular comparison is not intended to made light of what is actually a grave matter with serious consequences: language attitudes and their potential relationship to linguistic discrimination (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). Although problematic in some ways, the Santa Claus phenomenon serves as a comparison that is both timely, having emerged in just the past two hundred years—thereby highlighting how quickly such norms can become entrenched—and is also readily identifiable due to exposure to popular Westernized culture. If the Santa comparison does not work for your particular community, you might consider creating a comparison to other cultural manifestations such as table manners, customs surrounding local holidays, holiday foods, marriage or other ceremonies, or any widely accepted and entrenched customs.

In 1823, the poem “The Night Before Christmas” was published anonymously by a poet who was later identified as Clement Clarke Moore. Moore was a member of the group of New York dandies who referred to themselves as the Knickerbockers, and some scholars assert that the writing of the poem was a somewhat collaborative effort of that group. Moore, himself, was a professor of Hebrew, and the children’s Christmas poem he wrote was far enough outside his normal character that he initially did not claim authorship of it. Yet the poem has become his enduring contribution: it is a standard, recognized part of Christmas for many people in the United States and, in fact, to some extent throughout the world. Even if the poem is unknown, the associated customs that arose in part because of its publication are certainly known—that is, the modern incarnation of celebrating Christmas with Santa Claus (Nissenbaum 1996). The poem, which begins with the famous lines “’Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,” has served as the basis for a Christmas song and countless films and radio programs, as well as satirical accounts based on the poem, including one for language scientists (see eResource).

It might come as a surprise to learn that, until this poem was published, the celebration of Christmas in the United States was not standard cultural practice, and, when it was celebrated, it tended to be a Christian religious observance that occurred on Christmas Day. The poem "The Night Before Christmas," originally titled "A Visit from St. Nicholas," is the first known literary work to gather up several strands of folklore from various immigrant groups who were prominent at the time and place where the poem was written. In this case, the groups in question were primarily English Episcopalians and Dutch Protestants in the region around New York City. In the poem's telling of Christmas, a "jolly old elf" enters into a home through a chimney on Christmas Eve, whereupon he fills up Christmas stocking with gifts for the children and leaves wrapped packages under the Christmas tree. He flies through the night in a sled pulled by eight reindeer, who, not surprising for the time and place in which the poem was written, are called by a collection of Dutch and English names: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner (from the Dutch word for 'thunder') and Blitzen (from the Dutch word for 'lightning').

Historical evidence shows that the "cult of Santa Claus" (Jones 1954), or in other words the modern incarnation that began in the United States, was devised in the United States in the early 1800s (Nissenbaum 1996), leading up to Moore's influential poem in 1823. Like Caxton and the first publication in English, Moore took the responsibility of taking what he had learned from others and putting it into a form that was presented and thereafter consumed voraciously by the public, who shaped it as the same time they appropriated it and made it part of their everyday routines. As the Santa Claus custom moved on through time and the increasing population of the United States, eventually "rules" or "practices" came into being: Santa Claus wears a red suit, often with white fur trim. He is a plump old man with a white beard and red cheeks. He wears spectacles and he often carries a walking cane. His laugh sounds like "ho ho ho," and of course he loves children. These "truths" are not unlike those that emerged for standardized English once it had become firmly anchored in everyday reality. For example, consider the following, each of which can be heard expressed by everyday users of English.

> "Don't end a sentence with a preposition."
> "You should say 'She and I,' not 'Me and her.'"
> "Saying 'aks' instead of 'ask' is 'Bad English.'"
> "Good English means you speak like you're educated."
> "Two negatives make a positive."
> And so on.

Just as we can go on describing both the physical and personal characteristics of Santa Claus, we can describe what it means to use "good" or "proper" English. A vast breakdown in our comparison between standardized English and Santa Claus appears, however. Even though we have established that both standardized English and Santa Claus arose in particular settings amid certain social groups, then grew in stature and influence, most people, even the most ardent adherents to Christmas customs, know and admit that Santa Claus does not exist outside collective social practice. In an editorial in *The New York Sun* in 1897, the author FP Church writes an ironic, "Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies!" (see eResource).

The same cannot be said for standardized English. So successful has been the rise of standardized English that everyday users themselves are not aware that its history is a human-made one, complete with vast flaws, inconsistencies, and foibles. It is an effective system, but it is not a perfect one. As other chapters in this book demonstrate, the rejection of standardized English for what it is: an accepted pattern of (linguistic) behavior that has been shaped through ritual, makes it an extremely effective tool for, at worst, subverting the rights of others who do not adhere to the ritual.

2.4 Folklore, fact and tradition: "Good English"

In an authoritative book on the history of modern Christmas, the author Nissenbaum (1996) notes that, when people become educated about the foundations that gave rise to the customs surrounding Christmas, there is an inclination to label the entire process an "invented tradition" and thereby discount it as something inauthentic or contrived. While in part the customs were in fact invented or contrived, this should not diminish the importance of these cultural rituals for the societies that engage in them. It would be difficult or impossible to find a custom or ritual that was not "invented" or at least altered over time: this is the way cultural manifestations like holiday customs—and language—naturally evolve. In the same newspaper editorial cited previously, the writer FP Church notes "The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men [sic] can see" (Church 1897).

To put this another way: to know the origins of how something came about, from a factual, historical perspective, is not to diminish its importance or relevance for its modern-day adherents. Rather, this knowledge can offer a deeper understanding and the possibility to engage in a more meaningful and informed way with those rituals. Gaining a new perspective on something that was previously seen as a "fact" could potentially affect understanding and judgments about how people engage in those customs in different ways. At this juncture, it is probably clear that I am not referring to Santa Claus, but to language.

2.5 Conclusion to Chapter 2

Here is an overview of the historical processes that gave way to contemporary rituals surrounding standardized English.

1. A written code was necessary to preserve and protect anomalies, inconsistencies, as well as the language of those in higher social positions.

2. As a result of standardization, the "best" speakers are thought to speak English in the same way they write English. This is a fallacy. A writing system is an arbitrary system which has a manmade relationship with language. Humans are pre-programmed for language, but they are not pre-programmed for writing—or, as has been explained by other language scientists, there are only native speakers, not native writers.
3. The standard is inaccurately viewed as a smooth continuum in time, with purely English structures passed from one generation of speakers to the next. Older English is largely considered to be "better" English. This notion overlooks the fact that there has always been variation in English, and there always will be—so long as English survives as a thriving, spoken language. As commonly stated by language scientists, the only language that does not change is a dead language.

Acknowledgments

The author is thankful to Dr. Leena Kahlas-Tarkka for reading a draft version of this manuscript. Thanks also to Dr. Claus Elholm Andersen.

Discussion questions for Chapter 2

1. Is your mother tongue standardized? What was the standardization process of your mother tongue? If your mother tongue has a writing system, how well does it map onto spoken language?
2. One of the assets of having a standardized variety of a language is the opportunity to devise a unified writing system based on that standard. Can you think of other positive sides of having a standardized variety?
3. Many of the languages in the world are oral languages only, with no writing system. Do you think it is likely that an oral language with no written version would have a standardized version? Why or why not?
4. In many English-dominant countries, correct spelling is viewed as a sign of superior intelligence, as demonstrated, for example, by the popularity of the competitive events known as "spelling bees." In light of the history of English spelling as explained in this chapter, what do you think: does being a good speller in English mean someone is intelligent? The American author F. Scott Fitzgerald, for example, was a notoriously bad speller. Was he unintelligent?
5. Consider the range of alphabets in the world that you are aware of, or do an investigation of world writing systems. How many different alphabets and writing systems can you find? Could you substitute one alphabet/writing system for another to represent a certain language? Why or why not? Or, on the other hand, are closely related languages ever represented by different alphabets in their written forms? How would you account for this?

Suggested reading

For an overview of the history of English, the six-volume edited series *The Cambridge History of the English Language* is unparalleled in its breadth:

Bergs, Alexander and Laurel J. Brinton. 2017. *The History of English* (six-volume series), 1st edn. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter.

This handbook is edited by two leading experts in the field:

Nevalainen, Terttu and Elizabeth Traugott, eds. 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of English* (Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics). Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

While there are numerous fine textbooks and renditions of the history of English, here are a couple that are accessible for students:

Crystal, David. 2005. *The Stories of English*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishing.
Culpeper, Jonathon. 1997. *History of English*. London: Routledge.

Cited in this chapter

Bascom, William R. 1954. Four functions of folklore. *The Journal of American Folklore* 67(266): 333–349.

Church, Francis Pharcellus. September 21, 1897. Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus, editorial, *The New York Sun*.

Crowley, Tony. 2003. *Standard English and the Politics of Language*. 2nd rev. ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Griffin, Simon. 2016. *Fucking Apostrophes*. London: Icon Books.

Haugen, Einar. 1966. Dialect, language, nation. *American Anthropologist* 68: 922–935.

Jones, Charles W. 1954. Knickerbocker Santa Claus. *The New York Historical Society Quarterly* 38(4): 357–383.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2011. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States*. New York: Routledge.

Milroy, James. 2001. Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5(4): 530–555.

Milroy, James and Lesley Milroy. 2003. *Authority in Language: Investigating Language Prescription and Standardisation*. 3rd paperback ed. London: Routledge.

Moessner, Lilo. 2017. Standardization. In Bergs, Alexander and Laurel Brinton (eds.) *The History of English: Volume 4, Early Modern English*, 167–187. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter.

Nissenbaum, Stephen. 1996. *The Battle for Christmas*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Preston, Dennis. 2017. Folk linguistics and language awareness. In Peter Garrett and Josep M. Cots (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Language Awareness*, 375–386. New York: Routledge.

Schaefer, Ursula. 2017. Standardization. In Bergs, Alexander and Laurel Brinton (eds.) *The History of English: Volume 3, Middle English*, 519–533. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Shea, Ammon. 2014. *Bad English: A History of Linguistic Aggravation*. New York: TarcherPerigee Penguin Books.

3

"BAD ENGLISH" IN INNER-CIRCLE SETTINGS

3.1 Youth, young women, foreign influence

In the summer of 2017, an article appeared in the UK newspaper *The Guardian* titled "The Americans are coming for British English—but we're like, whatever." The article, which appeared in *The Guardian's* media section, began with the author reporting about a visit from his teenage granddaughter and how she responded to his greeting: "I'm good," she said. "What about you guys?" The author wrote, "she didn't go on to wish me an awesome day, but the message was still unmistakable […] she now belongs to the coming generation who, quite naturally and unthinkingly, speak American English." The article then went on to take issue with the amount of American-sourced media material consumed by the British population, with the final message that America speaks "our" language, by which the author meant English. The article ended with the ironic claim that Britain is on its way to becoming the 51st state in the United States of America, if it were not for the saving grace of the British Broadcasting Company—which, as the author stated, "stands tall for Britain."

There is a lot to unpackage in this short *Guardian* article in terms of attitudes and ideologies about language (see eResource for the complete article). The general premise of the piece, however, is nothing unusual, which is precisely what makes it a useful artifact for investigation. Every complaint raised in the article is commonplace, and has been for a long time. The article begins by lambasting the language of **youth**, zeroing in on the language of teenage girls. In this particular instance, the teenage girl in question was the author's granddaughter, which might seem a bit personal, but it is not unusual: complaints about younger generations in general is a familiar theme, and their language in particular is certainly not exempt. The reason for this burden has to do with their relative lack of social standing, which is the major theme of this chapter: the relationship of social prestige and regard for language.

3.1.1 The role of young women

Young women carry out an immense role when it comes to language attitudes and also language change. Young women, including teenage girls, are routinely blamed and discredited for their use of language in many different settings, not just English-speaking (see, for example, work on 'pissis girls' in Finnish, Halonen 2015; also refer to Kiesling 2019 for an overview). Look no further than your closest online forum to read the most current attacks on the language of young women. At the moment, the not-very-holy trinity of complaints about young women's speech in English tends to be a predictable line-up of complaints about (1) vocal fry, or what language scientists call *creaky voice*, meaning a lax phonation (used especially to signal the end of a speaking turn, among other functions); (2) uptalk or, in other words, uttering statements with a rising intonation, which for some hearers might signal that the statement is actually a question; and (3) the use of the word *like* in various functions, including as a quotative ("*I'm like, 'Did you really say that?'*") and as a discourse marker (*Like, the Conservatives won,* example from D'Arcy 2017: 205; see eResource).

These three linguistic features are often perceived as being the particular territory of young women, yet research shows that all genders participate in these same supposed egregious linguistic actions (see more information on eResource). Why is it that young women are held accountable for bringing these supposedly ruinous elements into the English language? Well, the answer is complicated. Part of the answer has to do with the fact that young women tend to get blamed or associated with stigmatized linguistic features precisely because they are young women. As pointed out in this chapter (and elsewhere in this book), the real question is never about the linguistic features themselves, but rather who is associated with those linguistic features. Mainstream society tends to value the features of language they associate with those people they hold in high regard, and to undervalue the features of language associated with people who do not have high social status. Teenage girls are part of a doubly socially marginalized group: they are young and they are female. (For more on this topic, see the suggested reading section at the end of this chapter.)

At the same time, however, it is also the case that young women have been shown in study after study of language change—focusing here on English—to be the innovators when it comes to experimenting with language and leading new linguistic trends. This fact was established especially by a pioneer in the field of sociolinguistics, William Labov (2001), and it has been widely acknowledged ever since his pivotal work in the 1960s. As pointed out by Tagliamonte (2016), if we want to know what language will sound like in the future, we must listen to the adolescents of today. Female youth, in particular, seem to have a special role.

3.1.2 Foreign influence

A second major theme of the *Guardian* article is **foreign influence**, in this case, the influence of another English-speaking country, the United States. The author states that the US speaks Britain's language—that is, English—yet at the same time worries that Americanisms such as "you guys," "I'm doing good" and "awesome" are causing young British people like his granddaughter to sound American instead of British. The contradiction in these observations is self-evident. As with age and gender, complaints about foreign influence on English are also nothing new. Chapter 2 introduced the term "inkhorn terms," coined in the 1500s by critics who complained about what they considered gratuitous borrowings from Greek, Latin, and other languages into English. In the intervening centuries, complaints about foreign influence on English have been steady. In the article cited at the beginning of this chapter, the "foreign" source is American English, which is clearly seen by the author in a negative way. Negative views about perceived American influence on British English is a phenomenon taken up at length in Murphy (2018), in what she calls the "love-hate relationship between British and American English."

3.1.3 Social class

Although the author of the *Guardian* piece does not specifically mention **social class**, it would be an oversight to dismiss the role of class in the author's complaints. The writing is imbued with cues relating to class. (UK readers, in particular, will pick up on these cues. See eResource.) For starters, the article was printed in *The Guardian,* which is associated with readers in the politically left-leaning, educated British middle class.[1] Ending the article with an appeal to the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) is another direct hint: BBC television, like *The Guardian,* is associated with relatively privileged middle-class viewers. Finally, the fact that the author assumes the right to complain about the English language in the first place—including that of his granddaughter—clearly implies that he perceives himself as being in a position to do so.

3.2 Talk like us, think like us

The author of *The Guardian* article discussed in this chapter is not alone in his worries. In fact, his worries and admonitions about the downfall of the English language is part of a discourse that goes back centuries. As explained in Chapter 2, the language complaint tradition could begin only with the standardization process of English. What is interesting is exactly how and why people began to assume the role of a warrior for the language.

The logic employed seems to be that there can only be one "right" way of using the language, and that is the accepted standard. Anything that deviates from that supposed standard is perceived as being wrong. Due to a general lack of comfort with variation, there is only one version that can be "right." This mindset has been called "the common sense" view of language (Milroy 2001): "everybody knows it, it is part of the culture to know it, and you are an outsider if you think otherwise …" (536). For many language scientists, perhaps especially those who, like me, work in the field of sociolinguistics, there is a different kind of logic: the standard is viewed as just one variety of many. In fact, there is no "the," or in other words, a singular standard. Not only are there standardized or accepted forms for various written genres, various spoken language standards, and so forth, but there are also socially and contextually driven norms within these different standards, as well.

A key point is that for many language scientists, the concept of *variation* in language is not only a comfortable one, but it is also a mandatory and inherent property of any healthy language. *Variation* in language refers to different ways of expressing the same thing, each with different social meanings. Language is constantly being shaped by its speakers, a reflection of the fact that the society in which these speakers live and operate is always changing.

So how is it that language scientists and everyday users of language have come to have such different ideas? One explanation is that, as a result of the standardization process of English, language becomes a sort of commodity that can be bought and sold (Lippi-Green 2012). Those who claim control of English do so because it is in their own best interest to do so: it is a part of what enables them to establish and maintain a position of power and social status, with the use of language becoming a very effective outward symbol of their perceived or desired status.

A controversial issue in the science of linguistics and linguistic anthropology is the relationship between language and thought (for example, see the influential work of Pinker 1994/2007). For everyday people, there is often a clear, if subconscious, relationship between language, thoughts, and actions. This is one explanation for why perceived misuse of English is regarded as an intentional affront or misdeed: variations from the standardized version of English are seen as moral indecency. Another explanation is that, just as language becomes a load-carrying substitute for issues such as race and social class, it also becomes a substitute for control. If for everyday people language equals thought, then it stands to reason that controlling the way people speak and write means controlling the way they think. This endeavor, of course, is doomed for failure. As the American poet Carl Sandburg astutely observes in his poem "Languages" (see eResource), "Words wrapped round your tongue today […] Shall be faded hieroglyphics […] Your song dies and changes/And is not here to-morrow/Any more than the wind/Blowing ten thousand years ago."

The remainder of this chapter turns to the relationship between social class and language regard in the United Kingdom. Race, the chief corresponding social factor in the United States, is a topic taken up in Chapter 4. In the United Kingdom, social class has been identified as the most important predictor of access to income and opportunity (see Milroy 2001; Garrett 2010), which also relates to the use of language and how it is viewed.

BLOWING IN THE WIND

In the English language, there is a long history of what is called "the complaint tradition," according to a highly lauded (and recommended) book by Milroy and Milroy (first published in 1985, now in its fifth printing). The tendency for certain members of a society to assume the role of language expert and offer advice about how others should or should not be using their own mother tongue is, according to the Milroys, a feature of societies that, like English, have a highly developed standard language. For the German language, for example, there are numerous websites, books, and forums dedicated to "fixing" other people's German. At the moment, the best-selling German author Bastian Sick, who has made a career out of writing about how people should be speaking German, has a book titled *Wie gut ist Ihr Deutsch?* (*How good is your German*?).

Language scientists writing on the topic of the language complaint tradition have referred to these self-anointed language guardians by a number of terms, including *language maven*s (popularized by Pinker, 1997/2012), *language pundits* (for example, Cameron 2012; Crystal 2007; Curzan 2014) and *language shaman* (Burridge 2010). My own addition to this list is *language proselytizer.* Proselytizer is a term normally used within religious contexts, meaning a person who attempts to get another person to join a different faith or religion. The concept works well in this context of language, too, because people who are sure their language use is the right use often see it as a moral issue. The reasons for trying to get others to change the way they talk range from altruistic to sadistic, but attempting to delineate the motivations is not a useful task for our purposes. Rather, it is helpful to point out the social power that goes along with the perceived authority to correct the way someone uses language. Here we have a conundrum: language scientists are uniquely qualified to comment on the way people "should" or "should not" use language, yet you will be unlikely to find a language scientist who would engage in such activity (I do not know of any). Why? Because to do so runs contrary to scientific knowledge about how language works. This leaves the road wide open for people of varying degrees of qualifications or equity to take on the task themselves, passing on views of language that are rooted in opinion, not in scientific fact.

But who are these language proselytizers? In the history of English, names like Jonathon Swift, Strunk and White, Daniel Webster, and Willem Defoe come to mind, but the list can end with people like the woman who lives next door, your third-grade teacher, a media writer for *The Guardian* newspaper, and so on (see Lukač 2018). Perhaps the most interesting question to ask with regard to this phenomenon is why and how certain members of a society feel qualified to assume the role of language proselytizer.

3.3 The top-down approach to language

Social groups which are considered to speak and write "Bad English" are those in positions of least relative social power. They are the most disenfranchised groups. Denigration of their language contributes to their marginalization. This means, for example, when a foreigner is ridiculed for speaking with a nonnative-like accent, is the accent itself the point, or is the root of the problem that the accent marks the person as an immigrant? When someone criticizes another for not knowing how to use an apostrophe, the criticism is probably rooted in elitism; people do not intentionally abuse apostrophes, they simply have not learned the intricate rules of the apostrophe in English. No one is born knowing how to use apostrophes in English: this is not an innate condition to humankind. Swedish serves as a fine example of counter-evidence toward the purpose of apostrophes: Swedish, which, like English, is a Germanic language, and has no apostrophes. Yet somehow Swedish speakers manage to use written Swedish with great success in a wide array of written formats.

A much-discussed feature of African American English is the pronunciation of the word *ask* as "aks," as in "I'll go *aks* the teacher." Are criticisms of this form, which has been in variation throughout the history of English (in the Middle Ages in England, *aks* was the preferred pronunciation), really about the pronunciation itself, or the fact that to modern ears it "sounds Black"?

In the context of the UK, a child can be disciplined for using the form *innit* at school, in an utterance like the following:

> *I mean, the sister,* ***innit****, she's about five times bigger than you,* ***innit****, Mark?*
> *(from Pichler 2016: 61)*

The linguistic feature *innit,* derived from the phrase *isn't it,* has taken on multiple usages in English in today's UK, as shown in the example above. This feature is known as an invariant tag question because, unlike tag questions in standardized Englishes, it does not match up with the verb of the preceding sentences, as in *You* ***didn't*** *forget to buy milk,* ***did*** *you?*. In recent years, the form *innit* has merited attention in the UK media because some schools have banned its use, along with a list of other everyday linguistic features, as being too informal for the school setting. Here again we could ask the question: is it the form itself that is bad, or is it the associations it carries with it, such as lower social class and multiethnic urban populations?

Language is more than just a means of communicating. It is one of the most important and revealing social manifestations of who we are and where we come from. To criticize someone's language assumes a position of superiority and a right to judge that person. It is never just about language. Rather, marginalization through language becomes a proxy for racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and elitism. It is incredible that in this day and age—even among those who claim to celebrate diversity in other ways—language remains a socially accepted means of targeting others for marginalization and ridicule. The openness that many profess to have toward ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and gender, and so on, simply does not extend to language variation.

There is a direct connection to relative social power and use of language: what those who have relatively high social power say and write is considered "Good English" because they say and write it—after all, they are, from a top-down perspective, the most powerful people. In exactly the same kind of direct connection, what others say and write is considered "Bad English" because of who says or writes it. What makes it "Bad English"? The fact that it is said or spoken by people who lack mainstream or top-down social power or prestige. It becomes abundantly clear that labels such as "Bad English" and "Good English" have less to do with language itself than they do with social structures in a given society: this is a theme which is returned to time and again throughout this book. Certain features of a language become associated with certain social groups, and the language, rather than the people directly, becomes the target of blame and denigration. It is one step removed, then, but it is still racism and classism. Think about it: when you criticize certain aspects of a language, who do you consider the main users of these linguistic features? Is it really the aspects of language you don't like, or is it, at its core, aspects of the speakers associated with those language features? Your attitudes are not likely to change as a result of reading this book. But perhaps you will have a slightly different perspective on where those attitudes come from.

3.4 What's "bad" is relative: US vs UK

In the inner circle, or in other words in environments where the majority of the population uses English in nearly all of their different daily activities (and many speakers are monolingual in English), the label "Bad English" is most likely to apply to those who speak a variety that is seen as differing too much from the idealized, standardized variety, including both native and nonnative speakers of English. In the outer circle or, in other words, areas that tend to be former colonial territories, the term "Bad English" is often used to describe those who speak a highly localized variety of English, such as the Singlish variety discussed in Chapter 8. In the expanding circle, places where English is a foreign or additional language, "Bad English" is often, not exclusively, a description used for people who are perceived as showing too much influence in their English from their first language, or for showing obvious signs of being a learner of English.

In the United States, it has been noted by language experts that differences in English according to region, or in other words regional dialects, are often regarded as "matters of quaint curiosity and charming intrigue" (Wolfram and Schilling 2015: 159). For example, in the United States it is noteworthy that the highest-ranking elected position in the country, the position of president, has been occupied by several individuals whose native variety of English was quite regionally marked—for example, Jimmy Carter, who spoke with a distinct Southern variety of English, and John F. Kennedy, who spoke with a distinctly Boston accent. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, a regional dialect has traditionally been associated with a lack of education and social prestige, which often stands as a barrier to high-ranking positions. A famous point of contrast between a US and a UK head of state, at least in terms of their way of speaking, is Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who took lessons in her mother tongue before embarking on a full-fledged political career. Thatcher's regional and working-class native dialect was considered inappropriate for someone who had high social and political aspirations in the UK.

There are many reasons why the UK differs from the US with regard to attitudes toward regional dialects, but one of the most important has to do with education and its relationship to Received Pronunciation (RP). Received Pronunciation is the name of the dialect—or, more accurately, the *accent*—which is used by the most socially prestigious or elite group in the UK. Regardless of where such individuals live, they speak RP, or, in some cases, a form of RP which exhibits features of a regional dialect, but is still recognizable as RP. Like any variety of a language, RP reveals the social background of its speakers, and RP speakers traditionally were educated in private schools; their RP accent is a symbol of this prestigious education and social standing. The outcome is that there is an interaction between regional and social class dialects in the UK that does not exist—at least not to the same extent—in the US and other English-speaking locations. This relationship has been illustrated as a triangle figure as shown in Figure 3.1, which is meant to represent the number of speakers of different types of English in the UK. The top of the triangle shows that there are relatively few speakers of RP compared to the overall population, even though it is the most socially prestigious accent (although its social prestige does seem to be diminishing in some circles; see, e.g., Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2012). The majority of the population of the UK speaks with some kind of an accent that marks them for place, whereas RP might not.

accent: *for language scientists, 'accent' refers to pronunciation and intonation features, not to an entire dialect*

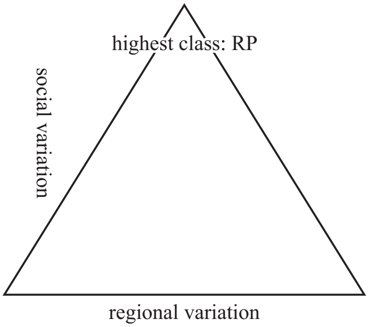

FIGURE 3.1 Linguistic and social variability in the UK.
Adapted from Hughes, Trudgill, and Watt (2012: 10).

This chapter makes an example of the poet Chrys Salt (see her poem, “Roots,” in this chapter), who has also been an actor, broadcaster and theatre director. She was awarded an MBE (Member the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in the 2014 Queen’s Birthday Honour’s List for her Services to the Arts. People who meet Chrys Salt today might be surprised to learn that she grew up speaking an entirely different variety of English than she does now. In an interview, Salt reported, “I was a short girl with buck teeth and a Brummie (Birmingham, UK) accent. My parents knew there would be no hope for me, so they sent me to elocution lessons starting at the age of 6. It changed my life. It made me who I am” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). There is no overstating the effect of this change on Salt’s subsequent career opportunities. In a language attitude study reported on in the book *Sociolinguistics in England* (Braber and Jansen 2018), Brummie was voted as not only the least prestigious of the dialects that were polled, but also the least socially attractive (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3). These results were based on attitude surveys about different regional dialects of English in England and the United Kingdom covering a 40-year period. In fact, a 2018 BBC radio feature addressed exactly the question: Could the Prime Minister have a Brummie Accent? (see eResource). Received Pronunciation, the social accent associated with the upper class of Britain, became Chrys Salt’s way of speaking as a result of her elocution lessons. In a real-life Pygmalion/My Fair Lady type story, her acquisition of RP equated

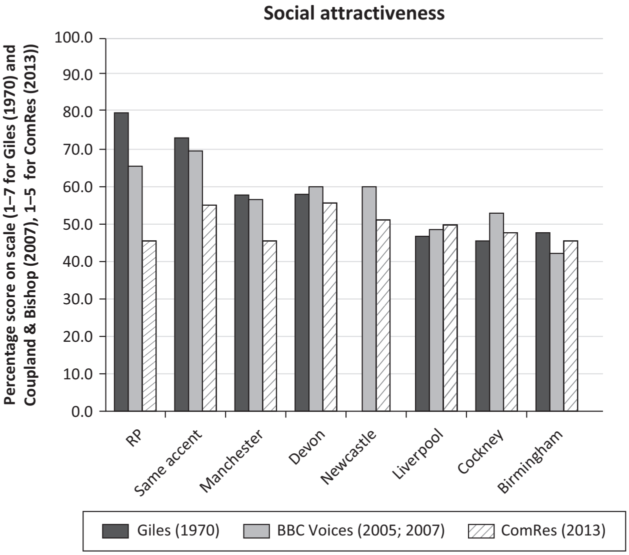

FIGURE 3.2 Results for social attractiveness from 43 years of language attitudes research in English. Reproduced based on Montgomery 2018: 135. Copyright editors and authors 2018. Used with permission from Palgrave Macmillan.

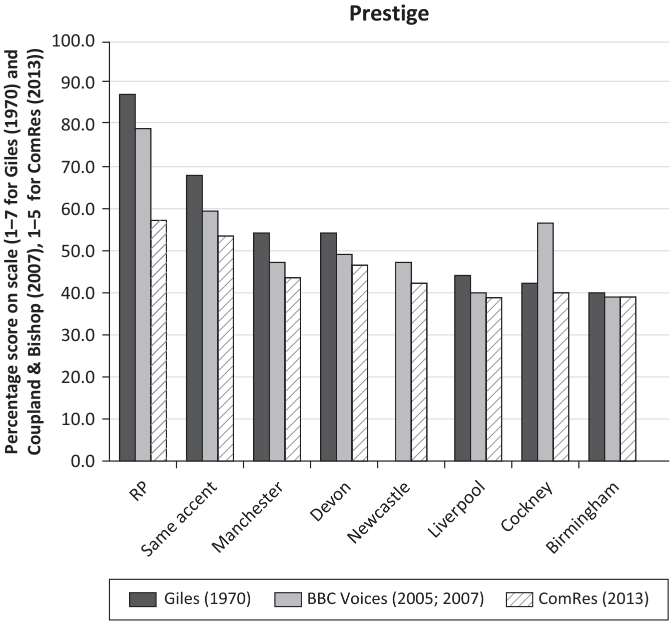

FIGURE 3.3 Results for prestige from 43 years of language attitudes research in English. Reproduced based on Montgomery 2018: 134. Copyright editors and authors 2018. Used with permission from Palgrave Macmillan.

to enormous changes in the career opportunities she had. Eventually, she quite literally ended up making her living, both in the theatre and as a poet, because of her proficiency in a socially prestigious way of speaking—in combination, of course, with her host of other talents.

It is interesting to note that if either Margaret Thatcher or Chrys Salt had come to the United States speaking their native, regional UK dialects, chances are they would have been met with enthralled comments such as, "I love your accent!" The tendency for Americans to positively evaluate the speech of British people is captured, for example, in Figure 1.5 in Chapter 1, which indicates that the American students tend to undervalue their own use of English (see also Murphy 2018). This tendency highlights the fact that what is negatively perceived in one setting might be admired in another: context is everything.

In this poem and accompanying footnotes by Chrys Salt, she writes about how she changed as a result of becoming a speaker of Received Pronunciation, and how becoming an RP speaker distanced her from her roots. The topic of identity and language is explored further in Chapter 5.

Roots

Small, pigeon toed,
and buck-toothed as a donkey,
my parents thought I didn't stand a chance,
my Brummie accent the last straw.

How now brown cow,
how now brown cow,
the mantra of my youth
as Mrs Sadler
rounded my vowels,
tightened my consonants
with elocution.

How now brown cow,
how now brown cow.
Over and over.
Do you remember an Inn,
Miranda?
Do you remember an Inn?
Dirty British coaster with its salt-caked smoke stack.
Do you remember an Inn?

Now with my accent polished 'Radio 4',
Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant la-de-da,
with a cargo of cut glass, apes and plums,
I miss that Brummie coaster with its salt-caked smoke stack
butting down the channel
of those long-gone days
with its cargo of 'our kid', 'pikelets', 'lamping',
'tarar a bit', 'blarting'
round and round the Wrekin
and back to me.

Brummie slang: *our kid*—my brother/sister, *pikelet*—crumpet, *tarar a bit*—goodbye for a while, *blarting*—crying, *round the Wrekin*—taking the long way round, a serious detour.

How now brown cow—a mantra used in elocution teaching to demonstrate 'Queen's English' vowel sounds. *Do you remember an Inn Miranda* (from Tarantella by Hilaire Belloc), *Dirty British Coaster and Quinquireme of Nineveh* (from Cargoes by John Masefield)—both poems were used in elocution as memory exercises and to sharpen consonants.

Copyright Chys Salt 2017. Used with Chrys Salt's permission

3.5 When "bad" really means "foreign"

A chapter on language regard in the US and UK would be remiss if it focused only on attitudes that exist about mother-tongue speakers of English. Language attitudes having to do with gender, age, ethnicity, and social class are one thing, but they are only part of the story. Another crucial part of the story is attitudes about non-native speakers of English, or, as mentioned earlier, those who are perceived as speaking "accented" English, meaning they are perceived as learners of English and as mother-tongue speakers of a different language.

A report created for the 2015 UK Prime Minister and Home Secretary (Casey 2016) revealed that, as anticipated, large numbers of immigrants to the UK from different parts of the world faced challenges related to integration, access to schooling, and job training. In general, they faced social and economic challenges at a higher rate than nonimmigrants. Of course, there are multiple intersecting explanations for these challenges and disadvantages, but one of the explanations is language (for more on the relationship of language to social privilege, see Chapter 4). The report found, for example, that immigrants from certain groups, especially Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, were likely to face language-related integration challenges in combination with other social disadvantages.

Shifting the perspective from the immigrant groups themselves to the receiving society at large, several issues are clearly in effect, not all of them relating to language. As established previously, even the factors that appear to be language-related do not exclusively have to do with the language itself. In what Lippi-Green (2012) refers to as "the communicative burden," it is often the case that people would be perfectly capable of hearing and understanding what a second-language speaker of English is saying if they did not have "filters" in place that prevent them from accepting the intended message. That is, based on external cues such as appearance and the way of speaking, people instantly make judgments about the speaker, which social characteristics they represent, and where they come from (see Chapter 4).

3.6 What does "Bad English" mean?

In short, designating the way someone uses language as "Bad English" is an active and effective means of othering. *Othering* in this context means behavior or actions that alienates or classifies people as outsiders, specifically as it relates to language. When this chapter comes to an end, we can offer up some definitions of "Bad English" within the context of the US and the UK. These definitions might include, for example:

- Ways of using English that are not valued by the most powerful individuals in a society

- English language as used by marginalized or underprivileged populations or individuals
- English that is perceived as being a learner's English, or in other words, by someone who speaks English as an additional language to their mother tongue

Note that every one of these definitions has to do with the people who use English, not with the language itself.

3.7 Conclusion to Chapter 3

The chapter has established that within the US and the UK there tend to be differences in how regional dialects are valued. When it comes to ethnic and social dialects, however, there are similarities within these two-inner circle settings: ethnic and social varieties that differ greatly from the prestige norm, or in other words, the idealized standard, are often denigrated. As noted by the American language scientists Wolfram and Schilling, "the stakes are much higher" when it comes to ethnic and social varieties. Speakers of an ethnic or social variety that differs from the "standard," they write, "may be judged on capabilities ranging from innate intelligence and on personal attributes ranging from sense of humor to morality" (2015: 192). The stakes for such styles of English are explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Discussion questions for Chapter 3

1. This chapter establishes the idea that "Bad English" is a relative term. What are common complaints about English where you live? What kind of complaints have you heard, for example, in the workplace or in school? Does anyone write letters to newspapers or on websites about the corruption of your local language? What do those people complain about? Can you come up with social explanations for these complaints?
2. In the book *Dialects at School: Educating Linguistically Diverse Students* (Reaser et al. 2017), the authors contrast comments left on YouTube about Lumbee English, an ethnic variety spoken in North Carolina, versus comments about Outer Banks Brogue, a regional variety spoken in North Carolina. In the comparison, the authors demonstrate that the comments toward Outer Banks Brogue are largely positive and regard the variety as a source of local pride, whereas the comments concerning Lumbee English are derogatory and dismissive. What does this contrast tell about the social prestige of these groups within the North Carolina setting? Conduct a similar experiment with varieties from your home region: explore an online platform where the public can leave comments, and compare and contrast the public perception of different varieties. If materials do not exist about your local varieties, investigate Outer Banks Brogue and Lumbee English.

3. When it comes to "Bad English," which do you think: is someone more likely to be criticized for the way they write English, or the way they speak English? Explain your answer.
4. Summarize in your own words what the poet Chrys Salt is trying to express in her poem "Roots." Have you ever felt compelled to change the way you speak in order to fit in? What would it be like if you were informed that you need to alter your English to sound like you were from New Zealand, New York City, or Johannesburg? Is this comparable to Chrys Salt's situation?
5. Keeping in mind that it is never the language itself but the people who speak it, what do you know about the Birmingham region of England? If you do some investigating, what kind of social and historical information can you find about this region that would give you an idea of why it is considered the least attractive regional dialect in England?

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Dr. Heike Pichler and Dr. Chris Montgomery.

Note

1 The relationship of social class and readership of UK newspapers is a fascinating and complex story. For an overview, see sources such as https://www.anglotopia.net/anglophilia/which-british-newspaper-are-you-a-guide-to-british-newspapers/.

Suggested reading

For language attitudes, the volume by Dan Clayton offers a succinct and accessible introduction to the UK setting. Rosina Lippi-Green's textbook is based on the US setting, and it has become a classic in the field.

Clayton, Dan. 2018. *Attitudes to Language: Cambridge Topics in English Language*. Cambridge University Press.
Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2012. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*, 2nd edn. Routledge.

For information on language standardization and prescriptivism, three volumes stand out:

Cameron, Deborah. 2012. *Verbal Hygiene*, 4th ed. London: Routledge.
Curzan, Anne. 2014. *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Milroy, James and Lesley Milroy. 1985. *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

For information on youth language and language and gender, here are a few suggestions:

Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2013. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kiesling, Scott F. 2019. *Language, Gender and Sexuality: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
Tagliamonte, Sali. 2016. *Teen Talk: The Language of Adolescents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Finally, it should be noted that in recent years there have emerged a number of dedicated UK-based language scientists who are working hard to offer everyday people in Britain a more linguistically based, non-prescriptivist vantage point on language variation. Among these, Dr. Rob Drummond, who does work on multiethnic and youth English in Manchester, comes to mind as one of the more tireless and vocal. See his website at https://www.robdrummond.co.uk/ for more information.

Cited in this chapter

Braber, Natalie and Sandra Jansen, eds. 2018. *Sociolinguistics in England*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Burridge, Kate. 2010. Linguistic cleanliness is next to godliness: Taboo and purism. *English Today* 102(26): 3–13.

Cameron, Deborah. 2012. *Verbal Hygiene*, 4th edn. London: Routledge.

Casey, Dame Louise. 2016. *The Casey Review: A Review into Opportunity and Integration*. Crown Copyright. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review: Report.pdf

Crystal, David. 2007. *The Fight for English: How Language Pundits Ate, Shot and Left*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curzan, Anne. 2014. *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

D'Arcy, Alexandra. 2017. *Discourse-Pragmatic Variation in Context: Eight Hundred Years of LIKE*. Studies in Language Companion Series 187. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2013. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garrett, Peter. 2010. *Attitudes to Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Halonen, Mia. 2015. Presenting "pissis girls": Categorisation in a social media video. *Discourse, Context and Media* 8: 55–62.

Hughes, Arthur, Peter Trudgill and Dominic Watt. 2012. *English Accents and Dialects: An Introduction to Social and Regional Varieties of English in the British Isles*, 5th edn. London: Routledge.

Kiesling, Scott F. 2019. *Language, Gender and Sexuality: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Labov, William. 2001. *Principles of Linguistic Change, Volume 2: Social Factors*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2012. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*, 2nd edn. New York; London: Routledge.

Lukač, Morana. 2018. Grassroots prescriptivism: An analysis of individual speakers' efforts at maintaining the standard language ideology. *English Today* 34(4): 5–12. doi:10.1017/S0266078418000342

Milroy, James. 2001. Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5(4): 530–555.

Milroy, James and Lesley Milroy. 1985. *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Montgomery, Chris. 2018. The perceptual dialectology of England. In: Natalie Braber and Sandra Jansen (eds.) *Sociolinguistics in England*, 127–164. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Murphy, Lynne. 2018. *The Prodigal Tongue: The Love-Hate Relationship between British and American English*. London: Oneworld.

Pichler, Heike. 2016. Uncovering discourse-pragmatic innovations: 'Innit' in multicultural London English. In: Heike Pichler (ed.) *Discourse-Pragmatic Variation and Change in English New Methods and Insights*, 59–84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pinker, Steven. 1997/2012. *The Language Instinct*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Reaser, Jeffrey, Carolyn Temple Adger, Walt Wolfram, and Donna Christian, eds. 2017. *Dialects at School: Educating Linguistically Diverse Students*. New York; London: Routledge.

Tagliamonte, Sali. 2016. *Teen Talk: The Language of Adolescents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wolfram, Walt and Natalie Schilling. 2015. *American English: Dialects and Variation*, 3rd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell and Sons.

4

HOW "BAD ENGLISH" WORKS AGAINST US

Linguistic discrimination in the USA

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters established the relationship of a standard variety of a language—or at least the *idea* of there being a standard—and the subsequent development of standard language culture and, along with it, language ideology. At this point, one might well pose the question, "OK, so there are ideologies about how language should be used … what's wrong with that?" As discussed in the previous chapter, there are those who seem to think that protecting and preserving standard language is tantamount to maintaining civilization as we know it.

For those who participate in standard language culture, either by birthright, conscious decision, personal sacrifice, or some combination thereof, it is a great gig. Many of the most powerful movers and shakers in a given society participate in standard language culture, and it benefits them greatly. It is the linguistic equivalent of a secret society handshake. It helps open doors that would otherwise remain closed.

What has standard language ever done for me?

In a scene reminiscent of Monty Python's *The Life of Brian* ("What have the Romans ever given us in return?"), it does not take long for me to tally up a few major steps in my own life that I can credit to being born into and continuing my participation in standard language culture. Clearly, related factors such as race and socioeconomic status enter into the picture, as well, but for now, let's focus on language. First of all, I was able to attend school in a language and variety that was native to me, with my use of language matching quite closely to that of my teachers. In part because of my indoctrination into standard language culture, I was able to get a scholarship at a college when I was 18. After that, I entered a career in journalism, literally making a living from my language skills. Eventually, my language skills led me to study linguistics, which in turn led to a career as a language scientist and eventually the opportunity to be taken seriously when I submitted a proposal to write this book. My own relationship with language is not meant as any special showcase, but it serves as an example of the possibilities available to those who are part of standard language culture. What has standard language done for you? The ideas here are inspired by the work of Charity Hudley and Mallinson, 2011, whose complete list is presented in the next section. What can you take for granted?

4.1.1 What can you take for granted?

The advantages of students who enter the school environment already speaking standardized English is well summarized in a book on language and education by Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011). They note that what they call "standardized English-speaking students" can normally take for granted that:

- the newspapers, magazines, books, and other media they encounter at school will be in the type of English they are already familiar with.
- they will not be mocked or teased for how they pronounce their words.
- they will not be thought of as being less intelligent because of how they talk.
- standardized test instructions and materials will be written in the English they are already familiar with.
- most of their educators will communicate with them in the type of English the students are already familiar with.
- the way they talk will not be the subject of jokes or belittling in mainstream TV shows or movies.
- their pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structure will not interfere with their ability to be assessed accurately, to interact with authority figures, or, later in life, to obtain housing and be hired for a job.

(Source: Charity Hudley and Mallinson 2011: 36)

What has standard language culture given us? It has provided countless opportunities for those who are fortunate enough to have access to it and facility in it. It is one of a number of factors that contribute to success in education, working life, and the justice system, for example, and it is more accessible for some than for others. But how does standard language culture work against those who, for a host of different reasons (see Chapter 5), do not participate in it? As the rest of this chapter shows, those who do not participate are judged for a long list of perceived social and personal characteristics. It may be surprising to learn that people can be and are judged solely on the way they talk. The work of language scientists over more than five decades has confirmed this fact numerous times. This chapter begins with an overview of studies that have established the relationship of language and attitudes, then moves on to some real-life consequences of those attitudes, focusing especially on schools, the justice system, and the workplace.

4.2 What's with the attitude?

For language scientists, it is no secret that people are judged according to how they talk, or even according to which language they speak. Starting already in the 1950s, the Canadian linguist Wallace Lambert and his colleagues conducted a series of experiments in Quebec, noting that when they had bilingual people listen to the same passage in both French and English, the English version was judged more positively, according to a wide array of non-language-related features. Even though listeners heard exactly the same speaker in French and English, they nonetheless perceived the speaker of the English version as being taller, more attractive, more intelligent, more dependable, and more ambitious, among other qualities (Lambert 1967). In Quebec in the 1950s and 1960s, there was overt social prestige associated with being a speaker of English. French speakers were more socially marginalized. In fact, when Lambert and his colleagues conducted their experiment with mother-tongue speakers of French as the listeners, they found that even French speakers viewed English speakers more positively. In other words, the French speakers shared the same negative views of themselves as the community at large. Their views of themselves matched up with the negative stereotypes of the more powerful portion of society. Lambert and his colleagues referred to their experiments as *matched guise tests,* and this basic method is still widely applied in linguistic studies today.

Matched guise test: *eliciting feelings or attitudes about certain speech or language styles by asking listeners to evaluate a speaker's personal traits based on the way they talk*

Some of the most well-known work on language regard in the US is associated with the language scientist Dennis Preston. Rather than having people listen to audio recordings of different speakers, however, Preston draws on cultural knowledge about English to make connections about how language interacts with geography. Because he works with everyday people and their everyday views of language, this type of work has been called *folk linguistics,* although more recently the preferred term has been *language regard* (Preston 2011). In his studies, Preston asked people to label a US map according to perceived characteristics associated with the English spoken in the region (Figure 4.1). For example, people might circle the state of Texas and label it with "cowboy talk." Another part

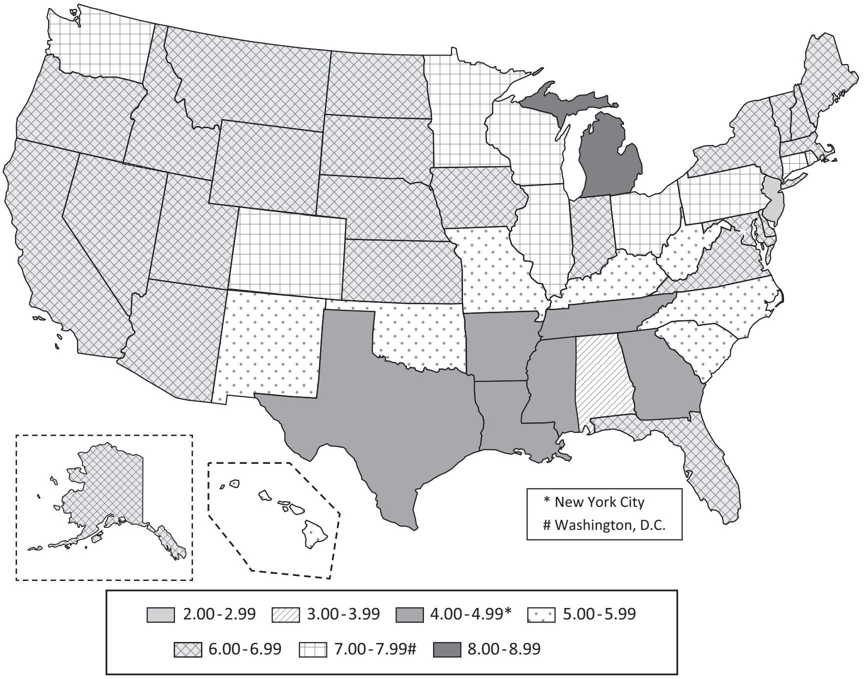

FIGURE 4.1 Mapping attitudes about US dialects. Respondents were asked to measure on a scale where the most correct English was spoken in the USA. These respondents were from Michigan, which they ranked highest on the scale. Reproduced from Preston 2002. Permission granted by Taylor & Francis.

of Preston's experiments asks people to judge where in the United States the most "correct" English is spoken, where the "friendliest" English is spoken, and so on.

Preston's results showed some surprising outcomes. For one thing, he has found that many Americans consider their own speech to be "normal." The results also show that Americans tend to agree that the "worst" US English is spoken in the US south. The "best" English is widely regarded to be that spoken in the Midwest region. Like the French speakers in the matched guise experiments in Quebec, Preston found that the US speakers judged as the "worst" were equally hard on themselves: southerners were the only group among those tested who did not consider their own English to be "correct" and "normal." Rather, the southerners that Preston tested associated "good" English with the US Capital, Washington, DC. However, southerners viewed their own speech as positive in other ways, such as friendliness and politeness.

4.2.1 Is it race, or is it language? Or is it race and language?

Experiments like these establish a clear relationship between language and attitudes. Similar methods have been used to test other attitudes in relation to language, for example, with different types of ethnic varieties. Research in the United

States has shown that listeners are much more likely to tune into a person's ethnicity than they are to a person's home region. This fact was effectively highlighted in a study reported in 1999, which showed that undergraduates at the University of Delaware were able to identify the ethnic dialect of a speaker of American English by hearing only the word "hello" (Purnell et al. 1999). Clearly, ethnicity can offer a great deal of perceptual salience to listeners, especially when it comes to pronunciation. It is not a coincidence that people who speak a perceived non-White variety of English are much more likely to be judged negatively than someone who has a discernible US Southern or New York accent. The previous chapter highlighted the relationship between social class and attitudes toward varieties of English in the United Kingdom. In this chapter, the examples are drawn from the United States, where it is well known that attitudes toward varieties of English are based more on ethnicity than on social class, even though these factors are likely to overlap (see Baran 2017, Garrett 2010, Lippi-Green 2012, Matras 2009).

These notions were effectively tested by the American language scientist John Baugh. Baugh, like many (not all) who self-identify as African American, is fluent in more than one variety of American English: he is a speaker of African American English, Chicano English (see inset on Chicano English), and standardized US English. Baugh refers to this latter variety as his "professional voice," or what many would consider his "White voice" (Baugh 2003: 159). In the 1990s, when these experiments were conducted, it was typical to use the telephone to conduct everyday business such as setting an appointment with a prospective landlord. Baugh and his colleagues used newspaper classified ads to locate and contact prospective landlords for apartment rentals in five different regions in the greater Bay Area surrounding San Francisco, California, an ethnically diverse urban area of the US. After selecting landlords from each region, Baugh telephoned each landlord three different times, each time saying the same words, but using a different ethnic dialect. In other words, he conducted a matched guise experiment. The point of the phone calls was to see if there was a relationship between the ethnic variety Baugh used over the telephone and the number of invitations he received to come and view a rental property. The hypothesis of the experiment was that Baugh would not receive as many invitations to come and view a rental property when he used Chicano English and African American English, especially in predominantly White neighborhoods.

Chicano English is an ethnic variety of US English, spoken mostly (but not exclusively) by people of Latin-American heritage, especially people of Mexican descent. Language scientists who conduct research on Chicano English (for example, Carmen Fought and Norma Mendoza-Denton, see end of chapter for references) do not consider it a learner variety, for one thing because it is acquired as a mother tongue. It is mostly distinguished by its phonology, or in other words pronunciation, which is linked to the sounds of Latin America Spanish, especially Mexican Spanish.

The results of the experiment were, unfortunately, not surprising. The landlords in traditionally European American (i.e., "White") neighborhoods showed a bias against Baugh's Chicano English and African American ways of speaking. Traditionally African American neighborhoods, such as Oakland, showed a preference for Baugh's African American voice. To put it another way, his African American way of speaking was a benefit when he approached a predominantly African American community. The results for Chicano English were more mixed, but overall the reactions against Baugh's Chicano style of speaking were biased. The results reflect the respective population areas of the Bay Area: the Bay Area, like many metropolitan areas in ethnically mixed cities, is strongly divided according to ethnic make-up. Social segregation along ethnic lines is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

With this set of experiments, we see evidence of not just language attitudes in effect, but how language attitudes pave the way for discrimination based on language use. Starting with the information presented in Chapter 3, we can establish a relationship leading to language discrimination:

1) A standardized variety of a language emerges in the collective minds of a community of language users, based on the written form, and often (not always) related to the notion of a nation state.
2) The standard becomes associated with social prestige. As the standardized variety grows in stature and recognition in the collective minds of its users, *ideologies* emerge relating to the standard. These ideologies are based on who uses the standard and how these users perpetuate the perceived importance of the standard. Discourse about language use emerges. The stature of the standard is discursively reinforced over time. Importantly, the ideals of the standard are applied not only to written language, but to spoken language, as well.
3) People whose speech (and writing) is perceived as being too distant from the standard are negatively viewed and denigrated for their language use. Their perceived misuse of language is seen as a conscious choice and something that should be fixed or changed. Language use has shifted from being a property of the collective community of speakers to being in the hands of an elite group. Negative *attitudes* emerge towards those who do not conform to the norms of the elite.
4) The perceived rules of language use become so collectively engrained for an elite group of users that they form a perimeter around them. People who do not use language in the same way they do are effectively shut out from all sorts of social and public functions. *Linguistic discrimination* is in effect, but because the elite group perceives their language use as the only way of using language, language-based discrimination goes largely undetected, unaddressed, and dismissed.

The experiments conducted by Baugh and his colleagues were some of the first to highlight linguistic discrimination along ethnic lines. In fact, Baugh's work, which itself drew from court and housing discrimination cases, went on to influence other researchers and garner media attention. Collectively, the work of Baugh and others deals with *linguistic profiling* (Baugh 2003). Studies focusing on linguistic profiling support the claims set out in this book: there is a direct relationship between social marginalization and linguistic marginalization, and, in fact, attitudes about language seem to offer otherwise fair-minded, well-meaning people an all-too-accessible means of denigrating others.

At this juncture, it is important to make explicit the connection between linguistic discrimination, linguistic profiling, and issues related to justice and human rights. We have established that attitudes for and against certain varieties of English exist, but what does this mean in real life? There is an abundant and continuously growing body of work on these topics. A few cases are presented in this chapter. Obviously, these cases are not in any way representative of the widespread reality of linguistic injustice, but they are meant to demonstrate the interplay between language attitudes and justice and opportunity in developed societies. We look at three key areas: education, the justice system, and working life. For the sake of comparison within a given society, the examples presented here are from the United States. As one of the most taught varieties of English worldwide, it is important to unlock some of the linguistic realities embedded in American English.

4.3 Access to education

In many societies, access to education is, at least in theory, a self-evident human right. It is no secret, however, that standards of education and access to it vary vastly from place to place, having to do with a host of factors from socioeconomic setting, geographical location, the ethnic make-up of the community, and, in addition, the language background of teachers, students, and families.

An overarching goal of many educational institutions, whether implicit or explicit, is to teach students to share mainstream values so that they can participate in mainstream society as functional, contributing members. This means that students who come into the institution of formal learning already possessing or having access to those values are at a great advantage from the outset. Theirs is the path of least resistance; they have already been initiated into “the system.” Indeed, they are part of the system. Their integration, starting at the primary level of education, is seamless compared to students who come from segments of the population who, for whatever reason, do not share the same customs or norms. Language is often at the forefront of success or failure in the school experience.

One need not be a professional educator to recognize that a student whose native grammar and pronunciation mirrors that which appears in classroom discourse, both oral and written, has an advantage over a student who comes to the classroom with a variety of English (or another mother tongue, for that matter) that does not map onto what they are learning. Chapter 2 highlighted the fact that standardized written English, which is introduced when children learn to read and write, has a stronger relationship with mainstream, standardized English than it does with non-mainstream varieties.

In a worst-case scenario, this lack of linguistic connection (often coupled with other complicating factors) can lead to a situation where the student is not able to thrive in the school environment. The specific issues of children who speak a nonstandard variety of English are well documented by linguists and educators, yet, too often, the linguistic needs of such children go unrecognized and ignored; after all, they speak English, so what is the problem? The problem is that their native, home variety of English is so distinct from standardized, mainstream English, that the children can face difficulties in learning to read and write in standardized English, especially compared to children who have the privilege of speaking standardized English as native, home variety. From the teacher's point of view, it is often a given that standardized English should be the tool of a classroom, without understanding that, even for mother-tongue speakers of English, the standard may not be entirely accessible. So, is equal access to education supported/endorsed as a basic human right in developed societies? Well, yes, at least for students who already have knowledge of standardized language.

There are two well-known cases in the United States in the past 50 years when schools and school districts came to acknowledge and address the linguistic needs of students who spoke non-mainstream varieties of American English. The first is a court case, *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et al.,* v. *Ann Arbor School District Board* (1976/1979). The second incident has to do with the Oakland School Board District (Oakland Board of Education 1996) which attempted—and succeeded—in addressing the linguistic needs of its student body, but not without facing the wrath of onlookers and media pundits who misunderstood and maligned its intentions. Both of these cases involve speakers of African American English, a variety that some linguists characterize as a dialect of American English. However, the origins and linguistic features of African American English are distinct enough that some linguists and educators consider it a distinct language system. A brief history, overview, and description of African American English is presented in Chapter 7. This chapter details the Ann Arbor School District case, which, although it occurred more than 40 years ago, is still the only case so far when a US court decided that a school had failed to address the linguistic needs of its students.

4.3.1 Ann Arbor Decision

The first case study presented in this chapter dates from 1977. On July 28 of that year, the court case *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et al.,* v. *Ann Arbor School District Board* was filed by two Michigan Legal Services attorneys. Two years later, a federal judge ruled in favor of the elementary school children. The lawsuit had to do with the education of African American children at Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Thirteen percent of the students at the school were African American, and out of that 13 percent, only 15 students comprised those who were represented in the court case. These 15 students lived in the relatively new, low-income Green Road housing development. The children who lived in the Green Road housing development happened to speak a variety of African American English that distinguished them not only from European American children at the school, but also other African American children. That is, their style of African American English, which they spoke at home with their family and friends, was distant enough from the standardized English language used at school that they faced language-related difficulties at school. These 15 children had been routinely "suspended, disciplined and repeatedly retained" at grade level and labeled as "handicapped" (Smitherman 1981: 41), yet witnesses in the court case reported that none of the children showed evidence of cognitive or physical disabilities. Their disadvantage in school was deemed language-related—which, in turn (as discussed in Chapter 3 and taken up further in Chapter 5), was related to their socioeconomic status and other social factors.

The reason this court case still bears mention so many years later is because it is so far the only case when a US court ruled that a school failed to take into account the linguistic needs of its students. In the ruling, the school was told to take "appropriate action" (see extract below) to teach its students to read and write in "standard English." This court case also created a precedent for underlining the linguistic differences between certain styles of African American English and standardized English, an issue which in turn created a language barrier contributing to the lack of student success.

A key feature in this situation is that the language barrier extended to a segment of the population that has been in the United States for hundreds of years. While this fact is an aside from the issue of equal access to education, it is a theme that returns in later case studies in this chapter.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JUNIOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN, ET AL., V. ANN ARBOR SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD

The text from the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunity Act relevant to *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et al.,* v. *Ann Arbor School District Board*:

> "No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin … by failing to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs" (1703(f))

From the judge's decision on *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et al.,* v. *Ann Arbor School District Board*:

The schools failed "to recognize the existence of the language system used by the children in their home community and to use that knowledge as a way of helping the children learn to read Standard English […] No matter how well intentioned the teachers are, they are not likely to be successful in overcoming the language barrier caused by their failure to take into account the home language system, unless they are helped … to recognize the existence of the language system used by the children in their home community.

Further, "It is a straightforward effort to require the court to intervene on the children's behalf to require the defendant school district to take appropriate action to teach them to read in the standard English of the school, the commercial world, the arts, science, and professions. This action is a cry for judicial help in opening the doors to the establishment […] It is an action to keep another generation from becoming functionally illiterate.

Finally, "The defendant Ann Arbor school district is ordered to devise a plan to accomplish the following: (1) to help the teachers of the plaintiff children at King school to identify children speaking 'black English' and the language spoken as a home or community language, and (2) to use the knowledge in teaching such students how to read standard English."

4.4 The (in)justice system

A transparent and fair judicial system is considered a cornerstone of civilization in modern, developed societies. The relationship between language and justice is a strong and obvious one. After all, waiving or accepting rights, testifying in court or serving as a witness to a crime are all activities contingent on the use of language.

In Lippi-Green's (2012) book, there is a long list of court cases that actually involve language-related issues, usually hinging on attitudes, that ultimately end up in the courtroom. The case study presented next has a different perspective; the language used by a witness in a murder trial is brought to the forefront. While the court case itself is not about perceived mistreatment due to language, research shows that language and language attitudes played a significant role in the trial.

4.4.1 The hallowed halls of justice

In an award-winning scientific article published in December 2016, authors John R. Rickford and Sharese King laid out a convincing argument describing how the jury in the case *State of Florida* v. *George Zimmerman* failed to understand

and accept the testimony of a key witness. The authors' argument demonstrated that the key witness, who was the last person to speak with the victim before he was killed, was rendered ineffective because of language attitudes present in the court. The information laid out in this case study draws from the article by Rickford and King. The murder trial also garnered a high level of media attention, and it is possible to find a great deal of information about it from the internet.

In 2013, Florida resident George Zimmerman went to trial for the killing of Trayvon Martin, who was 16 years old at the time Zimmerman shot and killed him in Sanford, Florida, in 2012. There was no question that Zimmerman had killed Martin, but the point of going to trial was to try and determine whether Zimmerman had shot Martin out of self-defense, or if the shooting was murder.

Readers familiar with the case may recall that Zimmerman was acquitted of murder, and that, in fact, he later went on to sell the gun he had used to kill Martin for $250,000 in a private auction. The acquittal of suspects in the killing of people of color, such as Trayvon Martin, has a long history in the United States. For example, the case of Emmett Till, who was 14 years old when he was beaten to death in Mississippi in 1955, is within living memory for many Americans. Like Zimmerman, the group of White men who were accused of murdering Till were acquitted as well.[1] This historical context is important for readers to understand why there is a fury of activity, demonstrations, and public outcry when such court cases re-emerge; for many, it is like ripping the bandage from a wound that has never healed—nor been properly doctored. Although the details differ each time, the overarching sense is that history repeats itself in a profoundly unfair way.

The case of *State of Florida* v. *George Zimmerman* merits special attention because of the pivotal role of language used in court. At the time he was killed, Martin was talking on his mobile phone to one of his friends, a young woman named Rachel Jeantel. According to Jeantel, Martin told her over the phone that he was scared he was being followed by someone. As such, testimony from Jeantel was a crucial component of the prosecution's case against Zimmerman.

Jeantel has an interesting language biography. Like John Baugh, who was mentioned earlier in this chapter, Jeantel identifies as African American and speaks nonstandardized varieties. In fact, Jeantel is multilingual. Because of her family background, her mother tongues are French-based Haitian Creole, Dominican Republic Spanish, and, due to her formative years in a certain region of Florida, African American English. It is critical to point out that none of these varieties are, for the most part, valued by mainstream society. Unlike John Baugh, who is able to speak standardized American English, *none* of the three languages (varieties of French, Spanish, and English) Jeantel speaks place her within standard language culture. An interesting aside is to note, once again, language attitudes: it is easy to imagine that someone who natively speaks the standardized varieties of Spanish, French, and English and appears in a courtroom would be upheld as some kind of linguistic prodigy. This was not the case for Jeantel.

Jeantel was, in effect, deemed an unreliable witness in the murder case, despite the fact that she was the last person to talk to the murder victim during the last few minutes of his life. Because she was not able to express herself in the style of language normally expected in a courtroom, it was as if those involved in the case refused to hear her or to acknowledge the substance and content of her testimony. Clearly, other factors were at play, too; for example, Jeantel was ridiculed for the way she behaved and looked while in the courtroom. The language factor was part of a collection of problems. In the end, Jeantel's six hours of testimony and 15 hours of case-related were never fully utilized.

This situation serves as a striking example of what has been described by Lippi-Green (2012: 73) as a rejection of *the communicative burden*. Inherent to the communicative burden are language ideologies, or language filters, which, depending on our background, help us open up our ears and minds to different ways of speaking. A rejection of the communicative burden is effectively "to give someone the hand," with claims and complaints that "I just can't understand you." Numerous language filters were in place concerning Jeantel's testimony. It is telling that her witness to Martin's shooting was over the phone; she did not actually *see* what happened, she *heard* it, as she was told from Martin's own lips. Therefore, Jeantel bore the double burden of reporting her version of the facts via two denigrated varieties of English: Martin's African American English and her own African American/Caribbean English variety. We will never know for sure, but it could be that if Jeantel had been able to tell her version of what happened in standardized English, the facts leading up to Martin's death may have been received differently.

In the article by Rickford and King (2016), the authors, both experts on African American English, go to great lengths to demonstrate that Jeantel was a perfectly proficient speaker of African American English, with traces of the Caribbean-populated community where she lived in Florida. That is, within the immediate context of her day-to-day life, she was perfectly understandable and sounded like the people around her, which is true for pretty much any speaker of any language variety. Yet when Jeantel was placed out of this context and into an unfamiliar, official site such as a courtroom, her language skills were deemed inadequate for the task at hand.

The *Florida* v. *Zimmerman* case highlights a conundrum in US English, this time played out in a court of law: it is well documented that standardized English speakers *think* they understand the varieties of African American English, but they do not. For example, in a study to appear in the academic journal *Language,* researchers offer empirical evidence that court reporters, the professionals who transcribe court-related language and events during official sessions in US courts, were not capable of understanding and accurately transcribing African American English (Jones, Kalbfeld, Hancock and Clark 2019). This study, set on the premise that US court reporters must demonstrate at least 95 percent accuracy in their transcriptions in order to be certified, tested 27 court reporters working in Philadelphia. The court reporters listened to

African American English speech that was carefully prepared for the experiment. They were given the opportunity to transcribe the language they heard, paraphrase and revise it, using the typical tools for their job. The transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy by four independent reviewers who were qualified for the task. In the end, the reviews showed that 59.5 percent of the transcribed utterances were incorrect in some way, meaning that the standardized English rendition of what the African American English speakers actually said was somehow misrepresented.

This research is valuable for many reasons. First, it is important to point out that, in the United States, African American people, especially men, have a highly disproportionate representation among those who are arrested, sentenced to time in jail, put on trial, convicted, and punished for crimes—including punishment by death, which is still legal in some states in the United States. These statistics are highlighted by the authors of the court reporter study detailed in this chapter, who note that African American men are just under six times more likely to be jailed than White men (Carson 2016; see also Jones et al. 2019). Philadelphia, where the study was conducted, has the fourth highest incarceration rate in the United States (according to Hancock 2011, as cited in Jones et al. 2019). These statistics are not to suggest that African Americans, especially African American men, are more inclined to criminal activity: this is an extremely complex social topic that exceeds the scope of this book. What we can state is in relation to language: African Americans are much more likely than European Americans to come into contact with the US justice system (see Jones et al. 2019), yet research shows that for many of these people, their language is not understood in places of justice.

Language scientists have been aware of the systematic features of African American English for more than 50 years now, and they are well aware of the fact that the mainstream public does not actually understand all of the features of African American English. Yet, when someone who speaks a distinct style of African American English appears in court, there is no possibility of that person being aided by an interpreter or a linguist. In a 2017 panel on exactly this topic, North Carolina Attorney Vernetta Alston said that, even if it were allowed, having an interpreter on hand would only serve to further distance and alienate the African American speaker from those in the courtroom.

At the moment, there does not appear to be a clear solution to language issues in the courtroom like described in the case of *State of Florida* v. *Zimmerman*. It is clear that Jeantel was negatively viewed, which is a grave enough issue, but the language issue is equally complicated. Scientific evidence demonstrates that jury members and also the legal professionals in the courtroom did not comprehend and were not open to her way of speaking, which undermined her credibility and her testimony. Rather than calling into question the fairness of this lack of understanding, however, the burden of responsibility has been placed back on Jeantel: "Why can't you talk right?" Or on the prosecution team: "Why didn't you prepare your witness better?"

4.4.2 Wrap-up of the justice system

The case study presented here indicates that justice best serves those who already benefit from participation in standard language culture. As the court case *State of Florida* v. *George Zimmerman* showed, someone like Rachel Jeantel, a mother-tongue speaker of a US variety of English, is not in a prime position to participate in the discourse of the courtroom; her way of using English is misinterpreted and dismissed. Hypothetically, a nonnative speaker of English would fare better in the courtroom at least when it comes to language, because that individual would qualify for assistance from an interpreter, making sure the linguistic message was received and understood—in standardized English.

Language also plays a critical role when it comes to arrests in the United States and the set of rights termed the *Miranda Warning*: the rights regarding silence normally cited to a detainee or criminal suspect taken into police custody. Ongoing research by language scientists such as Norma Mendoza-Denton and Aneta Pavlenko (see further information at the end of this chapter) shows that the sophisticated language and structure of the Miranda Warning is best understood and responded to by people who are part of standard language culture. Understanding how to respond to the complex language of the Miranda Warning is understandably problematic for nonnative speakers of English, who risk, for example, waiving their right to speak through an attorney and not to the arresting police officer. Second language speakers are clearly in a precarious position when their legal rights hinge on their understanding of legal English.

While the first sets of case studies in this chapter have dealt with mother-tongue speakers of an inner-circle variety of English, the final section looks at speakers of English as a second language in the workplace setting, still focusing on the United States.

4.5 The workplace

In a lauded and relevant book, Ingrid Piller, a language scientist based in Australia, details the myriad ways in which language contributes to and perpetuates social injustices. The book, *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice,* published in 2016, astutely points out the different kind of workplace opportunities that are realistically available to people who do not participate in their local standard language culture. In many cases, the opportunities available for potential employees is based on their language skills in a receiving community, as is the case with many immigrants, who find themselves shut out from many job possibilities (and other opportunities) due to lack of language skills.

The work of Piller and others effectively highlights the relationship of language skills, standard language culture, and the workplace. With my own treatment of the topic, I switch from the relatively narrow focus of the previous two sections and expand the scope to look at statistics relating to the entire United States.

Other authors have thoroughly and expertly treated the topic of language rights and labor through the use of case studies and examples, but within the publications on the topic, relatively little appears about actual danger in the workplace due to lack of language skills.

Before continuing further, it is important to point out that the figures presented here do not deal specifically with language. The demographic information from the US Department of Labor does not focus on the question of language, but it does deal with ethnicity. As mentioned previously, ethnicity is the most important predictor of language variety in the United States. Let us draw any implications accordingly.

In the most current version of its report *Death on the Job* (2016), the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the largest federation of unions in the United States, offers a case-by-case breakdown of fatal workplace injuries and death among different US union workers. In general, the fatal injury rate for every 100,000 workers was 3.4 (figures from 2014). Among different ethnic groups, Hispanic workers (the term used by the AFL-CIO) are at the highest risk of being killed in a work-related injury, at 3.7 deaths per 100,000 workers. It is critical to note that, unlike other ethnic groups, the majority of Hispanic workers are immigrants. Furthermore, as pointed out in the report, we can assume that some 50 percent of injuries and deaths go unreported, as they are suffered by undocumented workers. That is, the statistics in the report deal only with documented, legal immigrant workers.

A few factors can be considered as explanation to these statistics. One explanatory factor is that the Hispanic workers, the majority of whom are immigrants, lack the language skills in English that would enable them to participate in jobs that are less dangerous, for example office jobs. Forty percent of those killed through work-related incidents were born in Mexico. The majority of foreign-born workers who were killed at work, according to the report, are construction workers, constituting 21 percent of the total deaths.

Another explanation is that, due to lack of skills in English, language relating to safety on the job is not adequately understood and absorbed by immigrant workers. In fact, this possibility is substantiated by Amber Gallup, an English as a Second Language consultant and trainer who has created a number of language materials for US unions and workers like those mentioned here. Even at the same high-risk job, according to Gallup, non-English proficient workers are at a higher risk than English-speaking workers due to the language barrier, which has been a common theme of discussion in her language classroom. This risk, compounded with the fact that workers who are not proficient in English often fill more dangerous employment roles, leads to an extremely high-risk work situation. Another factor not evident from the data presented so far, but which is substantiated by the AFL-CIO, is a higher on-the-job homicide rate against immigrant and Hispanic workers, which may or may not have to do with language-related factors.

4.6 Conclusion to Chapter 4

The examples in this chapter demonstrate how language attitudes interact with language rights. Language is used as an effective tool against people who are already in a disadvantaged position. The people who are fortunate enough to benefit from standard language culture are able to ensure that those who already have access to standardized language continue to benefit from what it has to offer. The division from mainstream society that is the day-to-day experience of speakers of non-standardized varieties, as well as non-English speaking immigrants, becomes an endless loop of challenges, as they butt up against standard language culture, but are denied a voice or access because they do not use language in the expected way. For many speakers who are part of these marginalized groups, either by choice or by circumstance, the benefits of standard language culture remain elusive. In the face of such challenges, one might ask: Why would anyone "choose" to speak a "bad" variety of English? The next chapter explores this question.

Acknowledgments

The author is grateful to Dr. Jeffrey Reaser and students at North Carolina State University for reading early drafts of this manuscript. The author also thanks Amber Gallup and Taylor Jones for valuable assistance in writing about their work.

Discussion questions for Chapter 4

1. In the introduction to this chapter, some of the benefits of participating in standard language culture were presented. Are these benefits applicable to your language situation? The author expressed a personal view of what standardized English has done for her. What has standardized English done for you? On the other hand, has standard language culture ever worked against you?
2. The chapter begins with a discussion of the personal benefits one might encounter from participating in standard language culture. What are some of the advantages at the societal level? In other words, what benefits can you think of that are related to a language having a standard variety?
3. Participation in standard language culture, in and of itself, is no guarantee of success in education and employment. What other factors come into play?
4. Have you ever been "given the hand" or shut down by a listener who did not want to hear your way of speaking? What happened? How did this make you feel? Do you ever feel frustrated trying to listen or understand someone speaking to you? How do you cope with the situation?
5. It was demonstrated that the original goals of the Oakland School Board language resolution were largely misunderstood, including by the press. How was it that the media and the general public so misunderstood the

goals of the resolution? Does this happen today? How can we know if the news we are participating in is real or manipulated?

6. Are you aware of changing the way you speak or write when you are in school or other more formal settings? Are there explicit rules about how one should or should not use language? How are these rules enforced?
7. This chapter presented a catch-22 when it comes to certain speakers of African American English in the US courtroom. Is there a solution to this catch-22?
8. Section 4 of this chapter describes some of the responses legal experts have made about the trial *State of Florida* v. *Zimmerman* and the preparation of witnesses such as Rachel Jeantel. What do you think, did the prosecution team do their job? Should they have better prepared Jeantel as a witness? For example, could they teach her to speak standardized English while on the witness stand? Or could there be another solution?
9. In a talk given at New York University on March 29, 2017, the American language scientist Gregory Guy noted, "Every kid comes to school not knowing math, science, and history—that's a given. Why should Standard English be any different?" Is there a difference? Explain.

Note

1 Emmett Till, a native of Chicago, was beaten to death, shot in the head, and his body was dumped into the Tallahatchie River. His body was so mutilated that he was no longer identifiable. His brutal murder is widely considered a precursor to the US Civil Rights Movement. His murder was carried out in supposed retaliation for making sexual advances toward a White woman at a grocery store in Mississippi. In 2017, the woman who made the claims, Carolyn Bryant Donham, recanted her accusations and admitted that there had never been any encounter in the first place. (*The New York Times*, January 27, 2017). A book on the murder was recently published by Simon & Schuster (2017).

Suggested reading

To read more on Aneta Pavlenko's work on forensic linguistics and language rights, visit her website at http://www.anetapavlenko.com/forensic.html

This chapter has limited its focus to the context of the United States. Clearly, the US is not the only region where issues of linguistic justice occur. For a more global perspective on the relationship between language and justice, the 2016 volume by Ingrid Piller is a good choice:

Piller, Ingrid. 2016. *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice: An Introduction to Applied Sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Further references on Chicano English

Fought, Carmen. 2010. Language as a representation of Mexican American identity. *English Today* 26: 3.

Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 2008. *Homegirls: Language and Practice Among Latina Youth Gangs*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Cited in this chapter

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). 2016. Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect. A national survey and state-by-state profile of worker safety and health in the United States. Available at: https://aflcio.org/sites/default/files/2017-03/1647_DOTJ2016_0.pdf

Baran, Dominika. 2017. *Language in Immigrant America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baugh, John. 2003. Linguistic profiling. In Sinfree Makoni, Geneva Smitherman, Arnetha F. Ball and Arthur Spears (eds.) *Black Linguistics: Language, Society, and Politics in Africa and the Americas*, 155–163. New York: Routledge.

Carson, E. Ann. 2016. *Prisoners in 2016*. US Department of Justice. Available at: https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p16.pdf

Garrett, Peter. 2010. *Attitudes to Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hudley, Charity, H. Ann and Christine Mallinson. 2011. *Understanding English Language Variation in U.S. Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Jones, Taylor, Jessica Kalbfeld, Ryan Hancock and Robin Clark. 2019. Testifying while black: An experimental study of court reporter accuracy in transcription of African American English. *Language*. Published electronically May 21, 2019. doi:10.1353/lan.0.0235.

Lambert, Wallace E. 1967. A social psychology of bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues* 23(2): 91–109.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2012. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*, 2nd ed. New York; London: Routledge.

Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children (etc.), v. Ann Arbor School District Board 473 F. Supp. 1371 (E.D. Mich. 1979). Available at: https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/473/1371/2148458/

Matras, Yaron. 2009. *Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Monty Python’s Life of Brian. 1979. [film]. Terry Jones, director. UK: HandMade Films.

Oakland Board of Education. 1996. Amended resolution of the Board of Education. Available at: https://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/ebonics-res2.html

Piller, Ingrid. 2016. *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice: An Introduction to Applied Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Preston, Dennis R. 2011. The power of language regard—Discrimination, classification, comprehension, and production. *Dialectologia Special Issue*, II: 9–33.

Purnell, Thomas, William Idsardi, and John Baugh. 1999. Perceptual and phonetic experiments on American dialect identification. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 18(1): 10–30.

Rickford, John R. and Sharese King. 2016. Language and linguistics on trial: Hearing Rachel Jeantel (and other vernacular speakers) in the courtroom and beyond. *Language* 92(4): 948–988.

Smitherman, Geneva. 1981. “What Go Round Come Round”: King in perspective. *Harvard Educational Review* 51(1): 40–56.

5

WHY DOES "BAD ENGLISH" STILL EXIST?

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, some of the social consequences associated with speaking a "bad" variety of English were highlighted. This might lead to a question: if there are so many risks involved, then why do people choose to speak anything other than standardized English?

An important answer is that question is that it is not always a choice, at least not a conscious one. For many people, access to standard language culture is off limits or at least elusive, for reasons ranging from the physical and tangible to the ideological and emotional. In this chapter, some of the ways in which standard language culture remains out of reach are presented. The explanations offered are not from any one source, nor should they be considered exclusive or self-contained. As with most things having to do with the relationship of language and ideology—such as the right to speak the way you want to—many factors intervene. In this chapter, we discuss three factors: (1) access and isolation, (2) covert prestige and (3) identity. These factors are perhaps simplistic, but in my experience, they have proven helpful in driving home two main points: first, how is it that varieties of English are so distinct even within inner circle settings, and, second, why people purposefully speak "Bad English." While the previous chapters have explained "Bad English" from the perspective of society at large, with this chapter we switch to the point of view of speakers of "Bad English."

In the numerous publications on dialect variation, there are several explanations posited for the existence of distinct dialects of English. Here are some of the most common explanations:

1) *Geographical isolation*. Living in a remote or inaccessible area can seal off a group of speakers, protecting their way of speaking from outside influence.

It is no coincidence that dialect boundaries can often (not always) coincide with rivers, inaccessible mountainous areas, or other features of geographical terrain.

2) *Social isolation.* Social isolation can coincide with geographical isolation, as highlighted in 1), but social isolation can also exist due to differences in what people believe, their ethnic background, and their social relationships and privilege, among other factors. For example, dialect differences may coincide with the boundaries of a religious community, with the socioeconomic status of a group of people, or with immigrants from a similar area who move to the same place.
3) *Contact with other languages or varieties.* If isolation can lead to the protection of a dialect, as described in 1), it stands to reason that the opposite is a common source of the creation of new or changed dialects and varieties. When people move around, they take their language with them. Over a sustained period, elements of one language or variety can influence another in various ways. Language contact can also occur for reasons other than mobility. Think, for example, about the contact English has with languages around the world because it is a language of widespread cultural influence. The same is true, naturally, for other culturally influential languages such as Arabic, Spanish, Russian, and so on.
4) *Group solidarity/identity.* Language is one of the most significant indexes of individual identity. For speakers of so-called "small" or "minority" languages, the language is often the single most enduring symbol of their uniqueness and the bond within the community. For example, a recent issue of the academic journal *Multilingua* features a collection of articles written about activism in preserving a mother tongue in locations such as New Zealand, South Africa, Zambia, and Quebec (Makoni and Criss eds. 2017). It is no mystery why those who wish to gain control over another group often target language. This was the case for speakers of Irish Gaelic when Ireland was still part of Great Britain. Irish speakers were physically forced to give up their mother tongue in favor of English. The same was true for speakers of American Indian languages in the US. These measures are not only rooted in the past, however; they are alive and well today in various forms, such as the "English only" ideologies forced onto, for example, Latin-American immigrants to the US (see Baran 2017) or Asian and African immigrants to Australia (Piller 2016). The great irony that seems to evade many "English only" advocates is that English itself was a transplant to those locations: English was brought by immigrants.

Among the many explanations posited for linguistic and dialect differences, there is one overarching distinction that emerges in settings around the world. This is the issue of race, the relationship between ethnicity and language, and, in turn, socioeconomic advantage. Very often, a combination of these factors—race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status—contribute to what is considered

"Bad English" in a certain location and among certain populations. These facts stare us in the face as soon as we scratch the surface of language distinctions and start to explore why so-called "bad" varieties are considered bad.

A few key points have been established already in this book, summarized as follows:

1) Social groups that have high prestige use highly regarded language varieties
2) Social groups that are marginalized use language varieties that are marginalized

To this list, let's add two related observations made by the American language scientist John Baugh, whose work on linguistic profiling was featured in Chapter 4:

3) "The relative prestige or denigration of a given language or dialect must be viewed in context" (Baugh 2007: 332);

and

4) "The social stratification of linguistic diversity in most advanced industrial societies frequently coincides with parallel racial stratification" (Baugh 2007: 333).

With 3), Baugh makes the point that what is considered pleasant, educated, or correct when it comes to language varies from place to place. In Chapter 3, an example was made of Chrys Salt, who gave up her native Birmingham dialect and thereafter engaged in a professional life in the UK as an actor, director, and poet. Outside the UK, however, it could well be that her Birmingham accent would have been admired as something British, nothing more.

With his point in 4), Baugh solidifies the observation made earlier: more often than not, language differences overlap with racial differences, which in turn overlap with socioeconomic differences. Let's explore what that means.

5.2 Access and isolation

In this section, the goal is to help readers relate to the social background and history of a minority group of speakers compared to the mainstream population, drawing conclusions about how these factors influence the way in which the minority group's way of speaking is viewed. The examples used to illustrate this connection are drawn from the United States. This is certainly not because the United States is the only place where social background and the history of a group connects to negative attitudes about the way that group uses language. Rather, the ideas presented here can (and should be) applied to any other location where ethnic and social differences and linguistic denigration go hand and hand.

I use the example of African American English within the context of standardized American English for two main reasons. One is that the history of the situation offers a sobering yet stark backdrop, which readers can grasp. A second reason is that African American English and culture is revered and admired worldwide as something distinct and special, but often without a deeper appreciation of how and why it is so distinct. By using African American English as the main example, then, we simultaneously achieve two goals: a relevant and meaningful example is offered, while helping readers learn more about a variety of English that they probably are already somewhat familiar with. The social and historical context offered in this chapter should be considered relevant to all of the case studies offered in the latter half of this book, but especially for Chapter 7.

5.2.1 Historical ties

It is generally accepted that the American Indians were the only people who were indigenous to the American continent at the time when European settlers began to arrive en masse, starting in earnest in the 1600s. That is, to state the obvious: the overwhelming majority of the population of the United States is descended from immigrants, a term which I use here in the broadest possible sense, to mean someone who leaves one country to go live in another.

For many Americans of, for example, European descent, there is the luxury of being able to trace their ancestors back to a location in Europe, sometimes even to a particular farm or town. These ties to Europe still contribute to the identity of many Americans even today, nearly one hundred years after New York's Ellis Island, where some 40 percent of Americans' ancestors were processed, ceased its immigration functions in 1924. It is not uncommon to meet Americans who say, "Oh, you're Italian! I'm Italian, too!" although they do not speak a word of Italian and have never set foot in Italy. These facts are irrelevant: that their family immigrated from Italy offers enough propulsion for subsequent generations to always regard themselves as "Italian," and this history contributes to their identity as Americans.

Not everyone in America has this privilege, however—and indeed it is a privilege to know where your family is from. For many people in the United States, including a large portion of those who are African American, the knowledge of exactly where their families came from, and even their names, was erased or altered through the means by which their ancestors came to the United States. This erasure of the past has to do, of course, with a very specific type of immigration, the Transatlantic slave trade, which many do not categorize as "immigration" at all, due to the lack of similarity between how people of African slave descent and other immigrant groups arrived and were introduced to life in the United States. These distinctions are just one contributing factor to a host of complicated relations, largely related to race, that persist to this day.

"Complicated relations" might be the biggest understatement in this book. As I write these words, I am all too aware that race relations in the United States are at a stressing point not witnessed since the era around the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. The question most people want to pose to me, as an

American living outside the United States, is why and how these issues keep coming up again and again, although the Civil War and the abolition of slavery took place more than 150 years ago. The most forthright answer is that the core issues have never gone away.

America is nicknamed the Land of Opportunity, but the possibility for opportunity is not so simple. The institution of slavery and the forced mass migration of people from Africa to other continents created a ripple effect that still continues into numerous challenges in modern life. The everyday experiences and testimonials of people of color, along with cold bare facts, provide witness to this statement. There are many examples to choose from to illustrate this fact, but here are a few:

- In an article on racial injustice, Baugh (2007) reports on a study showing that many economists assumed that African American and Latino Americans chose to live in lower income neighborhoods because of cultural affinity. However, it turned out that African American homeowners were routinely given higher interest rates on their mortgages than European Americans in the same income bracket. In other words, the African American home buyers were getting less house for the same (or higher) amount of money.
- The socioeconomic profile of a neighborhood has a direct effect on the resources of the schools in the area, as more than half of the funds of US schools comes from local property taxes.
- High school dropout rates are significantly higher for children of African American and Latino background than for European American youth. In 2014, the dropout rate for African American youth reached a historical low of 7 percent. However, this decline is explained by increased incarceration rates, which removed these youths from the 2014 estimate (Child trends/ Databank Indicator/High school dropout rates, November 2015).
- Even though Blacks and Whites are murder victims in nearly equal numbers of crimes, 80 percent of people executed in the US since the death penalty was reinstated have been executed for murders involving White victims (https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/race-and-death-penalty).
- The average African American woman would have to work until July 2017 to earn the same wage as the average European American male earned in the year 2016 (Kroeger and Gould 2017).

The list could go on and on, but you get the idea.

5.2.2 Social segregation

As described so far in this chapter, the situation by which people of African slave descent arrived in the Americas is unique, and the aftereffects of this situation persist to this day, influencing the way people speak and also the different ways in which uses of language are regarded and valued. This outcome is related to a cycle of subjugation, but also to separation between the day-to-day lives of people of color in the United States compared to people who are part of the European-American ethnic population.

A United States census map from the current day shows that, even more than 150 years after the Civil War, the majority of African American people live in the southern United States. The US Census maps from 2010, the most recent available census at the time this book was written, show that in terms of population majority, the areas with the largest African-American population extend from the US state of Texas east toward South and North Carolina (see Figure 5.1). This, of course, is the same area where the institution of slavery was most prevalent in the United States, and it is also the dividing line between north and south in the United States, the two factions that fought in the US Civil War. This fact often surprises students: why is it that African American people continued, and still do continue, to live in the South, when this was the location of their oppression and servitude? Didn't they want to leave and never come back? There are many answers to these questions, but perhaps the most important have to do with identity and feeling at home, a topic taken up later in this chapter. The cycle of disadvantage can also be a factor.

The cycle of disadvantage is a reality at odds with some of the most fundamental ideologies of many Americans. One of the most fundamental ideals of the American experience is the notion of *secular individualism,* which means that in the pursuit to be one's true self, and to live up to one's true potential, that there

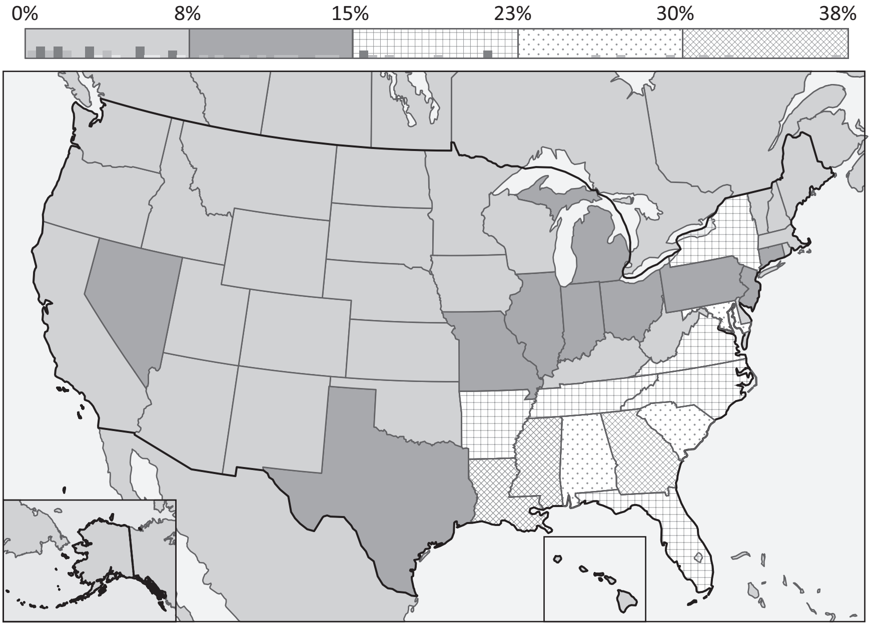

FIGURE 5.1 Majority African American population by US state. Map created based on 2010 US Census and Demographic information.

is no notion of race, gender, religion, or so on that might get in the way and prevent this from happening: all individuals are believed to be equal. The "American Dream" is an ideology meaning if one works hard enough, has enough hope and enough optimism, one will succeed. Obviously, such an ideology works best for those who are already part of the unmarked, or in other words, "default" social categories, the most powerful and dominant group: White, heterosexual, Judeo-Christian men. For those who are part of this dominant group, it can be very difficult to understand and acknowledge that the same privileges do not apply outside the group, and that the starting point in terms of striving for opportunities is often very distant for those outside the group. It's like some people in a 400-meter race would be given a 10-second start, while all the others had to wait behind—then at the end of the race you congratulate the winners for running a great race. Herein lies a problem inherent to the concept of secular individualism: the emphasis on individualism among people in the dominant group means that no one individual needs to feel remorse or responsibility about injustices such as slavery, sexism, and racism.

When it comes to ethnic minorities, the notion of *secular individualism* is problematic for several reasons. One of these reasons is instantly apparent: a person's outward appearance marks that person for inclusion within a certain group, and, for people of African descent, this means that physical traits mark that person for inclusion within an ethnic group that is associated with a cycle of disadvantage and oppression. What this means in practice is that White people have the luxury of seeing themselves as a mass of individuals, in a sense the "unmarked" category, but people of color do not share this privilege; they are seen as part of a group, and, as such, they also tend to consider themselves part of a group. One of the themes brought up in Chapter 7 of this book is the *push-pull syndrome,* which can be similarly expressed as *double consciousness*. Double consciousness is a well-known concept that was introduced with this meaning by African American writer WEB Du Bois in his novel *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), in which Du Bois decries the struggles of striving to be both "negro" [sic] and "American." In short, this phenomenon speaks to the balancing act a person of color (or any subordinated group) must master in order to live simultaneously in the majority world, but also in the private world, which is often (not always) made up of other people of the same race or ethnicity.

Social segregation means that, due in large part to a shared history, a certain group is sealed off or separated from others: it is in many ways distinct from the mainstream, and these distinctions are meaningful for the identity of the group. The group engages in different rituals, might speak a different language or variety of a language, celebrate holidays and other rites of passage in a different way, and so on. An example can be made of the Swedish speaking minority in Finland. The number of Finnish people who speak Finland Swedish as their mother tongue is about 5 percent of the total population, or in other words about 300,000 people. The Finland-Swedish minority in Finland is distinct from the mainstream in Finland in ways that are not always physically apparent.

Nearly anyone in Finland can tick off a list of social practices that Finland Swedes engage in that are specific to the group: they sing their own songs at their own parties, such as the crayfish parties they hold every autumn. They have their own history of literature and poetry in Finland. They read their own newspaper, which is written in Swedish, not Finnish. And so on.

An interesting point about the Finland Swedes is that their DNA matches up with the majority of people whose ancestors are native to Finland. That is to say: they don't look different from other people of Finnish background due to any physical characteristics. They *are* Finnish, they just happen to speak Swedish. The most decisive trait of the social identity seems to be the language itself. To demonstrate, I have observed a number of occasions where Swedish speakers who meet for the first time realize, through the course of their conversation, that they share a mother tongue. Until this realization, they speak Finnish together; after the realization, they switch to their shared mother tongue, Swedish. This is a relevant fact because it underscores that a group can be distinct through language and social practices alone, without looking any different from the mainstream. The further distinction lent through physical appearance is an automatic visual cue that causes others to mentally place someone in a certain social group—whether that person feels a personal association with the group or not. In this regard, an example is to be made of people of African descent in the United States whose families were not part of the institution of slavery. Independent immigrants from Africa have, in many ways, been decisive in their efforts to distance themselves from descendants of slaves and their history.

5.2.3 Geographical segregation

It was already pointed out that the most concentrated population of African American people live in the southeast portion of the United States. This fact continues to surprise people from outside the US. It is equally surprising for many people outside the US when they find out the extent of racial segregation in US cities. Many people outside the US have heard, for example, of Chinatown in San Francisco, or Harlem or Little Italy in New York City, and probably have thought little about how or why those neighborhoods exist—other than the obvious fact that Chinese, Italians, and African Americans populated those areas. This is a multifaceted phenomenon, part of it having to do with *chain migration*, or the tendency for migrants to follow the lead of people they already know in moving from one place to another. The rest of the phenomenon has less to do with choice and proclivity than it does with access to privileges and opportunities, segregation, violence, and redlining.

There is a long history in US cities of relegating certain groups of immigrants—often the newest wave of immigrants—into housing situations that perpetuate the chain migration phenomenon, but which also exploit the naivete and relative helplessness of the newcomers. For example, in Utah, a state in the western United States, I have studied the influx of Danish and Scandinavian immigrants, who were relegated to poorer sections of towns where the soil was less amenable to farming. On the one hand, this was the land that was still available in the towns after the English-speaking newcomers had already settled there. On the other hand, it is certainly not the case that the people already living in the area were eager and willing to take on a new cohort of immigrants right next door. This example serves as the norm, rather than the exception, throughout US cities and towns even today. In fact, in many locations the question is not only one of availability, but of a concerted effort on the part of landowners and moneylenders to take advantage of the newcomers (see Baran 2017).

At the end of the Civil War, thousands of African Americans left the US South in what has been called "The Great Migration." This is the period when cities such as Detroit, Gary, Buffalo, New York City, Washington, DC, and Seattle started gaining their first substantive African American population. Linguistic research points out that this is also the period when African American English began to diverge in many significant ways from Southern US English. The main reason? Because African American migrants were relegated into specific neighborhoods, with limited opportunity for interaction with European Americans (see Wolfram and Schilling 2015).

Visitors to the United States often mention being shocked when, in a large US city, they cross a street and find themselves in a different world. The difference between neighborhoods is striking, at every level, and delineation from one neighborhood to another is not always obvious to outsiders. A series of maps by the cartographer Eric Fischer capture these differences in an immediate and accessible way. Based on US Census data, Fischer used different colors of dots to represent people of different ethnic backgrounds. He used blue dots to represent African Americans, red dots to represent European Americans, orange dots to represent Latino Americans, and green dots to represent Asian Americans (see eResource). The resulting maps show the stark divisions between ethnic groups in major US cities. In the map of New York City, for example, there is an area of red on the west, south, and east sides of New York City's Central Park. These are the most expensive real estate areas of New York City, and they are occupied primarily by European Americans. An area of blue just to the north of Central Park is Harlem, an area that has been an important location for African Americans in New York City for over a century. On the southern tip of the island of Manhattan, a dark green area depicts New York City's Chinatown.

5.2.4 Reason 1: Why do people speak "bad" varieties? Access to standard language culture

This section has demonstrated how social and historical separation goes hand in hand with linguistic separation. The next two sections of the chapter develop this theme further, by showing how lack of access to standard language culture dovetails with covert prestige and issues of identity.

5.3 Covert prestige

Covert prestige is a term used in the academic field of linguistics to refer to local or in-group prestige, rather than prestige which is widespread, or the "norm" across a population at large. When he used the term *covert prestige* to apply to language, Trudgill (1972) had been investigating the speaking styles of people who lived in Norwich, England, about 190 kilometers northeast of London. Trudgill considered two social parameters in his investigations of local speech: sex of the speaker and social class. Following up on work by William Labov in New York City, where it was found that local norms of use linked to social class, Trudgill set out to find if the same applied in Norwich. What he found, however, was that sex was a more decisive factor in the use of local norms than social class. Specifically, he found that men were "more concerned" with "signaling group solidarity than with obtaining social status" (Trudgill 1972: 188). Because the men demonstrated awareness of the mainstream speaking norms but opted for local norms instead, Trudgill characterized their language as demonstrating "covert prestige." While Trudgill's investigation was concerned with language change, and his findings ultimately hinged on the sex of the speakers, the notion of covert prestige has been used in hundreds of linguistic investigations since its application to the language situation in Norwich. The notion is applied here because, as Trudgill stated in 1972, covert prestige applies when a group of speakers show a preference for nonstandard language.

For our purposes, a distinguishing characteristic of covert prestige is that it implies that speakers have more than one language mode available to them. Covert prestige applies to individuals who participate in (at least) two different language worlds, one which is local and immediate, and one which involves mainstream or broader involvement with a community at large, a more overtly powerful and numerous group of speakers, or even a nation state. This division between private and public is overly simplistic in many ways, but we need to start somewhere. The key point is that most often the covertly prestigious variety of a language is considered in some ways inferior or "bad," but for certain individuals in certain contexts, the covert variety is extremely valuable and offers the most meaningful and rewarding system of communication.

These distinctions are best expressed through examples. These examples are illustrative, of course, and are not in any way exhaustive. Examples of separation or unity through language are all around us.

Example 1: Local pride expressed through local dialect or language

In a southern region of Germany, locals speak a variety of German called Bavarian. It is distinct enough from Standard German, called *Hochdeutsch* or 'High German,' that the two varieties are not entirely mutually intelligible. When Bavarians visit other parts of Germany, the expectation is that they would shift as much as possible to Standard German, so they can be understood. However, when they are in their stronghold in Bavaria, they reserve the right to speak their own dialect, even to tourists from other parts of Germany. It is not unusual to see signs in shops windows that say, “We speak Bavarian here.” In other words, in Bavaria other Germans are expected to accommodate to the local variety.

Another example can be made of the language situation in North Wales, in the United Kingdom. North Wales is a stronghold for the Welsh language, but, even so, most of the speakers of Welsh are Welsh/English bilinguals. The ability to speak Welsh, however, marks one as an insider, something I experienced personally during a trip to the area. While I was out for a walk, a man stopped in his car and began speaking to me in Welsh through his open car window. When I told him I was an English speaker, he continued to speak in Welsh, then, exasperated, finally drove away. It was clear that at any point during this brief exchange the man could have switched to English, but, as I was in his home region, he exercised his right to continue speaking Welsh—or to choose not to speak to me at all. My status as an outsider was clear, due to my inability to speak Welsh.

Example 2: Separation from mainstream expressed through a different dialect or language

In the Williamsburg region of Brooklyn, New York City, there is a community of several thousand Satmar Hasidic Jews who began migrating there from the eastern parts of Europe subsequent to World War II. This community is characterized by several differences from the mainstream New York and US population in their appearance and lifestyle, and also with regard to language. This particular Jewish community speaks Yiddish in nearly all domains of life, a fact which sets them apart from other Jewish populations, for example, the largely Hebrew-speaking population of Israel. The adherence to Yiddish sets this group apart even from other Hasidic groups in New York, for example in Boro Park and the Crown Heights, where one can hear English and see it written on some signs. In the Williamsburg Hasidic community, the signs on streets and shops are in the Yiddish alphabet, which is a modified Hebrew script. Yiddish is spoken at home and in public. People who speak English and who do not meet the standards of modesty in dress may not be served in shops and public places. The language, along with other lifestyle choices, marks the community as separate and distinct, creating an example of extreme language loyalty. (The information in this example comes from the unpublished ethnographic fieldwork of Abramac 2017.)

Example 3: Group affinity expressed through use of an insider dialect or language

With this set of examples, the emphasis is placed on the level of the individual. The individual is able to use the inside group’s way of speaking to symbolize association with the group. This kind of behavior is also *discursive,* meaning that participating in the group’s behavior simultaneously adds to the cohesiveness and identity of the group.

> For example, consider the customer from the northern United States—a "Yankee"—who steps into an auto repair shop in the southern United States, hoping to have his car repaired. He might find that being able to talk like a local would get him better service, maybe even at a cheaper price.
>
> Consider the linguistics professor who goes into the eastern parts of London to conduct fieldwork with local children who come from a multitude of different language and ethnic backgrounds. For best results, perhaps a local could help her communicate with the children, as chances are, they will be more open to a person who can break down barriers by talking like them, rather than speaking to them as she would to her university students.
>
> Finally, consider the man who finds himself faced with some local rough guys—any location works here. Will the man stand a better chance with these guys if he talks like a highly educated outsider, or if he tries to talk in a manner more like the locals? The most likely answer is that the man will fare better if he can utilize some kind of mode of speaking that attempts to bridge the social gap between him and the locals. In fact, such an anecdote was relayed by the language scientist Walt Wolfram (personal communication, April 2017), who described a situation in which his son, while attending Brown University, ran into some so-called "townies" and extricated himself from the situation by appealing to local norms of spoken behavior. In other words, he was able to de-escalate the situation through in-group use of language.

There is a common thread running through all of these examples: in each case, the speakers in question, whether an entire community or an individual, have the potential to speak in at least two different language systems: in some cases, two entirely different languages, and in other cases, two different dialects. What this means in practice is that such speakers are able to utilize their knowledge of language to switch into another mode when the right situation arises. These speakers are aware of and able to access *alternative capitals,* meaning that they are tuned into the fluidity and localness of the notion of prestige and belonging.

5.3.1 Reason 2: Why do people speak "Bad English"? Covert prestige

Perceptive readers will note a connection between covert prestige and access to the standard. That is: separation from the mainstream in the ways discussed previously in this chapter create optimal conditions for covert prestige. In many ways, being socially and linguistically distinct from the mainstream go hand in hand: the in-group identity is more immediate and, in many ways, has more personal meaning than the outside, mainstream group. At this juncture, it is important to return to the issue of socioeconomic class and its relationship to social and linguistic separation. Within this section, the definition of covert prestige and its relationship to language has entailed access to more than one language system, whether at the level of language or dialect. For many people who live in socially

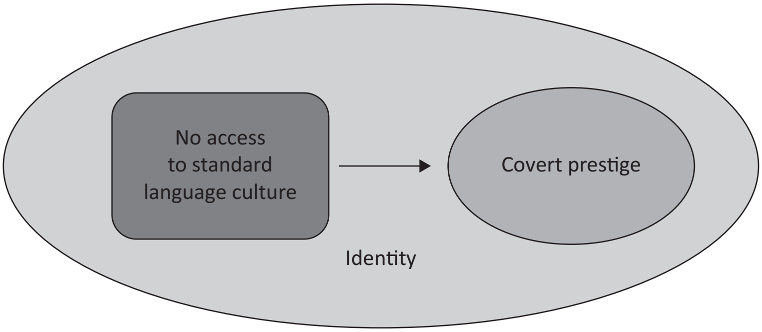

FIGURE 5.2 Relationship of social isolation, covert prestige, and identity.

segregated settings, this is simply not the case: the segregation from mainstream society is so pronounced that there is no access to an outside language system. This applies, for example, to many speakers of African American English: the research on African American English tells us again and again that the ability to code-switch from African American English into mainstream or standardized English is a perk of belonging to the middle class. For speakers in less advantaged socioeconomic groups, there is a distinct possibility of speakers being monolingual in the local language system only.

Figure 5.2 attempts to demonstrate the relationship of social isolation to covert prestige. The figure shows that these are related, although not necessarily overlapping notions. Social isolation, shown in the figure as "lack of access to standard language culture," can be a precursor to a linguistic variety that carries covert prestige, as shown through the arrow, but the line is unidirectional: social isolation can lead to linguistic covert prestige, but the reverse is not likely.

5.4 Identity and language

Identity is a huge issue to grapple with, and its significance as to why people speak "Bad English" cannot be overlooked. It must be addressed, even if summarily, as it is such an important explanatory factor. When I teach about this topic, I normally begin by showing photographs of well-known Finnish hip-hop artists, most of whom are White. We begin our classroom discussion by contemplating the kind of identity these hip-hop artists have in Finland, how it connects to themes and dogma from other locations, and, finally, how all of this relates to language and discourse. For example, one of my students once wrote a bachelor's thesis where she explored the discourse of Finnish hip-hop artists compared to American hip-hop artists, focusing on the themes found in their music. Many of the themes overlapped, including notions of "good" and "bad" neighborhoods, a sense of feeling outside the system, but in the Finnish context she found local manifestations, too, such as hip-hop songs about the long, dark winters and related seasonal depression, as well as songs about drinking too much alcohol. This mixture of local and nonlocal is nothing short of typical in global hip-hop. Some of the earliest research on the topic, for example the work of Cecelia Cutler (1999), looked at White rappers in the US and their use—and in some cases, their overuse—of African American English features, in what many would consider an act of appropriation. As Cutler demonstrates, however, the intention is not appropriation, but acts of identity and a desire to show solidarity with a social group they appreciate.

In recent decades, there has been an impressive output of work on global hip-hop and related discourse, and much of this work ties back to the issue of identity. Using hip-hop themes and styles as a cultural resource allows people to index their affiliation with a disenfranchised group and position themselves against the mainstream, while at the same time allowing them to push local boundaries and explore local themes (Alim et al., eds. 2010, Alim et al., eds. 2016). The example of hip-hop helps to demonstrate two key notions relating to identity: On the one hand, identity is something that you are born with, something that you *have.* On the other hand, it is something that you can *create,* a work in progress, as is clearly the case with people of European background who emulate and embrace African American hip-hop culture, forging their appearance, music tastes, and, in some cases, even their way of speaking according to what they perceive as indexing African American styles. Some of the most comprehensive work on identity and language is found in investigations of US teenagers in California, who position themselves in relation to each other, underlining the relational construction of identity (Bucholtz 2011).

For our purposes, identity is viewed as more of an intentional pursuit than it is accidental or incidental. This viewpoint enables us to widen our scope to include all different kinds of English speakers, including those from the outer and expanding circles. However, it is important to point out that a volitional view of identity in many ways creates a prettier picture of identity than the reality. There are certain aspects of identity that are foisted on an individual due to societal perceptions. For example, a former Finnish student of mixed-race background once explained that, although she plays the violin and listens to classical music, she finds herself being forced to explain to people why she does not like hip-hop, which they assume because of her physical appearance.

In contrast, a personal recollection illustrates the right to choose an identity: several years ago, I made the acquaintance of a young woman from Philadelphia, US, who had curly blond hair and blue eyes. I bring up her appearance because, as I grew to know her better, I learned that she comes from a mixed-race family, and that she self-identifies as African American. Unlike her siblings, who have more physical characteristics often shared with other African Americans, my acquaintance chose not to "sound" African American because it was not expected of her, due to her "White" appearance. It would be naive to state that these phenomena are anything short of commonplace among people of mixed-race or even minority background, but the examples given here underscore the fact that certain aspects of one's identity might not be a choice.

To illustrate the choice afforded to some when it comes to identity, I raise yet another example: that of a colleague from Denmark, whose mother tongue is Danish and who has lived in Denmark his entire life. When I met Henrik the first time, I thought he was from New York City based on the way he spoke English. Later, when I found out he was Danish, I was surprised. All of the associations I had conjured up about him as a New Yorker went out the window, and I had to reconfigure him as a Dane. When I grew to know him better, I finally mustered the courage to ask him why he sounds like someone from New York. His answer was: "It is because New York is the identity I chose for myself when I speak English." This act of identity in language might serve as the ultimate example of choice, and it is crucial to point out that it occurs in the expanding circle setting, in a place where English has no official status and is learned as a foreign language. In contrast, as a mother-tongue speaker of something approximating standardized American English, I personally would feel extremely odd and even inappropriate if I were to attempt to speak like someone from New York or in an ethnic variety of English.

If Henrik, my colleague from Denmark, represents the ultimate choice in identity and language, his situation still remains elusive for many speakers of English. This is due to three main reasons. First, it is relatively rare that a foreign language speaker of English ever reaches the level of aptitude Henrik has, where it is possible to come off as not only a mother-tongue speaker of English, but as someone belonging to a specific community like New York City. Second, as described in Chapter 1, the majority of English speakers in the expanding circle, and to some extent the outer circle, cluster around the two main targets of standardized American English and standardized southern British English. Third, a point raised in Chapter 9, in our discussion of English as a lingua franca, bears mentioning here: not only is it often unrealistic to expect that foreign language speakers of English should sound like someone from the inner circle, but why should they? What is wrong with sounding Finnish if someone is, indeed, Finnish? Or Russian, Japanese, Indian, Nigerian, Jamaican, or whatever else?

5.4.1 Reason 3: Why do people speak "Bad English"? Identity

With the examples offered in this section, we have only scratched the surface of the vast and highly applicable issue of identity as it relates to "good" and "bad" varieties of English. It is clear, in any case, that identity is to some extent volitional, more so for some people than for others. It is also clear that the role identity plays differs according to context: someone in the inner circle may have a close link between covert prestige and identity, and while this may be true for English speakers in the outer and expanding circle, it is also likely that expanding-circle speakers have an identity in English which has nothing to do with covert prestige and everything to do with being a mother-tongue speaker of a different language.

Figure 5.2 attempts to capture the relationship, as presented in this chapter, between access to the standard, covert prestige and identity. The main point of the figure is that identity is a much larger and all-encompassing concept than either social isolation or covert prestige. The figure also demonstrates that while there is not necessarily any overlap between social isolation and covert prestige (rather, there is an if/then relationship), identity is a larger notion that interacts with the other two factors, as well as serving as an independent factor in some instances.

5.5 Conclusion to Chapter 5

So why do bad varieties still exist? The most obvious answer is because people continue to speak them, and the reason they speak them is because they are useful and meaningful. As pointed out through a lifetime of work by Peter Trudgill, whose contributions with regard to covert prestige were mentioned earlier in the chapter, it makes perfect sense for people to speak their native dialect—be it "good," "bad," or otherwise. As we noticed when it comes to identity, in some cases it might even make sense for people to speak a nonnative dialect—especially if that person is a foreign language speaker of English. "Bad" varieties are not standardized, but they are highly practical. They offer optimal opportunity for communication, while at the same time allowing speakers to index their belonging—or not belonging—to other groups of speakers.

Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to Gabi Abramac, Henrik Gottlieb, Ulrich Busse, Jeffrey Reaser, Peter Trudgill, Walt Wolfram, and the MA and PhD students at NC State.

Discussion questions for Chapter 5

1. What are some of the local dialects or varieties where you live? Which of the explanations offered at the beginning of the chapter best apply to your region? Or is it a combination of factors?
2. Are there any examples of languages or dialects coming into contact where you live? What are the languages involved? Which languages have prestige in what ways? What are some of the outcomes of the language contact? For example, in Finland people have started to use the English word *please* when they speak Finnish. This change has been occurring over the past several decades, and now it is common to hear *please* in Finnish discourse, but only in informal contexts. Is your mother tongue influenced by English?
3. In 2012, a news story was released about a 12-year-old bilingual speaker of English and Menomonie, an American Indian language, in Wisconsin (see eResource). The girl was banned from playing on her school basketball team after a teacher overheard her saying a few words in Menomonie to her friends in class. The teacher and the school later apologized. What

does the initial reaction of the teacher say about the relationship of Menomonie and English in the school in terms of prestige? Have you ever seen children chastised in school over their use of language? If so, how did it compare to this situation? Do you think this situation might have been different if the child in Wisconsin had spoken French or German? Why or why not?

4. This chapter mentions that students are often surprised by the fact that so many African American people continued to live in the US South. Do you find this surprising? Why or why not?
5. Are you aware of any situations in which you shift into a different variety of your language, maybe a more local or minority variety? For example, many people who move away from their home town notice that they change back into the local way of talking if they, for example, go back to visit their parents. For some, this might even mean speaking a different language, not just a language variety.
6. Most people are part of some sort of minority group in some way, from which they have to navigate their in-group identity with the mainstream group. For example, I am an immigrant, and I often find myself attempting to strike a balance between my identity as an American and being an immigrant in Finland. This tension shows up in my language choice; for example, there are some days when I simply too tired to try to speak Finnish, so I resort to using my mother tongue—a luxury many immigrants do not have. What kind of language choices do you make as you navigate through different situations in your life?
7. Figure 5.2 in this chapter attempts to illustrate the relationship between access to standard language culture, covert prestige, and identity. Where would you place different kinds of speakers in the figure? For example, where would you place a speaker such as Henrik, who is Danish but speaks New York City English? That is, what seems to be the most important factor(s) for the way Henrik speaks English?
8. In a 2017 panel discussion at North Carolina State University, the American poet, musician and performer Shirlette Ammons, a member of the panel discussing the film *Talking Black in America* told the audience, "It's my Black speech that's magnetic, not my Southernness. That's the swag that I bring with me." What do you think Ammons is expressing with this statement? How does this statement tie in with the information presented in this chapter?

Recommended reading

Alim, H.S., John R. Rickford, and Arnetha F. Ball, eds. 2016. *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Baran, Dominika. 2017. *Language in Immigrant America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosa, Jonathan. 2019. *Looking Like a Language, Sounding Like a Race: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and the Learning of Latinidad*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cited in this chapter

Abramac, Gabi. 2017. Language Choices and Language Ideologies among Hasidic Jews in New York. Presentation at The Eighth Annual Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 8), 12–14 October, University of Copenhagen.

Alim, H.S., Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook, eds. 2010. *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*. London; New York: Routledge.

Alim, H.S., John R. Rickford, and Arnetha F. Ball, eds. 2016. *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ammons, Shirlette. 2017. Panel discussant at screening of *Talking Black in America* [film]. USA: The Language and Life Project at NC State. North Carolina State University, March 23.

Baran, Dominika. 2017. *Language in Immigrant America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baugh, John. 2007. Linguistic contributions to the advancement of racial justice within and beyond the African Diaspora. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 1(4): 331–349.

Bucholtz, Mary. 2010. *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Child Trends Databank. 2018. *High School Dropout Rates*. Available at: https://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=high-school-dropout-rates

Culter, Cecelia. 1999. Yorkville crossing: White teens, hip hop and African American English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3(4): 428–442.

Du Bois, WEB. 1903/1994. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Dover Press.

Kroeger, Teresa and Elise Gould. 2017. The Class of 2017. Report for the Economic Policy Institute. May 4. Available at: https://www.epi.org/publication/the-class-of-2017/

Makoni, Sinfree and Marika Criss, eds. 2017. Special issue: In honor of Joshua Fishman. *Multilingua* 36(5): 533–540.

Piller, Ingrid. 2016. *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice: An Introduction to Applied Sociolinguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Preston, Dennis R. 2005. Good and bad English in the United States. In: Richard J. Watts and Peter Trudgill (eds.) *Alternative histories of English*, 134–151. London: Routledge.

Trudgill, Peter. 1972. Sex, covert prestige and linguistic change in the urban British English of Norwich. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 1(2): 179–195.

Wolfram, Walt and Natalie Schilling. 2015. *American English: Dialects and Variation*, 3rd edn. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Introduction to Part 2

The first half of *Making Sense of "Bad English"* laid out several considerations pertaining to why and how the notions of "good English" and "bad English" emerged, why they persist, and the consequences of the division between what is considered good and bad English. In the second half of the book, we shift perspective from social and historical forces to look at particular linguistic manifestations of English. The information is presented as a series of case studies: mother tongue acquisition of standardized English, African American English, Singlish (briefly), New Delhi English (also briefly), and English as a lingua franca. It should be noted that these language systems cannot accurately be described as *varieties* of English, especially with regard to mother-tongue acquisition and English as a lingua franca (and, arguably, the other case studies, as well). For this reason, I refer to the examples in this part of the book as case studies or language systems.

At the outset, the chapters included here may seem like an odd collection, but rest assured that these case studies were chosen specifically to help readers of the book draw conclusions about three main concepts. These concepts are (1) the role of linguistic universal tendencies, (2) the role of social factors, and (3) the role of historical factors, which, of course, are likely to overlap with social factors.

It is important to point out that entire shelves of libraries are filled with robust research on each of the case studies explored here. In the following chapters, the information presented is intended to give readers an overview of some of the most significant historical and cultural factors that shape the language systems in question. In addition, an aim is to present some—not all—of the distinguishing linguistic characteristics of the different language systems.

A main aim in presenting these case studies is to enable readers to learn a few things about linguistics. In particular, the lesson on linguistics pertains to observations about what exact types of features these language systems of English have in common. On the topic of common features, one of the most visible contributions comes from the language scientist Jack Chambers, who, referring to what he called "vernaculars" of English, ponders how it is possible that the English used in big cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Detroit has so much in common. For that matter, he wonders why inner-city Sydney has so much in common with Norwich, Newfoundland, rural Northern England, working-class Britain, Detroit and Harlem, all geographically distant and diverse settings of English (Chambers 2007). In a much-quoted passage, he continues:

> [A] small number of phonological and grammatical processes recur in vernaculars wherever they are spoken … [T]hese features occur not only in working-class and rural vernaculars but also in child language, pidgins, creoles and interlanguage varieties.
>
> *Chambers 2004: 128*

With these observations, Jack Chambers brings to mind the now-famous observations of the *hyperpolyglot* Sir William Jones, a native of Anglesey, Wales, who in 1786 made linguistic history when he spoke about similarities he observed between Sanskrit, Latin and Greek. These observations led to major breakthroughs in the way scientists view the history of language, namely with regard to recognition of a common source language for languages across Europe and parts of Asia: proto-Indo-European.

(*hyper)polyglot*. This term refers to the rare trait of being able to fluently speak multiple languages, usually more than 11. The term *polyglot* refers to someone who speaks several languages.

The notion of *vernacular universals*, introduced by Jack Chambers to explain his observations about English, has been tested in myriad ways, with mixed results pertaining to supposed universals. Further discussion on universals, or *angloversals*, a term preferred by many linguists working in this area, is taken up at the end of Part 2, after the presentation of the various case studies. The case studies in this part of the book reflect those mentioned by Chambers in his 2004 statement, including vernaculars, child language, creoles and, in the case of English as a lingua franca, not an interlanguage variety, but rather a system used mostly by non-native speakers of English.

For now, readers are advised to keep track of linguistic features that arise as appearing common or linked across these varieties. To aid in the purpose of tracking features across case studies, a study form is available on the book's eResource.

Discussion question

The parallel made here between *vernacular universals of English* and the comparative features of Indo-European languages hints at a major (and controversial) prediction about the future of English(es). What is that prediction? What do you think the future of English looks like?

Cited in this section

Chambers, J.K. 2004. Dynamic typology and vernacular universals. In: B. Kortmann (ed.) *Dialectology Meets Typology: Dialect Grammar from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, 127–145. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Chambers, J.K. 2007. *Sociolinguistic Theory*, 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Filppula, Markku, Juhani Klemola and Heli Paulisto. 2009. *Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond*. New York; London: Routledge.

6

ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH AS A MOTHER TONGUE

When it comes to studies of language, there is probably nothing more fascinating than learning how we as distinct individuals came to have language ourselves. After all, with the exception of very few people, everyone is proficient in at least one language, and the majority of people in the world are able to use more than one language.

This chapter focuses on the acquisition of English as a mother tongue among English-speaking children. Although the focus is on English, the information presented is relevant to language acquisition of any mother tongue to some extent, as some of the development stages of language appear to be universal, notably at the very beginning. Children have been called "speakers of the world," due to their ability, up until a certain age, to perfectly master any language they are regularly exposed to through robust person-to-person interaction. Children are learning *Language* with a capital "L" during the beginning stages of their development, not *a* language. That is, they are gaining language as a cognitive and social system, but during the earliest phases their language is not divided up into Arabic, Basque, Chinese, etc.

A revealing reminder of the social impetus for language comes from children who grow up with more than one language in the home environment. For them, it is not a question of which language to speak, as in "This is my mother, so I have to speak Spanish to her." Rather, the relationship itself takes prominence. During the early stages, the child does not recognize the language as Spanish, as such, but rather knows that this is how to talk to mother. Only much later does the child come to recognize and give a name for the language used to interact with the mother: Spanish.

Some readers may find it odd or even surprising that a chapter on children's language acquisition would be found in a book on "Bad English." This topic is included for two main reasons. One reason is to further examine and test the kinds of attitudes associated with different English users and how they view the language. More than any other, this is the case study that demonstrates that negative evaluations of language are social, not linguistic. Another reason is to work toward the goal of establishing the kind of linguistic features that emerge in each of these case studies of English—which, in turn, may have a bearing on how attitudes are sorted out against one form of English versus another.

It is important to point out that much of the research on first language acquisition in English has been conducted on children acquiring standardized English, although this is not often stated explicitly. Here, I wish to state explicitly that I am drawing from research that has been conducted on children acquiring standardized English as their native variety. Therefore, the results would differ in many notable ways from a child acquiring another variety of English as a mother tongue.

6.1 The study of first language acquisition

As fascinating as it is to study children and how they acquire language, it is notoriously difficult to get at. Whereas with adults it is possible to offer grammatical tests or ask them what they are thinking about, there is no obvious way to get into the mind of a child who has not yet acquired a mother tongue. That said, language scientists working on first language acquisition have employed innovative and ingenious methods of assessing the linguistic ability of even young infants (see eResource).

When it comes to the acquisition of a first language, there are many general observations to be made. As is also true for second language learners, we know that comprehension is way ahead of production. That is, babies are able to understand many aspects of language well before they have the cognitive or physical skills to produce those structures themselves. Even if they do not yet know how to respond with language, babies are absorbing all sorts of input, including linguistic input.

With the exception of only a few known cases of shocking child abuse and neglect, any child with no mental or physical impairment will have acquired most of the linguistic information they need for their mother tongue by the age of 6. There are still a few kinks to be sorted out, which varies depending on the target language and other factors, but the main building blocks of a language are in place by the time most children are of school age. More specifically, for English speaking children 80 percent of the grammatical structures are in place by around the age of 6, meaning that the child knows how to form sentences, how to inflect verbs, how to use morphology, and so on. More than 90 percent of the child's sound system is in place. Some of these specific linguistic features are presented later in this chapter.

6.1.1 How do children learn their first language?

While parents and other figures in child's life may want to give themselves credit for training children explicitly in language, in fact explicit input is rarely very effective, especially during the early stages of language acquisition. Explicit input means telling children *how* to talk. Rather, children learn implicitly, by being talked *to*. Their minds are constantly in motion, sorting and categorizing sounds, units and structures, and during the early stages of development, they are running experiments, until finally a target form solidifies and endures into adulthood as part of the overall language repertoire. (See eResource link: why it is important to talk to your baby.)

There are many possible explanations for how a child learns a language. A few common explanations among nonlinguists are that children learn language by imitating older children or grown-ups, by being corrected by others, or for being praised when they say something "right."

The following examples illustrate how these explanations fall short, with a few examples from authentic parent and child interactions (note: these examples are modified from *Language Files*, Department of Linguistics, The Ohio State University 2016).

1) Child, holding up three fingers: *So tree like this and the tree outside are the same.*
Adult, holding up three fingers: *No, this is three* (with careful enunciation). *Can you say three?*
Child: *Tree. Tree and tree.*

With example 1), the main point is that the child does not learn from reinforcement of the "correct" form. Even when the caregiver models the target sound in the word *three*, the child either does not hear it, or is not able to reproduce it.

2) Adult: *Mommy went outside.* Child: *Mommy goed outside.*
Adult: *Did you put it there?* Child: *No, Sally put it that there.*

With the utterances shown in example 2), we see that the child makes utterances in English that are not present in the standardized English input from caregivers. The child's speech is clearly not modeled on what the caregivers offer, but on some kind of processes in the child's own learning of language. That is: the forms used by the child are unattested in the language heard from caretakers and other external sources.

3) Child: *Daddy drinking coffee.*
Adult: *That's tea, sweetheart, not coffee.*

The main point of this example is that even when caretakers bother to correct the language of a child, it is most often the semantic content (or "truth" value) of the utterance that gets corrected, not the grammar. In this example, the caretaker does not tell the child, "You have left out the copula, Daddy *is* drinking coffee," but rather corrects the child about the type of beverage.

These examples illustrate that children do not learn certain linguistic features from modeling their speech after their caretakers, nor do they learn from being corrected or reinforced. Rather, they go through a cognitive and physical process that eventually results in having at least one mother tongue.

6.1.2 The Critical Age Hypothesis

Much has been discussed and written about the notion known among linguists as The Critical Age Hypothesis. In brief, this hypothesis has to do with the ability all normatively healthy children have to acquire language, any natural language.

Not only can they learn any language, but children can learn a number of languages in a native-like manner, so long as the input is systematic and regular, and the input occurs before about the age of 10. Research shows that the sound system (in other words, the phonology) of the native language(s) is in place by about 12 months old, and the ability to gain native-like mastery of a language continues for the next few years. Even within the same family, it is likely that a child of, say, 4 years old who moves to a different country will speak the target language of the community like a mother-tongue speaker, whereas an older sibling of, say, 12 might always have an "accent" in the target language.

For language scientists, the term *accent* has a specific meaning: it means the sounds and intonation a person has in speaking. For people in general, *accent* is likely to mean the person is speaking a second language, as indicated by elements of the first language coming through into the second language. Thus, when someone says, "She speaks English with an accent," chances are they are talking about the person's status as a second-language speaker, not about their native phonology or intonation. Accent can also refer to the pronunciation and intonation associated with a home region, for example Australian English or Northern England English. What kind of accents do you have?

Language input means the kind of language the child is exposed to: it has to come from another human being, and it has to be a *natural language* or, in other words, an actual language that has developed and is carried on through generations by other human beings. Children who are acquiring a language system (i.e., their mother tongue(s)) do not learn it from voice recordings, television, or apps: learning language at this stage requires systematic interaction with people; there is no substitute (see eResource).

Children who learn their mother tongue or any other language during the critical period must be exposed to those languages in a persistent manner over a prolonged period of time. If the input in the language ends, so does the child's proficiency in the language. In other words, children learn languages relatively quickly compared to adults, but they can also lose them quickly if the languages are not maintained. Losing a language is called *language attrition*, and it can happen to adults, as well.

It is likewise the case that children who do not receive regular linguistic input during the critical period, in other words, up until about the age of 10, will never be able to regain that lost opportunity. For example, in the few isolated cases of extreme child abuse that we know of, when children have been forced away from other human beings and human interaction, those children never gained the ability to use any fully developed language later on in life. If the acquisition of native language(s) does not happen during the critical period, it does not happen at all; the person will never have full linguistic abilities.

6.2 Stages of acquisition

In this section, we look at the acquisition of English as a mother tongue in terms of stages. Researchers in the field divide the overall acquisition period into four different stages, and each stage entails a few predictable, landmark processes. These stages often overlap to some extent, and an individual child might master some elements within one stage at a different rate than another child. However, it is not likely that a child will skip a stage and move onto another. The stages are iterative: one stage builds on another.

6.2.1 Stage one: babbling

By the time they are about six months old, babies within any language environment (not just English) start to "babble," which is an onomatopoeia in English, reflecting the fact that many babies show a preference for sounds that start with the lips, like [m] and [b]. Across languages, babies first start experimenting with the sounds [b, m, d, n, g]. This has to do with the development of motor control over the muscles and movements that make it possible for humans to make these sounds, for example learning to control the flow of air into the lungs. In fact, babies at this age are experimenting with a full range of sounds, some of which make it into their eventual language repertoire, and many that do not.

Did you ever stop to consider the number of sounds people are capable of making with their vocal apparatus that *don't* make it into language? The number of sounds, or phonemes, across world languages is staggering, but actually, humans are capable of making many other sounds that don't end up as phonemes in any known language. Can you think of any explanations for this?

The sounds a child makes are not random, however. One of the earliest areas of language recognition among babies is the intonation patterns, or what you could call the melody of a language. This means that a child who babbles in English is already sorting out and learning to mirror the intonation patterns of the language she hears around her, and the same goes for Singlish, Malayalam, etc. The child is also learning the sound sequences that are possible in the target language, for example which vowels go with which consonants, and in what order. These are the beginning stages of what will later become words.

Along with this sound experimentation comes muscle growth and control, so that babies can eventually master the complex practices of pushing air from the lungs, which in turn travels through the vocal tract and the various articulatory locations throughout the oral cavity and mouth.

Already at this stage, it is impressive to note the will to communicate. A baby will use whatever tools she has at her disposal to communicate her desires and connect with others. For example, children at this stage can learn to shake their head to agree or disagree, a gesture that they use productively and accurately in all sorts of situations. This skill reflects a fact that was stated earlier: perception or understanding of language always precedes the ability to produce language, so children understand a fair amount of what is said to them even at this early stage of development.

6.2.2 Stage two: One-word stage

Starting at around the age of one year, normally children are able to produce understandable words in the target language. A single word can have many different meanings, and the caregivers are often able to disambiguate the meanings based on context. For example, the word *bread*, depending on the context, can mean "bread," but it can also mean "milk," "yogurt," "food," or anything that the baby can eat or drink. The word *woof* can mean the sound a dog makes, but it can also mean the dog itself, it can mean that the baby wants to go outside (and walk the dog), or it can mean any animal that remotely resembles a dog.

These words might not be recognizable as such to people outside the baby's immediate circle, however. The words are not pronounced with perfect target-like pronunciation, because all the articulators used to control the sounds are not fully exercised and developed yet. All words tend to have a phonemic (i.e., a sound) structure of consonant-vowel (CV) or consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC). In adult speech, the word *bread* has the phonemic structure CCVC—that it, it starts with two consonants, a “B” and an “R.” But for a child at this stage of linguistic development, the word *bread* probably has the structure CVC or even CV; in other words, the word can sound like *bed* or even *be* (that is, something like [bɜː] in the International Phonetic Alphabetic symbols, with the vowel sound here representing a standardized pronunciation).

A different system is in place for words of more than one syllable: *reduplication*. That is, if a target word has more than one syllable, the baby repeats the first syllable twice. This means, that, for example, the word *banana* might be rendered as *baba* or *nana* or the word *daddy* as *dada*.

6.2.3 Stage three: Two-word stage

At the age of around a year and a half, children are moving on from expressing themselves using one word to being able to string short words together. Initially, multiple word units consist of only two words at a time, and English words appear in their bare form, with no morphology. In other words, the two words *mommy bread* could be used to mean 'this is mommy's food,' and the possessive *–'s* is implied through the proximity of the two nouns. At this stage, children are able to actively produce a stock of about 50 words, mostly nouns and verbs, but without any morphology such as verbal agreement or possessive forms, and there are no function words such as prepositions and determiners. Although they can produce only about 50 words at this stage, they are able to understand around 200 words relating to their everyday environment and routines, including names for people and pets.

6.2.4 Stage four: More than two words

Some experts on child language development refer to the stage starting at around two years of age “the telegraphic” stage. This is because children are eager to communicate, but they still have a limited word stock, and they use whatever words they have to attempt to be understood and to relate to others. At this stage, they begin experimenting with the words they have available to them, stringing them together, still without function words or morphology. This stage lasts until about 30 months of age, at which point English-speaking children are beginning to acquire English morphology and function words such as pronouns and determiners (such as *a*, *an*, *the*). Until then, context is critical in understanding what the child intends to convey through words. For example, the words, “Mommy, baby, help,” might mean “Please help me put this doll's leg back on, Mommy,” but this would only make sense if the parent sees the child with a broken doll in her hand. The words “Daddy, Cava, bye bye,” might mean “Daddy and the dog (whose name is Cava) went outside for a walk.” These forms are considered telegraphic because they do not make sense outside of the immediate context, and a caretaker often has to do some guessing to understand the intended meaning.

6.3 Acquisition of linguistic features

At this point we shift our perspective to look at first language acquisition of English from chronological stages of development to the acquisition of certain areas of language: phonology (sounds and how they are put together), morphology (how words are put together), vocabulary, syntax (how sentences are formed) and pragmatics (how language is used for interpersonal functions).

Voiced vs voiceless consonants: The distinction between voiced and voiceless means that the vocal cords are either vibrating or they are not. The best way to notice the difference is to put your fingertips on your throat and pronounce a sequence such as “sssssszzzzzzssssszzzz” or “ffffvvvvfffffvvvv” and note the difference in the tension of your throat. [s] and [f] are voiceless consonants, and [z] and [v] are voiced.

6.3.1 Acquisition of phonetics/phonology

When babies babble, the first distinguishable consonants are the sounds represented by the letters *b*, *m*, *d*, *n*, and *g* or, in other words, the bilabial stops and nasal, the alveolar stop and nasal, and the velar stop. Babies are actively carving out their linguistic territory, experimenting with target sounds of their immediate language community. By the age of two years, English-speaking babies already have in place the majority of target consonants for English: in addition to the previous consonants, they have learned to articulate the voiceless stops [p, t, k] as well as the fricatives [f, s, h] and the semi-glide [w].

As the children learn to master and control their articulation, they go through several predictable stages. For example, it is likely that children will pronounce fricatives (for example, [f, v, s]) as stops [p, b, d] during the initial stages of acquisition, then alternate them, then finally distinguish between them. It is also possible that the voicing contrast between sounds such as *p* and *b* will be merged for some time, with the voicing contrast emerging sometime before the age of 2.

By about 3 years of age, English-speaking children are able to produce the *y* sound like in *yellow* and the velar nasal [ŋ] sound that comes at the end of words like *swing* and *bring*. It is still difficult for children at this age to pronounce consonant clusters, or in other words sequences of adjacent consonants. The exception is the sequence which occurs at the end of words like *think* and *drink*, [ŋk].

By the age of 4, children are astonishingly adept speakers of their native tongue. The consonants of English are nearly cemented in place, and in most possible consonant cluster combinations. The final sounds mastered by English-speaking children tend to be affricates and fricatives: [ʧ] the first sound in *cheese*, [ʤ] the first sound in *juice*, [θ] the first sound in *think*, and [ð] the first sound in *this*. Up until around the age of even 6, however, it is common for children to not be able to systematically produce the dental fricatives [θ] and [ð]. Rather, the [θ] sound tends to be uttered as [t], and the [ð] as [d]. The sounds [l, w, r] tend to come later, and, as many mother-tongue speakers of English can testify from personal memory, they can often be mixed during the early years of childhood; meaning, for example, that a word such a *red* can be uttered as *wed*.

As children chisel away at their mastery during these final stages of phonological acquisition, a few more patterns deserve mention. First, the position of the sound within a word is important. There is a tendency to produce voiced sounds at the beginning of a word, and to produce voiceless sounds at the end of a word. This means, for example, that a word like *blue* will be pronounced with a *b*, but a word like *prune* will also be pronounced with a *b*. On the other hand, a word like *flag* might sound more like *flack*, and the word *blob* might sound like *blop.* In fact, consonants at the end of a word might be left off altogether, so that, for example, *bag* sounds like *baa*, *ball* sounds like *baa* or *baw*, and so on. At the beginning of a word, it is more difficult for children to produce consonant sequences, so, for example, a word like *blue* might be epenthesized to have two syllables—*ba-lue*—thereby breaking apart the consonants at the beginning of the word. Another strategy for dealing with consonants in word-initial position is to simply leave one of them out, so that, for example, a word like *black* becomes *back*. Consonant sequences tend to be easier for children at the end of word, for example, words such as *hand*, *arm*, or even polymorphemic forms such as *dogs* and *cats*.

6.3.2 Acquisition of morphology

By around the age of 2, English-speaking children show an awareness and ability to produce the morphemes of English. These include verb forms such as *-ing* (*running*, *walking*, *playing*) and *-ed* (*walked*, *played*) and the possessive form *-'s* (*mommy's coat*).

Specialists on first language acquisition in children have established a list of morphemic elements that tend to be acquired by English-speaking children between the ages of approximately 2 and 4. The ordering of the list is important: it is well-established that English-speaking children learn these morphemic elements in the order presented. However, it might be the case that Child A spends more time establishing the uncontractable copula *Who is it* than Child B, while Child B might need more time to establish, say, the rules of the irregular past tense forms in English.

Again, it should be noted that the list presented here, like the other information in this chapter, applies to children who grow up speaking a standardized variety of English. Research into the language acquisition of nonstandardized varieties is nowhere near as well explored as standard varieties. Clearly, when more research is available, it will be interesting to note how the acquisition processes compare among varieties.

Morphological processes for L1 English children

1. Present progressive: verbs that end with *-ing. Baby singing*, *mommy eating,* etc.
2. The prepositions *in* and *on*

3. The regular plural of nouns. *Regular plural* means the suffix *-s,* as in *dogs*, *cats*, *toys*, etc. English words that take an irregular plural come much later on in the acquisition process. At this stage, the plural *-s* is used to make everything plural, from *fish* to *foot* to *people.*
4. The irregular past tense form of the most common verbs. This means the verbs most used in the baby's immediate surroundings, for example *went*, *came*, *saw*, etc. This does not mean that the child interprets these forms as being comprised of two morphemes (root word + past tense); the word is learned as a monomorph.
5. The possessive *-'s* form: *baby's*, *mommy's*, *Anna's*, etc.
6. The uncontracted copular forms or, in other words, be verbs that are used in their full form (contrast with number 12 on this list): *Here it is. Whose is it?*
7. The English articles *a*, *an*, *the*
8. Regular past tense forms, normally with *-ed*: *walked*, *talked*, *cried*, *played*, etc. Step 4 on this list mentioned irregular verbs. Children routinely assign the past tense *-ed* to all verbs at the beginning stages, continuing to experiment until the standardized form emerges, for example, with verbs such as *I fell/I felled*, *I felt/I feeled*, *I saw/I sawed*, *I made/I maked.* Note that verb forms like these are not always straightforward for grown-ups, either. For example, there is variation between *I dove* vs *I dived* and *I snuck* vs *I sneaked.*
9. Regular third-person singular present tense, or in other words third-person *-s: walks*, *talks*, *cries*, *plays*, etc.
10. Irregular third-person singular present tense verbs, such as *I am*, *you are* and *he is* (as opposed to *I play*, *you play*, *he plays*).
11. Uncontracting auxiliary verbs (contrast with number 13 on this list): *He hadn't eaten his dinner* (versus *He'd eaten his dinner.)*
12. Contractible copula verbs (contrast with number 6 on this list): *That's mine. What's that?*
13. Contractible auxiliary verbs (contrast with number 11 on this list): *He's eating cookies. They're playing with dolls.*

6.3.3 Acquisition of syntax

By about the age of 3, English-speaking children are able to produce complex sentences with multiple clauses, at the initial stages using mostly the coordinator *and*. After *and*, they begin to acquire the knowledge about how to add subordinate clauses using conjunctions such as *because*, *so*, *if*, and later still subordinate clauses using *why* and *what.*

> *Nova took the doll's leg off, and then she was sad.*
> *Nova didn't know what to do because the doll's leg broke.*
> *Nova broke the doll's leg, so she gave it to her mother.*
> *Nova didn't know why she broke the doll's leg.*
> *Nova didn't know what she should do.*

Still later, children are able to form relative clauses by attaching a clause to an object noun phrase, as in:

> *Wilma ate the chocolate that Grandma brought for her.*

Later, they develop the skills to attach a relative clause to a subject noun phrase:

> *The chocolate that the Grandma brought was for Wilma.*

6.3.4 Acquisition of vocabulary

The acquisition of vocabulary among English-speaking children normally follows the following trajectory:

1) By about 20 months, most children can say about 50 words, most of which are nouns. They can understand up to four times that many words.
2) By the age of 4, children are capable of learning four words per day. By about 5 years of age, the vocabulary increases by about 15 to 20 words per day.
3) By about 6 years, or in other words around the same time English-speaking children normally start school, there is a vocabulary of about 8,000 words. As the opportunities for interaction and learning increase, so does the vocabulary: by the age of 8, most English-speaking children know about 18,000 words.
4) English-speaking adults normally know between 50,000 and 100,000 words. The acquisition of vocabulary, of course, can continue throughout a lifetime.

6.3.5 Acquisition of pragmatics

The acquisition of pragmatic norms differs from other elements of language acquisition in that pragmatic norms are shaped and altered throughout a lifetime. An example like the following conversation, which took place at a dinner table involving a child and two adults, shows how pragmatic norms can be shaped.

Speaker A: "Can I have some more potatoes?"
Speaker B: "Yes, but can you ask nice?"
Speaker A: "Can I have some more POH-TAY-TOES?" (using carefully enunciated speech)
Speaker B: "I mean, can you say 'please'?"
Speaker A: "Oh. Can I have some more potatoes. Please."

Speaker A, a child, asks Speaker B, an adult, for more potatoes. The adult is not willing to give the potatoes unless the child "asks nice," or in other words says "please." The child misinterprets the request to "ask nice" as referring to articulation, so she slows down her speech and carefully utters each sound in the word *poh-tay-toes*. This everyday example is illustrative of the research summarized in Tannen (2013), offering an overview of family mealtimes, and how children learn adult behavior during such sessions, including pragmatic norms.

The reason pragmatic norms develop across a lifetime is because as new experiences and different types of exposure take place, people tend to learn the pragmatic routines that go along with those experiences. For example, the child in the "poh-tay-toes" discussion might learn one set of pragmatic norms while sitting at the dinner table with her family, but later on, as an adult, she might have to learn the pragmatic norms associated with ordering food for herself at a restaurant, asking for the bill, and so on.

When it comes to cross-cultural pragmatic norms—learning the pragmatic expectations in another language and culture—the stakes are quite high. Research on cross-cultural pragmatics shows that failure to meet pragmatic expectations can be seen as a much graver fault than not using the target grammar of a language. For example, a nonnative speaker of English who makes a request by pointing and saying the grammatical sentence "Give me that bottle," might offend a listener much more than a speaker who says, "Please, give you I that." The point is that, for many speakers of English, the word *please* softens a request in a way that perfect grammar alone cannot.

6.4 Conclusion to Chapter 6

With this first case study of Part 2, the main aim has been to demonstrate that children who are acquiring standardized English as their mother tongue go through established phases in their development with regard to specific constructions and sounds. Some of these phases are specific to language learning, and to first language acquisition in particular. What is interesting, and more to the point for us in our exploration of "Bad English," is that first language speakers of standardized English naturally employ many features in their speech that, if they were adults, would be regarded as "bad," as they do not map onto the common conceptions of standardized English. The main message of this chapter, then, might offer readers other ways of thinking about linguistic features that are considered "good" or "bad." Why is it that when young English-speaking children pronounce a word without a consonant cluster, or with a "t" sound instead of a "th" sound, they are not chastised for speaking incorrectly? Why is it that a speaker of a nonstandardized variety of English, however, is held to stringent norms about how others think they should be speaking? At what stage does it become "bad," and why?

A further point of the chapter is to offer readers the beginning stage of their investigation of vernacular features of English. As suggested by Chambers (2004) in the introduction to this part of the book, nonstandardized varieties of English tend to share certain linguistic features not only with each other, but also with features of early acquisition of standardized English as a mother tongue.

This is not to imply that non-standardized varieties are somehow baby-like or less developed than standardized varieties. On the contrary, the comparative exercise offered by this latter half of the book offers readers an opportunity to explore which features of the language systems shown here match up with each other. These observations offer valuable insights into how (nonstandardized) English works. Follow the eResource of this book to get your own list of features started and to see how your observations compare to others.

Discussion questions for Chapter 6

1. I have encountered other parents who, like me, are immigrants and adult second language learners. One particular instance stands out. Many years ago, I met a mother-tongue speaker of Yiddish, a recent immigrant to Finland with a Finnish spouse, who informed me that his plan was to learn Finnish along with his child when she was born. I never met the man after his child was born, but how do you think his attempts to learn Finnish with his child went? Why?
2. Is there a young child in your life? Try this simple game with a child between 18 months and two years. The point of the game is to be able to hear which sounds the child can repeat and which they cannot. Start with the sounds at the lips, the bilabials: "Mah mah mah," "Pah, pah, pah," "Bah, bah, bah," and move gradually backwards through all the articulators in the oral cavity: "Fah fah fah," "Vah, vah, vah," "Nah, nah, nah," "Tah, tah, tah," "Sah, sah, sah," "Zah, zah, zah," and so on. (Follow the IPA [International Phonetic Alphabet] consonant chart; see eResource). After each set of a certain sound, let the child repeat. Be sure to pay attention to the substitutions they use for the sounds they cannot yet pronounce. Which sounds does the child easily reproduce? Which prove more problematic?
3. For many English-speaking children, there is a general notion that children learn to use English "properly" when they start school. In light of the information in this chapter, discuss this notion.
4. Do you consider the features used by children as "nonstandard"? Why/why not? How does this compare to the use of nonstandard features among adults or second language learners? Who is more likely to be chastised or ridiculed for speaking a certain way or using nonstandard features? Why?
5. At what age/stage do we start to tell children that there English is not "grammatical"? Does it depend on the race/social class/other social features? How does this phenomenon relate to their indoctrination into standard language culture?

Cited in this chapter

Chambers, J.K. 2004. Dynamic typology and vernacular universals. In B. Kortmann (ed.) *Dialectology Meets Typology: Dialect Grammar from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, 127–145. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Clarke, Eve. 2009. *First Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Department of Linguistics, The Ohio State University. 2016. *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*, 12th edn. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.

Finegan, Edward. 2012. *Language: Its Structure and Use*. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.

Fromkin, Victoria A., ed. 2010. *Linguistics: An Introduction to Linguistic Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Graziano-King, Janine and Helen S. Cairns. 2010. Chapter 11. First language acquisition: Developing native linguistic competence. In S. Behrens and J.A. Parker (eds.) *Language in the Real World*, 206–225. New York: Routledge.

Tannen, Deborah. 2013. Gender and family interaction. In S. Ehrlich, M. Meyerhoff and J. Holmes (eds.) *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, 2nd edn, 491–508. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

7

AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

Within the academic discipline of linguistics, research on African American English, like research on first language acquisition of English, is abundant and of a staggeringly high quality. Starting with the groundbreaking work of language scientists like William Labov in New York City and Walt Wolfram in Detroit, the interest in studying African American English as a language system has never abated. In recent years, language scientists have continued to produce high-quality work on topics such as intonation and multiracial identity (Holliday 2018, 2019), acquisition of African American English as a mother tongue (Green 2011), as well as a comprehensive handbook (Lanehart 2015). Students of languages who are interested in African American English will not be disappointed: there is a wealth of literature to draw from. The irony that such a stigmatized variety of English is so well understood by language scientists is a paradox that many language scientists confront head on, with an overt aim of educating and working to create understanding and respect for this rich American language system.

TEASING OUT THE TERMINOLOGY

The language system referred to in this book as African American English has been known by various terms over the decades, and, in fact, there are several overlapping terms used today. *African American English* is the preferred term in this book because it is considered the most general and inclusive in its scope. People who use the term *African American language,* as earlier in this chapter, are likely to view African American English as a distinct language system, emphasizing its roots in African language and culture. *African American*

Vernacular English most likely refers to informal spoken language, or a type of African American English that is used by only a subset of African American people part of the time. *Blinglish,* a term used by Pennycook (2007), refers to the incorporation of African American English features into local languages and varieties, especially associated with hip-hop.

As stated in the introductory chapter to this book, one learning goal is to help readers in foreign language environments gain a better understanding of the social and cultural contexts inherent to inner-circle varieties of English. For this discussion of African American English, the most important goals are to contextualize the conditions that scholars believe shaped the emergence and development of African American English, and to educate readers about how this language system has come to be so distinct from mainstream, standardized spoken English. This theme was addressed to some extent in Chapters 4 and 5, and it is dealt with in further detail here.

The chapter begins by describing the historical foundations of African American English. It then goes on to describe some discourse features and ends by discussing some of the grammatical features of African American English.

7.1 The historical context of African American English

African American English has its origins in the Transatlantic slave trade, which primarily involved people from the areas on the central coast of West Africa. The area is home to hundreds of different languages from different language families, even today. According to Ethnologue, a website about worldwide languages, there are 884 languages spoken in the West African countries today, among a population of 356 million people (Eberhard, Simons and Fennig 2019).

The exploitation and abuse of people of African origin is well documented in historical and literary sources. While these incredible human rights violations are not detailed here, they deserve mention not only because they are historical fact, but because of the influence they had on the genesis of African American English. The language diversity of West Africa, coupled with the harsh authority held over the people who were captured and sold into slavery, led to a situation where the African people who were forced to the Americas were unable to speak their mother tongues with one another. A commonly held notion is that people who spoke the same African language were purposely separated from each other prior to the voyage to America, so that they could not communicate with other native speakers. Other sources state that the slave traders were not equipped to differentiate among the African languages, and that it was basic brute force and terror that kept individuals who shared a mother tongue from speaking to each other. Still other historical investigations posit that only a few African languages entered the US, and they existed for short periods in clusters (for a summary see Hall 2005).

It is difficult to imagine a more effective or violent method of cleaving a mother tongue from its speakers. The removal of their language, of course, was only one of myriad other abuses these people endured. The Transatlantic slave trade was in effect from 1619 to 1808. With the end of slavery in British colonies, there was a push for slaves from British colonies to be sold to the US, where slavery was still legal. The institution of slavery went on in the US until the end of the American Civil War, in 1865. During this time, about 10.7 million African people were shipped to the Americas, with about 388,000 arriving in the US (Eltis and Richardson 2015), and the vast majority shipped to the Caribbean and South America.

Other non-English speaking newcomers to the United States—from Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, Poland, and so on—brought their mother tongues with them, of course, as any adult immigrant would. Such immigrants would often set up communities, even within a given city, where they were able to communicate with one another and offer support. There were no such opportunities for African slaves. During the settlement period of US history, there were no African language enclaves, but there were Dutch enclaves, Italian enclaves, Swedish enclaves, and so on. Given the conditions under which they were brought to the US, it is no mystery as to why no African languages persisted in the US—although, as demonstrated in this chapter, many linguists believe certain elements of African languages survived in some form in what is today African American English—and in mainstream American English as well. There is likewise ample evidence of the influence of African languages in varieties of French (e.g., Haitian Creole), Spanish (e.g., Dominican Spanish) and other varieties of English (e.g., Gullah, Jamaican Creole) in the Americas.

MAINSTREAM AMERICAN ENGLISH WORDS BORROWED FROM AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Here is a partial list. There are many more.

> *banana, banjo, bongo, chigger, chimpanzee, cola, goober, gumbo, jambalaya, jamboree, jazz, jive, jumbo, mojo, okra, safari, trek, voodoo, yam, zebra, zombie*

Upon arrival in the Americas, there was no opportunity to resume speaking the native African language. Not only that, but for most people of African descent, the input from English was limited to specific domains and registers, relating to everyday work and livelihood. For example, it is important to note that it was illegal for Africans and, subsequently, African American slaves, to learn to read or write, meaning that people of African descent were denied access to education and the benefits that come with literacy.

There is a large extent of overlap between African American English and Southern US English, even today. This makes sense considering that poor

White indentured workers, mostly of Scots-Irish descent, were often those who worked most closely with slaves, thus influencing each other's language. Even after the Civil War, poor White people and poor Black people lived in the same areas (Wolfram and Schilling 2015). This day-to-day contact changed when African American people from the south began migrating north and later west, where interaction with White people was more limited, due to factors of isolation (as discussed in Chapter 5). Many linguists note that after the "Great Migration," African American English developed into an urban, inner-city phenomenon, growing even more distinct not only from mainstream American English, but from Southern US English, as well. Today, there are many features of African American that overlap with Southern US English, but there are many unique features, as well. A set of features is presented later in this chapter.

Today, African American English remains a Southern phenomenon in the sense that its roots are in the Southern US, but at the same time it is increasingly an urban and changing phenomenon.

Before continuing, there are a few facts that should be made clear:

- Not everyone who self-identifies as African American speaks African American English.
- Not everyone who speaks African American English is African American. It all depends on the circumstances in which people live and how they identify (see Chapter 5): people from other ethnic groups can and do speak African American English. There is no connection between genes and a person's mother tongue(s).
- Many (not all) speakers of African American English have the linguistic skill to shift into a more mainstream (in other words, "White") way of speaking when the situation calls for it.
- Among people who identify as African American, African American English is an extremely divisive topic, to the point where even mother-tongue speakers may deny it exists.
- Within the US, African American English is probably the most stigmatized and misunderstood variety of US English, yet language scientists know a lot about it. Throughout the years, these scientists have become increasingly more successful in spreading their knowledge, for example with the appearance of the 2017 film *Talking Black in America*, created and produced by researchers at the Language and Life Project at North Carolina State University.
- African American English is a cover (i.e., general) term: it includes many sub-varieties, such as local versions of African American English. As such, the linguistic features presented in this chapter should not be received as features used by everyone who speaks African American English, nor is it the case that any one speaker might use all of these linguistic features. Each speaker is unique.

7.2 Distinct discourse styles of African American English

In 2014, a rather innocuous piece of journalism appeared: “The Nod: A Subtle Lowering of the Head You Give to Another Black Person in an Overwhelmingly White Place” (Musa Okwonga, *Matter,* October 16, 2014). The title of the piece reveals the crux of the article: a Black journalist living in London wrote of his experiences traveling around the world and receiving an explicit, nonverbal acknowledgment—a quick ducking of the head—from other Black people in places where Black people are not in the population majority. The online comments to the article were mostly positive, and many were from other people of color, who wrote comments along the lines of: “Really? Is that a thing around the world? I thought we only did that where I'm from.”

Even though “the nod” is one simple gesture, it speaks volumes about the communication styles that are distinct to people of African descent throughout the world. In the context of the United States, it is important to remember that orality in the native African languages was something that was forcefully limited, so it is perhaps not surprising that nonverbal gestures, such as the nod, high five, giving dap, etc., are all means of communication that originate in African/African American culture.

At the same time, influenced by both communication traditions from Africa as well as factors related to the living—and survival—conditions of people of African descent in the United States, a wealth of other communication systems developed, with meanings and practices specific to African American culture. Many of these communication practices are chronicled in the work of African American language scientists spanning several decades, and those are the works cited here.

7.2.1 Discourse and communication

As pointed out in Chapter 4, in the discussion of matched guise tests and linguistic profiling, Americans report being able to tell around 80 percent of the time when they are speaking to someone who is African American, even if they cannot see that person. This is an elusive fact for many reasons, one of them being that not everyone who self-identifies as African American speaks African American English. So, what is it exactly that people think they are hearing? Many factors are probably involved.

A contemporary example can be made of US President Barack Obama. Does he speak African American English? Well, yes and no, most people would probably say. It is well documented that President Obama, by any account a skilled speaker and communicator, is able to make use of African American language styles if the situation calls for it. He might make use of certain expressions, certain types of pronunciation, specific use of vocabulary, or offer a fist bump, like he did to his wife Michelle during a political rally in Minnesota in 2008—a gesture which was subsequently called into question by his critics. At the same time, President Obama is a highly educated professional and a public official who is adept at using the language expected in formal, institutional roles; fist bumps and verbal expressions such as "Nah, we straight" (Alim and Smitherman 2012) are not likely to be used in the most formal occasions.

A third factor, the factor discussed most at length here, is rhetorical and discourse style. Put simply, rhetorical and discourse style means distinct styles, routines, and customs in communication. These factors tend to be culturally bound, the type of thing that people understand implicitly within a given culture because it is considered everyday, even expected, behavior. For example, people outside the US often comment on the American habit of saying, "Hi, how are you?" as a greeting—noting, for example, that people do not stop long enough to hear the answer. Students in Finland often say the greeting baffles them, because they do not know how to respond naturally or quick enough. But inside the US, for most people, "Hi, how are you?" is an everyday routine, an innocuous greeting which is met automatically and effortlessly.

Chapter 5 of this book went into detail describing how the US is divided into distinct populations relating to race and ethnicity, listing several factors that contribute to cultural distinctions among different groups based on race and ethnicity. This information, coupled with the historical backdrop that is unique to the African American experience, means it is no surprise that African American English is characterized by many specific rhetorical and discourse styles that do not normally carry over into other ethnic groups.

Many of the features described here are based on the work of Marcyliena Morgan, a Harvard professor who has researched discourse styles. Her work, in turn, has benefitted from decades of research on the same topics; some of these works are listed in the bibliography to this chapter. An overarching theme in Morgan's work is how the notion of "audience" is different for African Americans than it is for other groups, or, as she puts it: "The construction of the audience and hearer is based not only on those physically present, but equally on those who might, can, could, should or will hear or be told the hearer's interpretation of what the speaker said" (Morgan 2002: 38). Morgan regards this layering of audiences as a central ideology in African American language. The quotation above expresses the never-ending need within African American culture to be aware of the dominant culture, while at the same time attending to social structures within the in-group, as well. In other contexts, this tension has been referred to as the "push-pull" syndrome—the need to navigate dominant, mainstream culture while at the same time maintaining an identity and role within the African American community.

This tightrope between maintaining in-group and out-group relations could be an explanation for a related theme discussed by Morgan, what she calls "Playin it cool or actin the fool." Having "no cool" is akin to having a negative social face; being called a fool, which means overreacting to a situation, showing too much emotion, or losing one's composure, is to be avoided. The need to remain calm and composed, so as not to invite unwanted attention or criticism, is the theme of the novel *Invisible Man* (1952) by African American author Ralph Ellison.

It is also a characteristic played out by individuals in the public sphere, for example US President Obama.

In line with this notion is a need for self-protection for the in-group, which can be linked to times of slavery or even to communication styles in West Africa—or any combination thereof. Part of this self-protection of the speaker reveals itself as a style of *indirectness*, which is in contrast with the general American value of *directness*. Directness is characterized, for example, by eye contact, lifting one's head and being in a social position where one can speak one's mind. Morgan writes that direct speech is seen as institutional for many speakers of African American English; speech that is too direct might even cause some people to be nervous or mistrustful. Routines involving indirectness in African American discourse include what Morgan calls "baited indirectness," meaning that a message intended for just one individual or a specific group of people is presented in general terms. Presenting a message in such a manner allows a speaker to step back from the statement, to disavow it, as in, "No, I didn't mean *you* when I said that."

The value placed on indirectness might seem at odds with rhetorical and discourse norms known outside the African American community, for example through hip hop and spoken word, which can often appear as boastful and aggressive in tone. Although to an outsider such forms of communication might seem overtly direct, Morgan characterizes them as *directed,* as opposed to direct. By *directed* she means an utterance is made with temporary disregard for the social context (layering) and with a lack of appeal to audience collaboration—in contrast to the styles of indirectness that are otherwise typical. When it comes to insults or certain other speech events, speakers of Africa American English have at their disposal an array of discourse norms that allow them to redress perceived wrongs, slights, or lapses in judgment. Some of these discourse norms, for example *signifying*, are well attested in the narrative history of West Africa, through such tales as the Signifying Monkey and the Signifying Rabbit (Gates 1988). Such verbal routines, also known as *dissing* (among other terms), are often accompanied by discourse formulas, for example the well-known *Your mamma* trope, which has to follow the exact pattern of "Your mamma (is) so (adjective) that …." In addition to grammatical patterns, signifying and other verbal routines are often accompanied by specific prosodic and intonation routines such as sucking teeth, extreme high-low pitch contours, and specific rhythms in the delivery. These routines might be familiar through their exposure via hip-hop and "battles" that take place to rehearse and sharpen verbal skills.

7.3 Distinct grammatical features of African American English

We are fortunate to have at our disposal a treasure trove of research on African American English, written by scholars spanning many decades. With this wealth of information, it is a challenge to focus on just a few of the key features in the grammar and pronunciation of African American English. This is a way of stating that the list of features in this chapter is nothing close to exhaustive. I have selected illustrative examples that demonstrate the unique features of African American English, but also features that are shared with other varieties of English. The majority of this information comes from the work of language scientist Lisa Green, whose textbook on African American English (Green 2002) has proven helpful in my own classes.

7.3.1 Verb forms in African American English

1. copula absence in the *present* tense

This rule means that there is no form of the verb *to be* in sentences that require *to be* in standardized US English. For example, standardized English sentences such as *She is going* and *They are hungry* are grammatical as *She going* and *They hungry* in African American English.

With regard to this rule, there are a few points to remember. One is that copula deletion does *not* occur in the first person singular, or in other words with *I*. That is, it is not grammatical in African American English to say "I going." In addition, when a sentence is in the past tense, there can be no copula deletion. This makes sense if we consider that the past tense has to go somewhere, and that somewhere is the copula.

Here is a depiction of the copula paradigm in African American English:

> *I'm going.*
> *You going.*
> *She going.*
> *We going.*
> *They going.*

It is interesting to note that among world languages, there are many that do not have a copula in the present tense, for example Russian, Irish Gaelic, Japanese and Arabic. These languages are not closely related, so this is clearly not an uncommon feature across world languages. And, as can be seen with other case studies, it is not an uncommon feature in nonstandardized English language systems, either.

2. habitual/aspectual *be*

Of all the linguistic forms specific to African American English, this is probably the most stereotyped, meaning that when outsiders want to mimic or make fun of African American English, they try to use habitual *be*. And they are likely to get it wrong, because they do not know the grammar of African American English.

The *habitual be,* also called *aspectual be* (because it marks frequency and duration), means using the unconjugated form of the verb *to be* (in other words *be*) to signal that something happens on a regular or frequent basis.

This means that utterances that might seem identical to people who do not speak African American English actually differ in meaning. For example, consider these pairs:

They reading.	*They be reading.*
They playing.	*They be playing.*
She working late.	*She be working late.*

The sentences in the first column mean that the action is happening right now. The sentences in the second column mean that the action is happening on a regular basis.

A common misperception of this verb form is that speakers of African American English throw it around haphazardly in sentences, which is not the case. Any mother-tongue speaker of African American English is able to tell the difference in meaning of sentence pairs like those presented above. Speakers of other varieties are not likely to perceive any difference in meaning.

3. remote past/stressed *BIN*

The remote past *BIN* is often written in capital letters to reflect the fact that it is emphasized or stressed in speech. The inclusion of this verb form in an utterance informs a listener that an event or state is situated in the distant past. It could be that the state or event is still going on, but the use of *BIN* indicates that the event or state started a long time ago.

For example, contrast the following sentences:

She BIN running.   *She running.*   *She be running.*

Again, these three sentences all mean something different to a mother-tongue speaker of African American English. The first sentence means "She has been running for a long time (and she might still be running)." The second sentence means "She is running right now." The third sentence means "She runs on a frequent basis."

4. *done*

The use of *done* [dən] indicates to the listener than an event has ended; this is a marker of finalization. The form can be used in conjunction with other verbs in a series. It is situated between an auxiliary verb and a main verb. It can also appear in a sequence including remote past BIN, in which case it comes between BIN and the main verb.

For me, the most memorable example of this construction came from a co-worker who was offering advice about problems I was having with my supervisor. In her appeal to get me to take action, my co-worker stated, "I would have BIN done did it." This succinct statement is difficult to translate into mainstream

English, but a close equivalent is probably something like "If I was in your place, this issue would have long since been taken care of."

5. *finna* (including other variants *fixina*, *fixna*, *fitna*, *fixing to*)

This form indicates that an event is imminent: it will happen in the immediate future. This is a common feature in Southern US English in general, and it has been carried into forms of African American English throughout the United States with the movement of African American people.

> *I don't know about you, but I'm finna leave.*
> *I'm finna make me something to eat.*

6. *steady*

This form is grammatically used before a progressive verb form, or in other words when the main verb has *-ing* attached to it. It is used to convey the meaning that an activity is carried out in an intense and consistent manner. Like *BIN* and *done*, this form can be used in conjunction with other verb forms, as in the following example:

> *People be on them jobs for thirty years just steady working.* (from Green 2002: 72)

This sentence features distinct meanings carried by the verbs. For one thing, the use of habitual *be* indicates that the work is ongoing. The use of the form *steady* reveals the intensity and laboriousness of the work.

7.3.2 Morphosyntactic features of African American English

7. Third person singular –*s* absence in present tense verbs

The so-called "third person s" is an anomaly in contemporary English. It is a bygone of an era when English still had distinct case endings for the first, second, and third person and plural versus singular. It is a curious point that among all the previous verb conjugations in English, such as *I speak, thou speakest, he speaketh/speaks*, only the *-s* survives in contemporary English, meaning that the modern-day conjugations are:

I jump	*We jump*
You jump	*You (plural) jump*
He jumps	*They jump*

As can be seen from this paradigm, the third singular *-s*, well, jumps out. In African American English, there is no third person *-s*: all of the forms have just the verb stem. The same is also true, for example, of Swedish, another Germanic language that has long since lost its verb conjugations in the present tense, as seen here with the verb *hoppa* 'to jump':

jag hoppar 'I jump'	*vi hoppar* 'we jump'
du hoppar 'you jump'	*ni hoppar* 'you (plural) jump'
hon hoppar 'she jumps'	*de hoppar* 'they jump'

The point is that all of the forms are identical in Swedish. In standardized English, the third person *-s* is an exception, as it does not fit the pattern of the rest of the person perspectives. The examples of Swedish and African American English—and many other language systems—show that people understand each other perfectly well when the verb forms are uniform.

8. levelling of past tense *be* verb

Similar to the third person *-s* rule described in 7., this grammatical rule has to do with regularizing a paradigm. In this case, consider the past tense of the verb *to be* in Mainstream English:

I was	*We were*
You were	*You (plural) were*
He was	*They were*

In these examples, the fact that the paradigm shifts back and forth between *was* and *were* is the key issue. Many varieties of English, African American English included, regularize this paradigm by expressing all of the past tense forms of *to be* with just one form, in this case *was*:

I was	*We was*
You was	*You (plural) was*
He was	*They was*

Again, adherents to standardized English might argue that one way is "right" and the other is "wrong," but trying to step outside that mindset to view the system as a paradigm might help in thinking about it in other terms—for example, what is regular or uniform versus what is not uniform.

10) reflexive pronouns

The rule for reflexive pronouns is yet another example of the regularization of a paradigm, or in other words, getting rid of any exceptions. Reflexive pronouns in English are pronouns which end with *-self*, for example, in a sentence like *Maria got to know herself better when she went away to college.*

In standardized English, the reflexive pronouns are as follows:

Myself	*Ourselves*
Yourself	*Yourselves*
Himself/herself	*Themselves*

In African American English, the reflexive pronouns are as follows:

Myself	*Ourselves*
Yourself	*Yourselves*
Hisself/herself	*Theirselves* (often pronounced *theyselves*)

The difference between the two varieties lies with the pronoun that creates the base for the reflexive form. The standardized English forms are made of a mix of possessive (*my*, *your*, *hers*, *ours*, *yours*) and dative pronouns (*him*, *them*). For the African American English paradigm, the base pronouns for the reflexive form are all possessive. In other words, once again, the African American English paradigm is a system without exceptions; it this sense it is more uniform than standardized English.

It is interesting to point out that in standardized English, no one is likely to say *him car* or *them car*, but in the creation of reflexive pronouns, this is exactly what happens.

The lesson to be gained from these examples is that standardized varieties of languages tend to preserve and even protect anomalies and exceptions. Nonstandardized varieties have the tendency to not allow such exceptions.

11) negation

Negation in African American English, like in many other nonstandardized varieties, tends to be *ain't* rather than *isn't*. In African American English, *ain't* is also used to in constructions where *has/have + not* and *did + not* would be used in standardized English. For example:

> *She ain't been here too long.*

And

They ain't want to come out. "They did not want to come out."

12) multiple/double negation

Again, as is typical for nonstandard varieties, African American English tends to feature what is called *multiple* or *double negation*. The term *negative concord* is also used to describe this pattern. Many world languages prescriptively entail negative concord, for example Classical and Modern Greek, French, Spanish, Turkish, and Welsh. Even standardized English used to feature negative concord, as is apparent from the written language of Chaucer, Malory, Shakespeare, and many others. It was only in the Early Modern Period of English that language pundits began to eschew multiple negation—but it still lives on happily in nonstandardized varieties.

In African American English, multiple negation, as in the following example, is perfectly understandable:

> *I ain't never seen nothing like that before.*

Yet for speakers of Mainstream English—and foreign language speakers like my students—this sentence is probably confounding.

For example, which speaker from the following sentence set is a better chess player?

> *Ain't nobody can't beat me at chess.*
> *Ain't nobody can beat me at chess.*

The answer is *Ain't nobody can beat me at chess.* This sentence, translated into standardized English, means something like "No one can beat me at chess." The other sentence, *Ain't nobody can't beat me at chess,* means "Everyone can beat me at chess."

7.3.3 Phonological features of AAE

The phonological features of African American English—pronunciation features—vary from region to region and from speaker to speaker. The list presented here accounts for only a few of a vast array of pronunciation features that vary across the United States. The features listed here are chosen because they tend to feature strongly in the speech of many speakers of African American English, as well as being represented in other nonstandardized varieties of English.

13) lack of word-final consonant clusters

Word-final consonant clusters means a word that is pronounced with two or more consonants at the end, for example *kept*, *desk*, *mind* and *first*. In African American English, such words tend to be pronounced in spoken language without any final consonant sound. In other words, the pronunciation sounds like *kep* (for *kept*), *des* (for *desk*), *min* (for *mind*), *firs* (for *first*).

For such words, it is important to keep in mind that there is no willful abandonment of the final consonant, which is the reason I do not refer to the phenomenon as "final consonant *deletion*." For speakers of African American English, the final consonant simply is not in the word to begin with, so there is nothing to be "deleted." Written language, of course, is another matter.

14) no post-vocalic *r*

A common feature for African American English across the entire United States is an absence of post-vocalic *r*, meaning that words like *car* are pronounced as *caw*. It is interesting to point out that in the United Kingdom, for example, such pronunciation is most often prestigious. In the United States, it is generally not, at least not in the modern era.

15) no velar nasal in *–ing* forms

As is typical for a nonstandardized variety, African American English features the consonant [n] as the final sound in words such as *walking*, *doing*, *singing*, rather than the consonant [ŋ]. Many people refer to this as "g dropping," although this is not technically what is occurring; very few speakers of English pronounce a [g] at the end of such words, although it is an attested feature of some dialects and also outer circle varieties. The term "g dropping" comes from written language, where the [ŋ] pronunciation is often rendered as [n], or as in *walkin'*, *doin'*, *singin'* (in other words, with no letter "g"). In spoken language, standardized English speakers pronounce such words with the velar nasal [ŋ] as the final sound in the word, and speakers of nonstandardized varieties pronounce such words with [n] as the final sound. It is also the case that even standardized English speakers are likely to pronounce words with [n] as the final sound if they are speaking in a casual way or want to demonstrate laxness, informality, or if they are speaking to a familiar interlocutor. In short, this feature is highly variable throughout varieties of English and for most speakers.

16) phonological inversion, especially [sk] inversion

Among the pronunciation features of African American English, [sk] inversion is probably the most stigmatized and stereotyped. This pronunciation means that, for many speakers of African American English, the word *ask* can be pronounced as *aks*, the same as the English word *axe*. It is interesting to note that up through the Middle Ages, this pronunciation was in flux in English in general; it was only after the Early Modern English period that the pronunciation in standardized English became fixed as *ask*.

17) lack of interdental fricatives

In standardized US English, the first sound in a word like *think* is likely to be produced with the tongue between the front teeth, which is where the term *interdental fricative* comes from; it describes how the sound is made in the mouth. In the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), the first sound in *think* is written [θ]. The sound at the beginning of the word *this* is written [ð] (for speakers of standardized English). Interdental fricatives abound in English, but across world languages, they are relatively rare. Chances are that if you have learned English as a second or foreign language, the [θ] and [ð] sounds are especially troublesome for you. As it turns out, these sounds are not just troublesome for foreign language speakers of English, they are troublesome even for people who speak English as a mother tongue. In many varieties of inner circle Englishes, including African American English, there are not so many [θ] and [ð] sounds. Instead, words such as *this* and *that* are pronounced as *dis* and *dat*. At the end of words, you might hear words such as *bath* pronounced as *baf*, and words like *with* are pronounced as *wif* or *wit*. A word like *smooth* can be pronounced as *smoov*.

18) lack of word-final *-t, -d*

This particular rule means that English words such as *bed* and *bet* are pronounced without the final *-t* and *-d* sounds. In such words, the vowel sound is elongated or even diphthongized, and the word may be pronounced with a glottal stop as the last segment.

7.4 Conclusion to Chapter 7

The linguistic characteristics presented here do not begin to account for the richness and complexities of African American English, and the desired outcome is not to reduce this language system to a list of rules. Presenting the established usages of African American English drives home the point that it is not a random mixture of willful corruptions. Rather, it is a natural, systematic variety that is acquired by mother-tongue speakers in the same way as any other language—because in this way it is like any other language. It is not a language system that nonnative speakers can pick up without adequate exposure or training, nor is it something they should try to mimic. To learn African American English would mean mastering the rules of the language system, just like you would a foreign language.

As a final note to this chapter, I would like to point out that I have fallen into the same trap (one of many traps, no doubt) as many others who write about African American English. That is to contextualize AAE in terms of the past—through a list of figures, numbers, places, and questions of origins. In a book chapter written for other language scientists, Lanehart (2019) states that our attention should shift to improving the opportunities and possibilities for African American English-speaking children, recognize their speech for the rich (and contemporary) resource that it is, and stop making its past the central issue. As the main intended readership of this book are students of English worldwide, I hope that you can take a similar message away from this chapter about African American English. Do not have a reductionist view of this language system based on what you see in US films or hear in US music. Those cultural outputs are part of the story, but they are not the whole story. African American English is a unique cultural possession of a specific part of the US population. It is a real and vibrant language system that connects generations of users. It is not something to be mimicked or appropriated (however, see discussion question 8 below). Handle with care.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks Dr. Jeff Reaser and students and staff at NC State University for reading a preliminary draft of this chapter. Thanks, too, to Dr. Mark Shackleton for input on African American literature and discourse styles. Finally, thanks to Dr. Sonja Lanehart for answering questions about her work.

Discussion questions for Chapter 7

1. Try to imagine what would happen if you were suddenly forced to stop speaking your mother tongue for the rest of your life. At the same time, like slaves brought to America, you would be forced to learn and communicate entirely in a different language that you did not previously know. What would this type of dilemma mean for who you are and how you would cope with life?
2. Did you know that the high five and "giving dap" (you might call it something else) were rooted in African American culture? What other gestures can you think of that might have their origins among African American culture?
3. As was mentioned in Chapter 1 of this book, students outside the US are often surprised to find that the overall African American population within the US is around 12–13 percent and has been for many generations. Why do you think they have the impression that there are more people in the US who are African American than there actually are?
4. In 1998, an ad alluding to the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have A Dream" speech appeared in the *New York Times* (see eResource). The ad, which appeared in the mid 1990s (see Chapter 4), was advocating against the use of African American English. The main headline on the ad read, "I has a dream." In light of the information presented in this chapter, do you think a mother-tongue speaker of African American English would say "I has a dream?" In other words, is this sentence grammatical in African American English? How do you know?
5. Geneva Smitherman, a leading scholar on African American Language, offers this example: *They BIN married* vs *They been married.* One of these sentences, according to Smitherman, means that the couple in question is still married, while the other means they are divorced. Which is which? How do you know? (adapted from Smitherman 2004: 193).
6. Have you ever heard people assert that saying "he jump" rather than "he jumps" is illogical because we have to know who is doing the jumping? How might you counter this argument? Here is a hint: Do you speak Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, or Finnish, all languages which allow you to drop the pronouns in sentences like "He is talking" or "You are leaving"? What makes this possible?

7. In the US, I saw two cups holding pencils in a classroom. In one cup, the pencils were ready to use, and someone had written a note on that cup that read, "Sharpen pencils." In the other cup were pencils that needed to be sharpened. This note read, "Unsharping pencils." Although we are not used to seeing African American English rendered in written form, the language on these signs makes perfect sense if we think about some of the linguistic features of African American English. How can you explain the spelling on these signs in light of the information presented in this chapter?
8. This chapter ends with a rather strong suggestion from the author about who uses African American English and under what circumstances. This is an extremely complicated issue. Where do you stand on the issue? Do you think it is ever OK for nonnative speakers of African American English to use African American English features in their language? If so, what makes it OK? How much is too much? For example, in the spring of 2019, the US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who is not African American, was criticized for making a speech in which she uttered the sentences, "I'm proud to be a bartender. Ain't nothing wrong with that," in what was considered an African American English-speaking style. Critics blamed her for appropriating a style that was not hers to take on. The language scientist John McWhorter had a different view. In an article for *The Atlantic*, McWhorter wrote that Ocasio-Cortez grew up among African American English speakers in the Bronx region of New York City, where "Black English stopped being a black-exclusive dialect […] decades ago" (McWhorter 2019). (For further information, see eResource.)

Recommended reading

As mentioned in the chapter, there is a wealth of published work on African American English. For a more comprehensive list of recommended reading, see eResource.

Green, Lisa. 2002. *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lanehart, Sonja, ed. 2015. *Oxford Handbook of African American Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morgan, Marcyliena. 2002. *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rickford, John R. and Russell J. Rickford. 2000. *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Cited in this chapter

Alim, H. Samy and Geneva Smitherman. 2012. *Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language and Race in the U.S.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2019. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 22nd edn. Dallas, TX: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com

Ellison, Ralph. 1952. *Invisible Man*. New York: Random House.

Eltis, David and David Richardson. 2015. *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gates, Henry Louis. 1988. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Green, Lisa. 2002. *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Green, Lisa. 2011. *Language and the African American Child*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, Gwendolyn M. 2005. *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Holliday, Nicole R. 2018. Variation, race and multiracial identity in linguistic research. *WIREs Cognitive Science* 2019, 10: e1480

Holliday, Nicole R. 2019. Variation in question intonation in the corpus of regional African American language. *American Speech* 94(1): 110–130. doi:10.1215/00031283-7308038

Lanehart, Sonja. 2019. If our children are our future, why are we stuck in the past? Beyond the Anglicists and the Creolists and toward social change. In H. Samy Alim and John Baugh (eds.) *Talkin Black Talk: Language Education and Social Change*, 132–141. New York; London: Teachers College Press.

Lanehart, Sonja, ed. 2015. *Oxford Handbook of African American Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McWhorter, John. 2019. It wasn't 'verbal blackface.' AOC was code-switching: Her critics are misreading the linguistic reality of America's big cities. *The Atlantic* April 9, 2019, sec. Ideas. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-code-switches-black-english/586723/

Morgan, Marcyliena. 2002. *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Okwonga, Musa. October 16, 2014. The nod: A subtle lowering of the head you give to another black person in an overwhelmingly white place. *Matter*. Available at: https://medium.com/matter/the-nod-a-subtle-lowering-of-the-head-to-another-black-person-in-an-overwhelmingly-white-place-e12bfa0f833f

Pennycook, Alastair. 2007. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. London; New York: Routledge.

Smitherman, Geneva. 2004. Language and African Americans: Movin on up a lil higher. *Journal of English Linguistics* 32(3), 186–196. doi:10.1177/0075424204268223

Status of Women in the States. 2017. *Women's Labor Force Participation*. Available at: https://statusofwomendata.org/earnings-and-the-gender-wage-gap/womens-labor-force-participation/

Wolfram, Walt and Natalie Schilling. 2015. *American English: Dialects and Variation*, 3rd edn. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell and Sons.

8

COMPETING EXPLANATIONS FOR LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN THE OUTER CIRCLE

8.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters offered overviews of two inner-circle language systems: mother tongue acquisition of standardized English and African American English. With this chapter, the focus shifts not only to a different realm for English, the outer circle, but also away from lists of specific features relating to pronunciation, morphology, and grammar. The reason for this, in part, is that the task at hand would simply be too large to address in one or two book chapters. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the variety of Englishes used in even one given location in outer circle settings tends to expand over a very wide continuum. Describing linguistic features of such a language system, for example Singlish, would require taking just one or two slices for inspection from what is actually a large and complex collection of different styles. Another explanation is that, given the unique linguistic, social, and historical backdrop of each setting for English in the outer circle, the case studies presented here offer different opportunities for exploration. Readers will recall from Part 1 of this book that outer-circle environments of English are rarely (ever?) monolingual. An inherent property of outer circle Englishes is that they are used in multilingual settings, which leads to fascinating outcomes in terms of everyday use and how which features from which languages show up in the uses of English. In these brief case studies, focusing on Singapore English and Indian English, linguistic and historical factors are taken into account to illustrate that there is rarely a straightforward way of viewing these multi-faceted and layered varieties. The case studies presented here offer the opportunity to explore two distinct notions: language contact and transfer effects.

8.2 Singapore English

It is difficult to imagine a more dynamic place, linguistically speaking, than Singapore. English has been used as a major medium of communication by the majority of the population only since the 1970s, with changes in the language profile occurring rapidly and accompanied by extreme language ideologies. Currently, more than 50 percent of the population of Singapore claims English as a mother tongue, making it the most relevant example of an English-speaking location in Asia in terms of the proportion of speakers: the majority of the population claims English as a mother tongue, and this is a recent phenomenon. Language change and the accompanying attitudes are happening fast in Singapore.

Many of the properties of Singapore English, in its most localized form known as Singlish, are due to contact with other languages. Singapore was already a multilingual, multiethnic port before English was ever used there. Already in the 11th century, important trade centers were established in the area of Malaysia and Indonesia, transporting spices and other goods. A mix of Malay-based languages were in contact throughout the region as trade languages. The Portuguese were the first European power to set up trade in the Malay Peninsula, followed by the Dutch and British trade companies. By 1842, Britain had acquired three key ports in the region: Penang Island, Singapore, and Melaka. Like in India, Africa, and other outer circle locations, the input from English was mixed during this period. On the one hand, the model of English was supplied by working-class, uneducated traders, seafarers, and the military. On the other hand, the British made effort to train, linguistically and otherwise, an elite group of locals who could help them maintain control over the local population (Ansaldo 2013).

English has had a presence in the Malay Peninsula for a few centuries, but it was not until recent decades that it has been used as a major medium of communication. Starting in the 1970s, (American) English has been used as a vehicle for education in Singapore. With the introduction of English to more and more of the overall population, there has been a varied linguistic backdrop, with most of the population speaking Chinese (Southern Hokkien, to be exact, also called Min).

In many respects, the varied use of English in Singapore is similar to that in Creole contexts, although it lacks the social background that many linguists see as a precursor to a Creole situation (see, for example, Mufwene 2000). For one thing, English is considered a lexifier language for Singlish, meaning the vocabulary comes from English while grammatical aspects come from other languages. In addition, an obvious comparison is a so-called continuum of English, with close-to-standardized English on one end of the continuum, meaning a style of English that would be comprehensible to pretty much any English speaker, versus a highly local Singlish at the other end. When Singaporeans speak highly localized Singlish, they are not, for the most part, comprehensible to outsiders. Also similar to Creole contexts, many people in Singapore are capable of moving from one end of the continuum toward another: that is, they adapt their use of English to suit the purposes of the exchange at hand. These abilities among speakers means that the English language situation in Singapore is extremely variable, depending on issues like context and level of formality.

Considering the background information that has preceded this case study, readers already have some tools for postulating features one would expect to find in the more localized versions of Singlish. As expected, Singlish exhibits some the same features discussed in other nonstandardized language systems:

- Interdental fricatives are pronounced as stops
- Word-final stop consonants are reduced or absent
- Word-final consonant clusters are reduced
- There is no copula
- There is no third-personal singular *-s*
- There is only one form for question tags (compare to *innit* in Chapter 3)
- There is a reduction in the number of relative pronouns used in the formation of relative clauses, pronouns such as *which*, *who*, and *that*

A few other features are typical of Creoles and even inner-circle varieties of English, but we have not encountered them so far in this book:

- Syllable timing rather than stress timing
- Diphthongs are rendered as monophthongs

Syllable timing means that syllable prominence, for example in a multi-syllable word like *banana,* is indicated through lengthening the vowel (or coda) in the prominent syllable: *ba-naaa-na.* Stress timing means that syllable prominence is indicated through volume or intensity: *ba-NA-na.* Syllable versus stress timing is best seen as extremes on a continuum, with speakers of various varieties of English falling anywhere in between. For example, both standardized US English and standardized Southern British are said to be stress-timed varieties, but US English speakers often have noticeably more stress on syllables than British English speakers, for example in a word like *yogurt.*

Monophthongization refers to words that in a standardized rendering would have a diphthong—a two-part vowel sound—words like *mine* (where the diphthong is [ai]) or *face* (where the diphthong is [ei]). In many varieties of English, including Singlish, the vowel sound in such words is uttered as a single-part vowel, sounding something like *maan* for "mine" and *fees* for "face."

When it comes to features which are particular to Singlish, linguists have made connections with the other languages spoken in the region, especially Chinese. For example, Singlish makes use of a wide range of particles, most notably the renowned particle *lah*, which is used ubiquitously in Singlish. As is typical for particles, *lah* shows a wide range of meanings, indicating the mood or attitude of the speaker, to strengthen an utterance, or to attempt solidarity with the listener. (These features are part of a comprehensive list of features based on spoken data, see Lim 2004.)

Recently, an academic article appeared in which researchers focused their attention on the Singlish particle *what*, which is used in sentence-final position with the meaning of objection, discontent, an appeal for solidarity, or mitigation. The particle is always uttered with a falling intonation. For example, in the sentence "It's only for one month *what*," the authors of the article report that *what* means a speaker is refuting something that has already been said (Kuteva et al. 2018).

As with a host of other Singlish particles, researchers have long considered the source of the particles to be languages or dialects of southern China, given the demographic history of the area. The researchers of the particle *what*, however, offer historical evidence of overlapping uses of sentence-final *what* in English in England that they postulate as the root source of *what* in Singlish. They also present similar examples of sentence-final particles in South African Indian English, contemporary spoken French, and Korean. Today the use of particle *what* in Singlish is distinct from anything similar in the modern-day English spoken in England, providing an example of what the authors call *retention*, and how a retention can take on a life of its own in a different variety of English.

Singlish offers a telling demonstration of how multiple factors can combine to create a variety of English that is completely local, with little chance of anyone from the outside being able to understand it. Even for native speakers of other varieties of English, Singlish has to be learned, like a foreign language. The origins of Singlish have to do with the intersecting of language contact, transfer from other local languages, the usual suspects of universals, historical vs contemporary influence from English, and other factors. The example of sentence-final *what* is highlighted because it shows how ungeneralizable and elusive even one feature of an English variety can be: while many linguists have posited that *what*, like other particles in Singlish, has its origins in dialects of Chinese, a new account highlights that even a single particle can carry a story of its own. The next case study continues along this same vein, making use of a study of vowels in South Delhi to again demonstrate that the most obvious explanation is not always the most accurate explanation.

8.3 Indian English

The English language has had a presence in India for roughly the same amount of time as in North America, and nearly a century longer than in Australia and New Zealand. The means of English arriving in India was different, though: whereas in North America, Australia, and New Zealand scores of settlers took the English language with them, in India a much smaller proportion of settlers were sent for purposes of establishing and maintaining trade. This contrast in the history of English within a place is presented as the first defining factor in distinguishing the way English is used and also how it is classified: was the location a settlement territory, or was it primarily a trade colony? Settlement territories tend to be classified as inner circle settings, while trade colonies tend to be classified as outer circle settings of English. In the settlement territories, English speakers tended to push back or overwhelm the indigenous people. In a location like India, this phenomenon happened on a much smaller scale. Certainly, some people native to India were displaced by colonizers, but the vast majority of the huge indigenous population of the subcontinent remained where they were, along with their multitude of native languages (the current count in India is 447 living languages). English never really took over as the main language of the vast population; historically, English has remained "another" language, in addition to one or, often, two other languages. In India, like in many other outer circle settings, multilingualism is a basic fact of life. Many people speak an ethnic language, which may or may not have a written form, a language of wider communication (such as Hindi), as well as using English in a small set of institutional or public domains.

India, then, is presented as a novel example of an outer circle English. But is it really that simple? Since the English language first arrived in India, along with the East India Company (as it was called then) in the early 1600s, the English language has played a complex role in certain settings and with certain populations. For a small minority of the overall population, it has been passed on generation by generation, just like any other mother tongue, but nearly always in combination with at least one other language. In other words, mother-tongue speakers of English in India tend to be concurrent bilinguals.

Before moving on to the main idea of this case study, it is important to establish the full range of possible types of English speakers in India. In brief, English speakers in India run the full gamut, from mother-tongue speakers to those who are barely proficient, and every combination in between. This is hardly surprising, given the diverse and enormous population. The latest available census data, from the year 2001, places the number of native English speakers at around 200,000. This is not a small number by any means, but it is thought to coincide with the Anglo-Indian ethnic group (Domange, forthcoming), thereby masking the number of native English speakers who are *not* Anglo-Indian. The *People's Linguistic Survey of India* (carried out in 2010 and 2012; cited in Domange, forthcoming) places the number of mother-tongue speakers of English at a minimum of 10 million, this count including anyone (including the Anglo-Indian ethnic group) who speaks English as a native language—a concept which in itself often poses problems in settings such as India, given the diversity of the population.

Even with the complex notion of "mother tongue" taken into account, we are talking about a huge number of native English speakers in India, in addition to the myriad other users of English. In addition to language variety, class membership and unequal educational backgrounds add to a mix of factors that combine to affect the use of English (Kandiah 1991: 276–277). This brings us to the crux of the problem and the main reason for presenting this particular case study. We need to complicate this story.

When it comes to the Three Circles Model that was introduced in Chapter 1, India is classified as an outer-circle environment, due to the fact that it was a British trade colony and then part of the British Empire, with the vast majority of speakers acquiring English through formal means, usually the classroom. Given that, for most, the acquisition of English occurs relatively late, there are transfer effects from the native language(s), to the second language, English. For decades now, "Indian English" has been described largely according to these transfer effects, with some variation depending on the native language of the English speakers in question. Even so, many of the indigenous languages in India share certain features, for example retroflex consonants (meaning that the "d" sound, for example, is produced with the tongue tip making contact with the velum). In fact, the presence of retroflex consonants in the English spoken by people from India is a common stereotype, even though for at least 30 years language scientists have noted that the use of retroflex consonants in Indian English depends on a number of social factors (see Agnihotri and Saghal 1985).

As noted by Domange (forthcoming), there is no doubt that substratum (in other words, mother tongue) influence has much explanatory power in deciphering the origins of many features of Indian English. However, when it comes to the mother tongue Indian English speakers, transfer from the (other) native language is not a viable explanation. That is: if a person grows up speaking English as a mother tongue, it is acquired as an intact system. It is not influenced by the child's other languages. As a parallel, think of a bilingual child who is born and grows up in London, surrounded by other speakers of English. The child may speak Polish like the parents, but the child will speak the same kind of English as the surrounding community.

There is a general assumption that Indian English is divided according to the first language of its collective group of speakers. That is, someone who speaks Hindi as a first language speaks "Hindi English," someone who speaker Punjabi as a first languages speaks "Punjabi English," and so on. To be fair, there are areal features that co-occur across many speakers of English on the subcontinent, and the issue of first language and level of proficiency in English does enter the picture for many. But remember: we are talking about a continent of 1 billion people, and there are sure to be some nuances in their use of English beyond substratum effects.

The common rationale, as evoked by Domange (forthcoming) points to the following line of reasoning: (1) Indian English speakers are bilingual in English and at least one "indigenous" language; (2) the acquisition of English comes later; for the most part, Indian English speakers are not concurrent bilinguals; and (3) therefore, one of the strongest explanatory notions for their collective style of English is transfer from the mother tongue.

Recent research on Indian English casts some serious faults on such assumptions, however (see, for example, Chand 2010). One of the most important factors to take into account is the age at which the second language is acquired. To test the hypothesis that Indian English has its basis in mother-tongue transfer effects, thereby being related to age of acquisition, the researchers Sirsa and Redford (2013) compared features of Indian English between two groups of speakers: those who had Teluga as their mother tongue, and those who had Hindi. These two languages have notably different sound systems, yet the English produced by both groups of speakers showed a high level of consistency. These findings indicate that factors other than mother tongue are influencing the use of English. Among other explanations, the idea that there is a bona fide target of Indian English, critical for its own community of speakers, comes to the forefront.

8.3.1 Delhi English

For our investigation, we are interested in explaining where the elements of so-called "bad English" come from. When it comes to Indian English, as with any variety, we have a few possible explanations. One of them is that, as discussed previously, the distinct elements of Indian English are due to transfer effects from the native languages that are spoken in India. Another possibility, as presented in the introduction this chapter, is that universal tendencies of vernacular varieties of English might have an effect. Such effects need to be taken with an element of caution, however, and never without looking into such crucial explanatory factors such as history of the speakers and the social forces that might shape the way they speak.

This is precisely what was done by the researcher Raphaël Domange, who, first of all, isolated his investigation of Indian English to a particular social group, namely native speakers of English living in a region of New Delhi. Second, he focused his research on a clearly defined set of related features: the way these speakers pronounce vowels in words like *trap*, *strut*, *lot*, *foot*, *dress*, and *kit*. Any reader who has had a class in phonetics will recognize these words as the Wells Lexical Set (see eResource).

Delhi does not immediately stand out as an epicenter for a longstanding use of English within the Indian context. As a relatively new administrative seat, dating from 1911, the Westernization and Anglicization of Delhi was quite late compared to older enters such as Lahore and Bombay, centers of English administration and trade from the 1600s. Delhi underwent staggering social and population changes after the partition of India following its independence from Britain in 1947. In the decades since independence, the population of Delhi has skyrocketed from about 1.5 million to 17 million inhabitants.

The English speakers who participated in the study conducted by Domange, along with their families, were part of the transformation of the city. The South Delhi residents interviewed by Domange all considered themselves to be native speakers of English. At the time of the study, which took place from 2008 through 2014, the people interviewed all used English in a number of different everyday circumstances in their daily life. In performing an acoustic analysis of the speakers' pronunciation of the vowels in words like *trap*, *dress*, and *strut*, Domange recognized that the South Delhi residents showed a relative lowering of these vowels that matches up with pronunciation of the same vowels in other English-speaking communities within inner circle settings, namely London (see inset: Meanwhile, in London).

The main point made by Domange through his study of South Delhi English is that there is no evidence to assume that users of Indian English are striving to achieve a model of English that, due to interference from their first language, they are not capable of achieving. He calls the gradual lowering of the short front vowels in South Delhi a "complex case of faithful language transmission," by which he means that children grow up with a sociolinguistic sensibility of their immediate community. Furthermore, the notion that an inner-circle model of English, notably London English or Received Pronunciation (RP), would be the model for this change does not hold up to scrutiny. Figure 8.1 shows a plot for the vowels of South Delhi compared to those of London upper middle class on the left, and for RP on the right. Each graph shows the average vowel angles depending on the year of birth of the speakers.The progression of the lowering of the vowels advances at a slightly higher pace for the South Delhi English speakers than for upper-middle-class London English speakers, as shown on the left. The figure on the right shows that during the earlier years of the increased use of lowered vowels, South Delhi English speakers were slightly ahead of RP speakers, but then younger RP speakers surged ahead, with younger speakers pushing the trend. If London English or RP had been the model for South Delhi, the Delhi trend line would be lower in each graph, indicating that people in South Delhi would have time to note the pronunciation used by Londoners and subsequently use it as a model for their own use of English. However, we are brought back to the topic of universal tendencies: Domange ponders if the lowering of these short front vowels is the outcome of some kind of historical tendency of the vowel system of English.

This study is highlighted because it demonstrates the nuances of what many would generalize as one "variety." That is, for many people, English in India is viewed as a monolithic entity, Indian English, a generalization that masks the many intricacies involved with the history, social setting and myriad other influences that have shaped varieties of English within India. Even the term "Hindi English" or "Delhi English" are not descriptive enough to capture the properties of the native English used by a group of speakers, for whom, as shown, the localization of English extends to pronunciation features such as vowels. Further, it would be an overgeneralization to ascribe these features to transfer effects from the other languages of the speakers in question; if this were the case, we would not expect to see similar trends in inner-circle settings such as London.

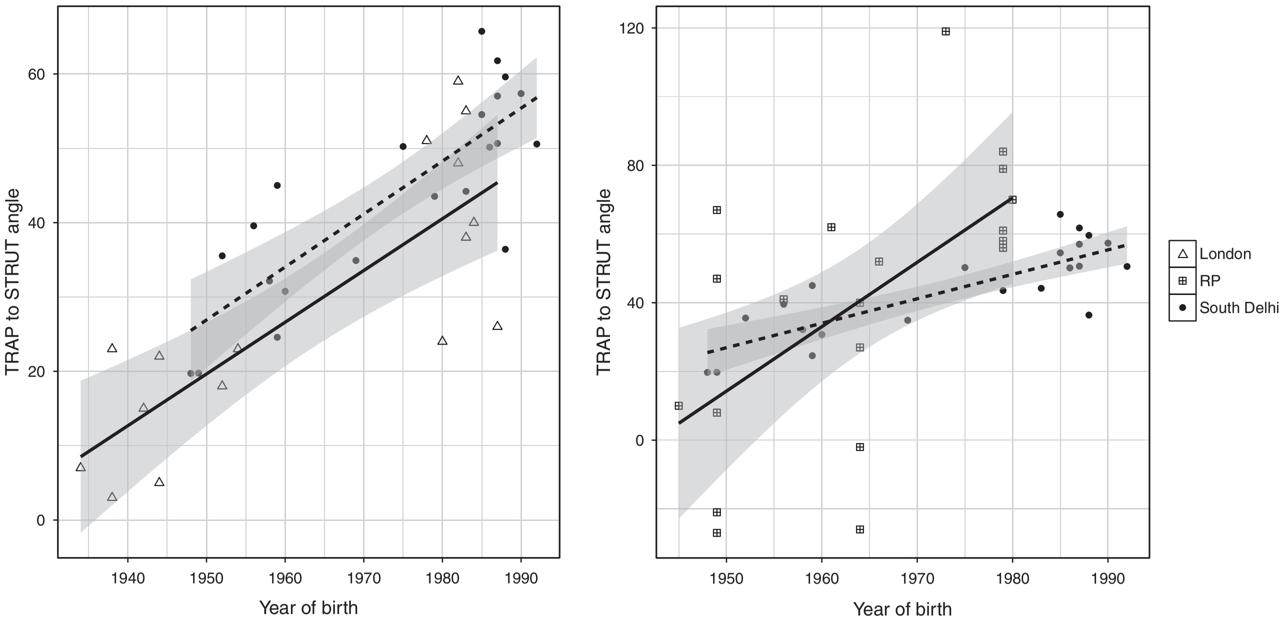

FIGURE 8.1 Mean TRAP to STRUT angles. Dots, South Delhi; Squares, RP (Received Pronunciation). Triangles, London Upper Middle Class. Figures reproduced with permission from Raphaël Domange.

MEANWHILE, IN LONDON: MOVE OVER, COCKNEY

For many people throughout the world, the image of "real" London English is associated with the Cockney dialect, a working-class style originating in London's East End, made famous (or even infamous) in films such as *My Fair Lady*, *Mary Poppins*, and the TV series *EastEnders*.

London is a diverse and rapidly changing city, and along with social change comes language change. It should not come as a surprise, then, that as the population of London has shifted to become more multiethnic over the years since World War II, so has its iconic use of English. Linguistic researchers on London English note that in recent years, a third of the overall foreign-born population of the UK were living in London, representing an increase of 50 percent over a 10-year period (since 1996). The end result is that about half of London's school-aged children speak a language other than English at home (Fox and Torgersen 2018: 191). These factors combine to create a whole new repertoire of London varieties of English, with these varieties closely linked to ethnicity—but not any one ethnicity.

Since the early 2000s, several language researchers have been carrying out studies of some of the most ethnically mixed regions of London's enormously multicultural backdrop. Language scientist Jenny Cheshire, who along with her colleagues has followed the twists and turns of the city's linguistic make-up for decades, offered the term Multicultural London English (Cheshire et al. 2011) as a descriptive means of capturing one of the central phenomena related to contemporary London English. That is, the English used by London youth in the current era consists of a repertoire of features that do not stem from any one ethnicity, nor are these features limited in use to people of any one ethnicity. Young speakers in certain areas of the city freely incorporate features from this pool of linguistic resources into their English, simultaneously marking themselves as urban youth while contributing to the endless flow and change that is London English.

More recently, the work of London-based researcher Shivonne Gates indicates that ethnicity does play a role, but in a nuanced manner that was not captured by the previous work on Multicultural London English. From a 12-month study at an East London secondary school, Gates found that especially for girls, Whiteness vs non-Whiteness was a key factor in distinguishing how traditionally London their speech was. In fact, Whiteness vs non-Whiteness was not the only factor, but subcategories were also key. White girls of British background—as opposed to those of general European background (for example Eastern European background)—tended to have a more traditionally "London" pronunciations of vowels, with the mouth wide open in words like *face*. Non-White girls and European White girls tended to exhibit features more associated with Multicultural London English. All the ethnic groups Gates observed, including girls of Asian and Arab background, showed distinct pronunciations of vowel combinations, underlying the salience of ethnicity in the girls' social networks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is grateful to Dr. Shivonne Gates for offering advice about how to discuss her research.

SOURCES CITED

Cheshire, Jenny, Paul Kerswill, Sue Fox and Eivind Torgersen. 2011. Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15(2): 151–196.

EastEnders. 1985–present. [television series] UK: BBC Studios.

Fox, Sue and Eivind Torgersen. 2018. Language change and innovation in London: Multicultural London English. In: Natalie Braber and Sandra Jansen (eds.) *Sociolinguistics in England,* 189–214. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gates, Shivonne M. 2018. *Language Variation and Ethnicity in a Multicultural Secondary School*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Queen Mary University of London.

Mary Poppins. 1964. [film]. USA: Walt Disney.

My Fair Lady. 1964. [film]. USA: Warner Brothers.

8.4 Conclusion to Chapter 8

This chapter has introduced two factors relating to the emergence of features in varieties of English, this time making case studies of outer-circle varieties: English in Singapore and English in India. In the case of Singapore, the factor of *language contact* was introduced, with contact from southern Chinese dialects offering an explanation for the robust system of particles in modern-day Singlish. The concept of language contact, too, was problematized: one particular particle in Singlish, sentence-final *what*, appears to be a historical remnant from English, which has taken on distinct uses in Singlish, thereby masking its historical connections to English.

In India, we focused in on the native English spoken by a community of speakers in South Delhi. The reason for doing this was two-fold. First, the views often taken of English in India tend to do with the native language of the speakers in question, giving us a monolithic view of not only what Indian English is, but what "Hindi English," "Punjabi English" or "Urdu English" might sound like. The example in this section showed that *transfer effects* from the first language are not adequate to explain the variation we find within the repertoires of English in India. Transfer is certainly part of the story for some speakers, but it is not the whole story. By highlighting the native variety of English used in a neighborhood of Delhi, we illustrated that an Indian variety of English is perfectly capable of demonstrating overall trends that could be found in any English-speaking community, even London. The model of English upheld by this group of speakers is not imported from outside India: it is local to their own community.

The main point of this chapter is to demonstrate that varieties of English tend to have certain linguistic features in common, and that there are good explanations for why those features often—but not always—end up there. An interesting point, in line with the main message of this book, is that these features are also those that tend to be viewed as "bad" or "ungrammatical" by critics and self-proclaimed protectors of the English language. The universal tendency of "bad" features is only one explanation, however. The features that combine to make a variety distinct are made up of multiple inputs over the history of the variety, some starting long ago, as seems to be the case with Singlish sentence-final *what*, or some that start on their own, as with the lowering of short front vowels in Delhi. This examination helps to demonstrate a gleaming truth of linguistics that cannot be over-emphasized: language never stands still.

Acknowledgments

For this chapter, I wish to especially thank the participants of the Round Table on English as Second Language varieties, hosted at the University of Helsinki on June 13, 2017. While everyone at the round table contributed to the content of this chapter, I offer special thanks to Raphaël Domange and Edgar Schneider.

Discussion questions for Chapter 8

1. Consider a few features that are typical for the English spoken where you live. Of the explanatory factors presented in this chapter, which do you think best account for the features of your own special variety? Are there any competing explanations? Which explanations seem most plausible?
2. As demonstrated through the case study on South Delhi English, the term *native speaker* has become an increasingly problematic term in the discussion of English. How do you think we should define the term *native speaker*?
3. Where is the home for English today? If you have learned English as a foreign or second language, how was the "home" for English introduced to you? Was it through the context of Great Britain, the United States, or something else? For example, what kinds of pictures appeared in your school textbooks? What kind of vocabulary or pronunciation were you taught?
4. Now that the book has discussed different kinds of English speakers in different kinds of settings, reconsider the classification model introduced in

Part 1: Three Circles Model. What are some of the issues or problems when it comes to using this model to describe certain kinds of users of English?

5. So far, this section of the book has demonstrated several kinds of "bad" features and how they link to issues such a history, education, contacts, and also universal tendencies of language. It is not a coincidence that many of the same features that are explained through these forces are also the features that are often pinpointed as being examples of "bad English." How do you account for this connection, in light of the themes introduced in the first part of this book?

Cited in this chapter

Agnihotri, R.K. and Anju Saghal. 1985. Is Indian English retroflexed and r-full? *IJOAL* XI(1): 97–108.

Ansaldo, Umberto. 2013. Contact and Asian varieties of English. In Raymond Hickey (ed.) *The Handbook of Language Contact*, 498–517. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell and Sons.

Chand, Vineeta. 2010. Postvocalic (r) in urban Indian English. *English World-Wide* 31(1): 1–39.

Domange, Raphaël. Forthcoming. Variation and change in the short vowels of Delhi English: Transmission, norms and the status of Indian English. *Language Variation and Change*.

Kandiah, Thiru. 1991. South Asia. In: Jenny Cheshire (ed.) *English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, 269–287. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kuteva, Tania, Seongha Rhee, Debra Ziegeler, and Jessica Sabban. 2018. On sentence-final "what" in Singlish: Are you the Queen of England, or what? *Journal of Language Contact* 11(1): 32–70.

Lim, Lisa. ed. 2004. *Singapore English: A Grammatical Description*. (Varieties of English around the world series). Amsterdam; Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Mufwene, Salikoko S. 2000. Creolization is a social, not a structural, process. In Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh and Edgar Schneider (eds.) *Degrees of Restructuring in Creole Languages*, 65–84. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Schneider, Edgar. 2011. *English Around the World: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sirsa, Hema and Melissa A. Redford. 2013. The effects of native language on Indian English sounds and timing patterns. *Journal of Phonetics*, 41(6): 393–406.

9

ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

9.1 Introduction

One of the definitions offered at the beginning of this book was the Three Circles Model, describing how English tends to be used differently and often has a different status depending on the region in which it is spoken. To a large extent this has to do with colonization and settlement: regions that were colonized relatively early on, from the 1700s, and which also featured large-scale movement and resettlement of English-speaking people, tend to be characterized as "inner-circle" or, in other words, predominantly mother-tongue English-speaking populations. Regions that were part of the British Empire, but where large numbers of English-speaking settlers did not permanently settle, tend to be part of the "outer circle," or in other words locations where English is used in addition to regional, indigenous languages. Together, English speakers in locations like these make up only about half of the English speakers worldwide (according to estimates of people such as Crystal, 2002). What about the more than 500 million people who speak English for all sorts of reasons, and at all levels of proficiency?

It has been pointed out numerous times that in today's world people who speak English with one another are demographically unlikely to be from inner-circle regions. For many people, English may even be a third or fourth or fifth language, meaning that they learned it later in their education, only after they learned the native languages indigenous to their home region, as is often the case in settings in Africa and Europe, for example, and for some speakers in Asia, such as in the Philippines. In recent years, the phenomenon of using English as a mutual language has been labeled "English as a lingua franca" communication, or "ELF" for short. This is a relatively new field of study: the academic conference series devoted to ELF research celebrated its tenth anniversary in June 2017.

The introduction of ELF onto the linguistics scene can be considered, in a sense, a reconceptualization of a known theme: using English as a tool for wider communication and the implications thereof. For several decades, starting in the period after World War II, English was evaluated and recognized as the most widely learned second language in the world, and its functions in this role were investigated by people like Braj Kachru, whose Three Circle Model is familiar to readers by now. Scholars such as Kachru initially tended to be associated with second language acquisition and/or World Englishes programs. Eventually, the ELF paradigm developed a shift in perspective from the field of second language acquisition. Perhaps the most important difference in perspective is how second language speakers are viewed: either as second language *learners* or as second language *users.* That is, for researchers in the field of second language acquisition, English learners are viewed as still acquiring English. For ELF researchers, English is something its users already have. This shift in perspective has important ramifications for the politics of English. One way of thinking of it is that ELF researchers took English from being under ownership of inner-circle, and, from some points of view, outer-circle speakers, and spread it to the expanding circle, as well.

As with other chapters in this section of the book, this case study offers readers an opportunity to notice similarities and differences between English as a lingua franca and the other language systems presented. How do we account for similarities between ELF and mother-tongue acquisition of English? What about similarities, if any, between African American English, Singlish, and the varieties of Indian English? For further details, refer to the book's eResource.

9.2 The groundwork: Deficit versus empowerment

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the use of English as a language of communication around the world was entrenched within the field of second language acquisition, which in turn tends to fall under the rubric of applied linguistics, traditionally involving the teaching and learning of languages. By the 1990s, there were a few significant contributions to the field commenting on the unprecedented scope and breadth of English as it was learned by more and more people around the world (Graddol 1997, McArthur 1998, Widdowson 2003).

A few years later, the language scientists Jennifer Jenkins published a scientific book (Jenkins 2000) and several scientific articles based on her work with international students at King's College, London. Refusing to refer to English as a "second language," which implies a learner's language, she used the term "English as an International Language." This term was replaced within a few years by "English as a Lingua Franca." In a 2002 article, Jenkins stressed the difference between "foreign" language speakers and "international" speakers, stating that not only was there a need among "international" speakers to be able to communicate with other international speakers, but also that they had the right to speak English with an accent from their mother tongue (Jenkins 2002). In other words, "international" speakers are not seen as language learners, but as speakers who already have the English they need; furthermore, French people have the right to sound French when they speak English, so do Japanese people, and so on. Jenkins stated emphatically what she and other scholars had previously pointed out: the so-called "native speaker model" of English, which adheres to the expectation that people who learn English should strive to sound either British or American, is outdated and irrelevant when it comes to English as it is used around the world. "Native speaker" expectations are problematic on a number of counts. For one thing, what kind of "American" or "Brit" are foreign language speakers supposed to sound like? Clearly, there is no monolithic style of either American or British English. And what about native speakers who grow up in Africa, or Asia, or Continental Europe? One can be a "native speaker" of English without living in an inner-circle country. Another problem with the native speaker model is that only a small portion of all language learners are ever capable of achieving such standards; according to Jenkins, most learners of English, under what she called "deficit linguistics," are destined to never meet strict "native-like" expectations with regard to their use of English.

Jenkins wrote that she wanted to answer two main questions: (1) What constitutes optimum productive competence? (2) What do international speakers of English need to be able to comprehend each other? Her questions mostly related to phonology, or in other words, pronunciation. She wanted to find and present evidence highlighting how to help speakers be understood in English, determining which sounds are critical to help them achieve this goal. Jenkins was a professor in an Applied Linguistics program at the time, and her students were future teachers of English, all of them "international" speakers in their own right. The data for the study comes from recordings and observations based on her students' interactions with each other. Jenkins described her students as being competent speakers of English, but not "native like." The footnotes to her 2002 article show that she based her findings on approximately 30 hours of recorded materials over a four-year period. In her recordings, she listened specifically for communication breakdown or misunderstandings which could be caused by pronunciation problems.

From these 30 hours of recordings, Jenkins found evidence that led her to four main problem areas dealing specifically with unintelligibility due to pronunciation:

1. problems with specific consonant sounds
2. problems with tonic (nuclear) stress
3. nontarget vowel length
4. nonnative-like simplification of consonant clusters.

She also made a general observation that speakers of the same native language merged toward common understanding and construction of forms in English, a phenomenon that ELF researcher Anna Mauranen would later refer to as "similects" (Mauranen 2012). For example, Jenkins noted that native speakers of Swiss German were able to understand each other in English, whereas speakers of mixed backgrounds had more misunderstandings due to their different ways of speaking English.

Similect: Shared features that show up in the English of a group of speakers due to their shared language background. For example, Japanese people who tend to sound Japanese when they speak English, German people who sound German, etc. Similects are distinguished from dialects in part because English is not a shared language among speakers who have the same mother tongue, therefore no norms of use develop. (adapted from Mauranen 2012)

Jenkins' findings led her to suggest a bold but controversial proposal: that English language learners need targeted training to help them learn the specific phonological skills that will make them more intelligible in *lingua franca* settings. In addition, English speakers—including inner-circle and native speakers—would need pedagogical training to help them be able to tune into the speaking styles of English users around the world, at least in the core areas Jenkins identified.

These proposals created a backlash within the academic community, and in her subsequent work, Jenkins stepped back, especially with regard to the teaching of ELF. In the development of the ELF paradigm, ELF scholars have consistently pointed out that ELF is not a variety in its own right; rather, it is viewed as a co-constructed phenomenon, always dependent on the context and speakers involved. Clearly, a language system which is not codified (in the manner explained in Chapter 2) cannot easily be taught as a language in the classroom. Although this early work by Jenkins is not representative of the breadth of her work in later decades—nor of the directions ELF research would eventually take—it is presented here as a foundation for ELF for two main reasons. First, the complaints weighed against Jenkins' early work demonstrate language attitudes in action. Second, the "lingua franca core" she suggested in her book from 2000 and her article from 2002, although now considered outdated in the ELF paradigm, serve as an important basis of linguistic comparison with the English language systems presented in this book.

Here are some generally accepted properties of ELF communication today:

- English is a tool used to achieve shared communication goals (in contrast to perspectives of English which are learning-based).
- People who use ELF do not share a mother tongue.

- There is a tendency for speakers in ELF interaction to focus on content rather than form.
- Linguistic success is viewed as being able to relay an intelligible message for the audience at hand and being able to communicate with a variety of speakers from different backgrounds, not to sound like a "native speaker."

9.3 The "empirical and contrived core"

Based on the findings from her data, Jenkins came up with a list of proposals which she termed "empirical" and "contrived." By *empirical*, she meant that the suggestions she posed were based on actual language, in other words, the data she had amassed from her students. By *contrived*, she meant that, even though the data were empirical, the particular constellation of features she proposes is not native to any variety of English. In this sense, then, the collection of sounds is made up, or artificial.

Jenkins' proposal for the empirical and contrived *lingua franca* core is divided into three subparts: consonants, vowels, and additional requirements, all relating to pronunciation features.

9.3.1 The consonant inventory

1. Interdental fricatives

Jenkins suggests that substitutions of the interdental fricatives [θ] ("thing") and [ð] ("this") are acceptable, because the target word forms in English are still intelligible if [θ] and [ð] are substituted with, for example, [t] and [d] or [f] and [v].

2. Post-vocalic [r]

Jenkins recommends speaking English with a post-vocalic [r]—with the "r" sound in words like *car.* This is interesting considering that Jenkins herself is British, and she taught in a British university, yet she found that speaking English with the British propensity for not pronouncing "r" after vowels led to issues of intelligibility among international speakers of English.

3. The flap vs /d/ and /t/

The varieties of American English feature what is called "the flap," meaning that in words where there is a [t] or a [d] sound between vowels, like in *water* or *ladder,* there is a short flap of the tongue that sounds like a fast "d" sound rather than a "t" sound. This is one of the most noticeable pronunciation differences between American and British English, as in varieties of British English, there is usually a "t" or "d" sound in these words. For example, the words *madder* and *matter,* or *ladder* and *latter,* sound the same in American English, but in British English they tend to sound different from each other. When it comes to the flap, Jenkins suggests the British model—pronouncing words with a "t" sound rather than with a flap. Again, the reason given is one of intelligibility: international speakers of English, she reports, hear the flap as a "d" rather than as a "t," leading to misperceptions.

4. Allophonic variation

Jenkins writes that "allophonic variation" is permissible as long as it does not lead to misunderstanding by overlapping with another sound. By this, she means using a sound which occurs in a native language and carrying it over into English. For example, people who speak Spanish, Italian, or Finnish as a mother tongue have a distinct pronunciation of their [r] sounds in their native language: they pronounce [r] as a trill. According to Jenkins, it is fine for these speakers to use their native [r] sound in English, because it will still be interpreted as an [r]. The problem arises when one consonant merges into sounding like another. For example, in European Spanish there is a trilled [b] sound (written as [β] in the International Phonetic Alphabet) which occurs between vowels, for instance in words like *Cuba*. This sound, according to Jenkins, should not be used in English because it sounds too much like a [v] rather than the target sound [b], which would confuse listeners.

9.3.2 Additional phonetic requirements

5. Aspiration

At the beginning of words and syllables that start with the three stop consonants *p, t* and *k,* most native speakers of English, including speakers in inner-circle settings, blow out a tiny puff of air immediately after the *p*, *t*, or *k* sound. Most people are not aware if they do this or not. If you want to find out if you do, hold your palm or a tissue in front of your mouth and say a word such as *apple*, *pick*, or *tight*. Many English speakers are so conditioned to expect this puff of air, called *aspiration,* that if it is not there, they don't hear *p*, *t*, or *k*, but rather *b*, *d*, or *g*. For example, a word such as *class* can sound like *glass*, or *pineapple* can sound like *bineapple*. For this reason, Jenkins recommends that international speakers of English strive to pronounce *p*, *t*, and *k* with aspiration at the beginning of words and syllables, to avoid confusion with *b*, *d*, and *g*.

6. Vowel lengthening before voiced consonants

An additional suggestion has to do with yet another feature of English that many native speakers are not explicitly aware of. It has to do with pairs of words such as *bed/bet*, *bathe/bath*, *buzz/bus*, *mead/meat*; that is, whether a consonant at the end of a word or syllable is voiced or not. Many native speakers of English are conditioned to hear as well as produce an extra long vowel before a voiced consonant such as *d*, *l*, *z*, *d*, and so on. This means that the word *bed* has a much longer "e" sound than the word *bet*. In fact, research on phonetics in English tells us that the "e" sound in *bed* is up to 80 percent longer. With this additional vowel length, many English speakers are conditioned to hear the longer vowel sound and not pay any attention to the consonant at all; if the vowel length is not there, listeners might misinterpret the word *bed* for *bet*. Jenkins found evidence of misunderstandings between speakers who did not have a longer vowel in words such as *bed*, *bathe*, and *buzz*, and therefore she suggests keeping vowel length before voiced consonants in the *lingua franca* core.

7. Consonant clusters

Consonant cluster is the term used to describe when two or more consonants occur in a sequence in a word. For example, words such as *place* and *travel* begin with a consonant cluster. Jenkins proposes that consonant clusters at the beginning of a word should not be altered in any way. In other words, it is not acceptable to pronounce *place* as *pace* and *travel* as *ravel,* because they are no longer intelligible. However, the middle of multiple syllable words, such as *factsheet*, can be rendered as *facsheet*. Likewise, consonant cluster modification at the end of a word is permissible if it suits the norms of native speaker populations. For example, *kept* can be pronounced *kep'* and *mind* can be pronounced *min'*. Further, consonant clusters can be altered by adding additional vowels, for example rendering a word such as "pa-ra-dak" for *product*, as this was found to be intelligible. This is an example of *epenthesis*.

Epenthesis means that a vowel sound—an extra syllable—is added to a word. For example, in my native dialect of English, people tend to pronounce the word *afghan*, the name for a certain type of blanket, as *af-a-ghan.* Another common example in US English is to pronounce the word *realtor* as "real-a-tor." Epenthesis typically breaks up consonant clusters.

9.3.3 Vowel sounds

When it comes to vowel sounds, Jenkins makes two suggestions, one concerning vowel length and the other concerning nativization of English vowels.

8. Contrast between long and short vowels

Jenkins calls for the maintenance of the contrast between what she calls long and short vowels, for example, in words pairs such as *live* and *leave*, *fill* and *feel*, and *bit* and *beat*. In these pairs, the vowel sound in the first word of each pair is often referred to as "short" and the vowel sound in the second word as "long," although there are other qualities at play, as well. The vowel sound in *live*, *fill*, and *bit* is generally produced slightly lower in the mouth than the vowel sound in the words *leave*, *feel*, and *beat*, and it is also lax compared to the vowel sound in *leave*, *feel*, and *beat*. As a mother-tongue speaker of standardized American English, my own pronunciation of the vowel in the words *leave*, *feel*, and *beat* is tense: when I look in the mirror and say the word pairs listed here, I can see that my face turns into a tense smile when I say the words *leave*, *feel*, and *beat*. Incidentally, this is why Americans say "cheese" when they are photographed: the pronunciation of the word "cheeeeese" forces the face into a wide—if artificial—smile.

9. Vowel substitutions

One of the key differences between dialects of English is how speakers pronounce vowels in certain words. For international speakers of English, Jenkins says it is not problematic to use different vowels, save for one specific vowel which she says leads to confusion: the vowel sound in standardized English *bird* should not be substituted with pronunciations from the mother tongue.

10. Production and placement of tonic stress

Jenkins advances that native-like productions of tonic (or main) stress is critical to help distinguish meaning. By this, she means which word or syllable in a sentence is emphasized. Based on her data, it seems that nonnative tonic stress, often coupled with pronunciation issues, leads to communication breakdown. An example offered from her data is the sentence:

> "I make more MONey than you do."

For many mother-tongue speakers of English, this sentence naturally comes out with the tonic stress on the first syllable of the word *money,* as shown above.

In Jenkins' example, the same sentence was uttered:

> "I make more money than you DO."

The placement of stress on the word *do* made it difficult to understand.

In another example, there is a combination of unexpected pronunciation plus a shift in tonic stress:

> "I took the blue VUN."

In this sentence, the speaker has shifted the stress to a position where many listeners would not expect to hear it, in addition to pronouncing the English word *one* with a [v] rather than a [w] sound at the beginning. For many English speakers, the expected position of stress in this sentence is on the word *blue,* as in:

> "I took the BLUE one."

In the same 2002 article, Jenkins commented on various other facets of English pronunciation, as well, which she termed "non-core items." Included are such features as the reduction (or relaxation) of vowels in nonstressed syllables, a feature she says is too difficult for international speakers to learn, in addition to being nonessential to comprehension.

A depiction of her final set of assessments is presented in Table 9.1, an overview of the features presented in her 2002 article.

TABLE 9.1 General recommendations for phonology of ELF (based on Jenkins 2002)

	NS target	*EIL target*
1. The consonantal inventory	• all sounds • RP non-rhotic /r/ GA rhotic /r/ • RP intervocalic [t] • GA invervocalic [ɾ]	• Only the sounds that are crucial to comprehension
2. Phonetic requirements	Rarely specified	• Aspiration after /p, t, k/ • Appropriate vowel length before fortis/lenis consonants
3. Consonant clusters	All word positions	Word initially, word medially
4. Vowel quality	Close to RP or GA	L2 (consistent) regional qualities
5. Vowel quantity	Long/short contrast	Long/short contrast
6. Weak forms	Essential	Unhelpful to intelligibility
7. Features of connected speech	All	Inconsequential or unhelpful
8. Stress-timed rhythm	Important	Does not exist
9. Word stress	Critical	Unteachable / can reduce flexibility
10. Pitch movement	Essential for indicating attitudes and grammar	Unteachable/incorrectly linked to NS attitudes/grammar
11. Nuclear (tonic) stress	Important	Critical

Source: Adapted from Jenkins 2002: 99

Abbreviations: GA "general American" pronunciation; RP Received Pronunciation; NS Native Speaker; EIL English as an International Language

9.4 Subsequent observations of ELF: Grammar and morphology

In the years since ELF became a field of academic inquiry, a number of observations about its other features, including grammar and discourse, have also been introduced. The list presented here is gained from the notes of researchers at the University of Helsinki.

9.4.1 Lexicogrammar

11. Articles

In ELF communication, it has been observed that the English articles *the, a,* and *an* are either not used at all or are used in ways that do not mirror the use of standardized English, for example, “I like to be outside and enjoy *the* nature” or “Most people do not understand *the* Japanese society.”

12. Prepositions

English prepositions tend to be used in ways that differ from standardized English, for example *discuss about*, *obsession in*, *we're dealing what is science*, *on this stage* (all examples from ELFA 2008; see also Mauranen 2012)

13. Morphology

Suffixes such as *-ly*,*-ate*, *-ical*, and *-ize*, for example, as in *irrelatively*, *orientate*, and *territorical*, can often occur in nonnative usages in ELF. The main point is that ELF communication makes use of suffixes, prefixes, and other English morphology in a way that is not likely to be found in the grammar books of standardized English nor in the English of mother-tongue speakers.

14. Verb forms

When it comes to the so-called “irregular verbs” of English, it is probably not surprising that it is possible in ELF communication to regularize them. For example, the verb paradigm for the verb *to teach,* in standardized English, is *I teach, I have taught, I taught,* but in ELF communication the same verb paradigm can be expressed as *I teach*, *I have teached*, *I teached*, so that it mirrors, for example, the English verb *I reach*, *I have reached*, *I reached.*

15. Uncountable nouns

In inner-circle settings, standardized speakers of English use a set of nouns that are called “noncount” or “uncountable” nouns due to the fact that the singular and plural forms are identical. Examples include *deer*, *luggage*, *sheep*, *milk*, *money*, etc. In ELF communication, these noncount nouns are often expressed with a plural -*s* on the end, or in other words they are expressed as a countable noun. This means that in ELF communication, it is possible to hear forms such as *furnitures*, *luggages*, *informations*, and *offsprings*.

16. Concordance/agreement

With concordance and agreement, we refer to issues such as subject-verb agreement and singular-plural agreement. Here is an example of lack of agreement with regard to a singular article and a plural noun: *each sciences*. In this example, *each* is the article and *sciences*, as expressed in 15., would most often be expressed as a noncountable noun, or, in other words, without a plural -*s* on the end. Thus, the singular article and the plural noun would probably be deemed to not "agree" in standardized English.

Another example of lack of agreement occurs with verbs, for example *we was/they was*, where the plural pronouns *we* and *they* appear to offer a mismatch with the singular verb *was*. In the chapter on African American English, this was referred to as the regularization of a pattern, where *were* is considered an exception to the overall pattern established with *I was*, *she was*, etc.

17. Idioms and colloquial phrases

When it comes to idioms and established phrases, it is common in ELF conversations to hear slightly modified versions of what gets used in inner-circle settings among mother-tongue speakers of English. For example, it is possible to hear forms such as *in my point of view*, *on my point of view*, *in my sense*, *in my belief*, *in my thoughts*, *in my view point*, *in my eyes*, *in my feeling*, etc., which all correspond to the native English expressions *from my point of view* and *in my view* (see Mauranen 2012). In most cases, though, what gets said is close enough to the native English form that no misunderstandings occur, and the conversation continues without any problem.

ELF researchers have noted that ELF users can sometimes slightly rephrase a known idiom from English, for example saying something like "We should not wake up any dogs" rather than "Let sleeping dogs lie" (Pitzl 2009). In addition, it is possible to hear idioms that are translated into English directly from the speaker's mother tongue, for example, "Keep your thumbs up," which is the Finnish equivalent of "Keep your fingers crossed" (a hope for good luck or a favorable outcome) and "Fly low," which is the Italian equivalent of "play it cool/keep a low profile" (Furiassi 2018).

It is important to point out that while a comparison of features across English language varieties and systems is a key component of this portion of the *"Bad English"* book—thus making a list of features necessary—the vigilance with which ELF researchers have distanced themselves from *the lingua franca* core and lists of features of ELF cannot be overstated. In a main address at the first English as a Lingua Franca Conference (University of Helsinki, March 2008), Professor Barbara Seidlhofer of the University of Vienna and creator of one of the main existing corpora of ELF interaction, told attendees that ELF researchers needed to move past the "fatal attraction" of creating lists of features. Her words echoed rumblings that had already been occurring in the ELF movement for some time: if ELF communication always depends on groups of speakers who come from different language backgrounds, how can it be considered a "variety" that can be described in the same way as a language system which has a more or less constant, steady population of speakers?

9.5 Conclusion to Chapter 9

The past decade or so has seen a shift in ELF research away from the discussion of linguistic features of ELF, and more towards theoretical questions such as processes of language change (including at the cognitive and individual level), accommodation among micro-groups of ELF users, and adoption of features across interactions. In addition, there has been a growing interest in social and political questions relating to ELF, such as language policy and regulation. ELF researchers have always been keen to explore language attitudes within and about ELF users, and this work continues, too. The use of ELF in the language learning environment has likewise remained an integral topic of study among ELF researchers. The final keynote speaker of ELF10, Janus Mortensen of the University of Copenhagen, made a recommendation for ELF researchers to augment their rich empirical work on ELF with further theoretical questions, for example involving language contact and change, complexity theory and cognition.

Acknowledgments

The author is indebted to Drs. Niina Hynninen and Svetlana Vetchinnikova for comments and for reading early drafts of this chapter.

Discussion questions for Chapter 9

1. This chapter mentioned three problematic issues with the "native speaker" model. What were they? Do any of these issues apply to your use of English? What other problematic issues do you find with the "native speaker" model?
2. A colleague recently described an interpreting job where she listened to the English spoken by a group of Chinese visitors, then translated their English into English that the Finnish hosts could understand, and vice versa. How does this scenario relate to the concept of similects, as described in this chapter? Can you think of any political or social implications from this type of scenario in light of the purposes of English as a lingua franca?

3. Why do you think there was such a backlash in the academic community about Jenkins' suggestions about the teaching of ELF? How does this relate to the public debate about the supposed teaching of African American English in schools in Oakland, California, in the 1990s—or does it?
4. What do you make of this excerpt from Jenkins' 2002 article on the phonology of English as an international language? "Learners therefore need specific training to enable them to add to their phonological repertoires those features which are most important for intelligible pronunciation in EIL contexts. In addition, they need pedagogic help in order to develop their accommodation skills, so that they become more aware of the importance of making adjustments for specific interlocutors and more able to identify the occasions when this is necessary" (Jenkins 2002: 96). A key issue here is shifting responsibility for understanding communication from the speaker to the listener. How does this this relate to the *communicative burden,* described in Part 1 of this book? Explain.
5. Here is another excerpt from Jenkins' 2002 article on the phonology of English as an international language: "The optimum teacher [...] is often a bilingual English speaker who shares her students' L1. This teacher will have acquired the core pronunciation features, but will also have clear traces of her regional accent" (Jenkins 2002: 100). Do you agree with this proposal? Why or why not?
6. Do you consider some aspects of a foreign language unteachable? Do you still think foreign language speakers should strive to master those aspects? Why? Is the situation different for English, which is spoken by so many people from so many different backgrounds?
7. What are similect features where you live? For example, in Finland a phonetician by the name of Michael Peacock identified the following:

   "Experience has convinced me that the pronunciation of the large majority of adult Finnish speakers could be dramatically improved [sic] if they would pay attention to the way in which they make only six of the major English sound contrasts. These are:

   1. The contrast between the two basic English sibilant types; the so-called 'alveolar' or [s] type of sibilant (as in *see*) as distinct from the 'palato-alveolar or [ʃ] that occurs in *she*. Learners have also to master the voiced version of this contrast (where *rasor* contrasts with *erasure*) as well as the affricated versions (*cats* contrasted with *catch,* and *heads* with *hedge*).
   2. The word-initial contrast between the 'voiceless' stops /p, t, k/ and the 'voiced' variants /b, d, g/; as in *pea/bee*, *town/down*, *cold/gold*, *try/dry*, *plays/blaze*, *class/glass*.
   3. The word-final contrast between 'voiced' and 'voiceless' stops and fricatives; as in *race/raise*, *false/falls*, *once/ones*, *set/said*, *sent/said*, or *colt/cold*.
   4. The labial consonants [v] and [w]; as in *overworked*, *very well*.

5. The dental fricatives [θ] and [ð] (as in *thin* and *then*); which must be distinguished from Finnish stop consonants employing the same dental place of articulation.
6. The vowel contrast of [i] with [I] (as in *sheep* contrasted with *ship*)."

(Peacock, n.d.)

Further reading and information

Corpora:

ACE. 2014. The Asian Corpus of English. Director: Andy Kirkpatrick; Researchers: Wang Lixun, John Patkin, Sophiann Subhan. http://corpus.ied.edu.hk/ace/

ELFA 2008. The Corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings. Director: Anna Mauranen. http://www.helsinki.fi/elfa/elfacorpus

VOICE. 2013. *The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (version 2.0 XML). Director: Barbara Seidlhofer; Researchers: Angelika Breiteneder, Theresa Klimpfinger, Stefan Majewski, Ruth Osimk-Teasdale, Marie-Luise Pitzl, Michael Radeka.

General reading on English as a lingua franca

Filppula, Markko, Juhani Klemola, Anna Mauranen and Svetlana Vetchinnikova (eds.). 2017. *Changing English: Global and Local Perspectives*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2007. *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mauranen, Anna. 2012. *Exploring ELF: Academic English Shaped by Non-native Speakers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2011. *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca: A Complete Introduction to the Theoretical Nature and Practical Implications of English used as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cited in this chapter

Crystal, David. 2002. *The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language*. London: Penguin Books.

Furiassi, Cristiano. 2018. Macaroni English goes pragmatic: False phraseological Anglicisms in Italian as illocutionary acts. *Journal of Pragmatics* 133: 109–122. doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2018.02.009

Graddol, David. 1997. *The Future of English? A Guide to Forecasting the Popularity of the English Language in the 21st Century*. London: British Council.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2000. *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2002. A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an international language. *Applied Linguistics* 23(1): 83–103. doi:10.1093/applin/23.1.83

Mauranen, Anna. 2012. *Exploring ELF: Academic English Shaped by Non-native Speakers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McArthur, Tom. 1998. *The English Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Peacock, Michael. (n.d.) *English Pronunciation*. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

Pitzl, Ann-Marie. 2009. "We should not wake up any dogs": Idiom and metaphor in ELF. In Anna Mauranen and Elina Ranta (eds.) *English as a Lingua Franca: Studies and Findings*, 298–322. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Widdowson, Henry G. 2003. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Summary of Part 2

Vernacular … universals?

At the beginning of Part 2 of this book, the notion of vernacular universals was introduced, and here we take up the topic again. In his elaboration of this idea, Chambers (2004: 12) noted that possible examples of vernacular universals could be:

1) (ng) or alveolar substitution in final unstressed *–ing*
2) morpheme or word-final consonant cluster simplification
3) final obstruent (e.g., stop consonant) devoicing
4) conjugation regularization, or levelling of irregular verb forms
5) default singulars, or subject-verb nonconcord
6) multiple negation or negative concord
7) copula absence or copula deletion

With the case studies in this part of the book, an aim has been to observe any possible patterns or repetitions among the linguistic features of the English language systems we have explored. Readers who have followed along with the worksheet provided on the eResource will have noticed a few similarities among these different case studies, with some of them matching up to the list above, from Chambers (2004). The features that can be included within the general concept of vernacular universals seem to be, for varying reasons, linguistic hotspots of activity across English language systems, or, put in another way, particularly sensitive locations where linguistic influences congregate. That is, the reason for a particular feature showing up in a given variety might be input from the other languages used in the area (as demonstrated in Chapter 8), but the end result can still be the regularization of a pattern, for example the non-use of the third person singular *-s*.

We have established that while the concept of vernacular universals offers some reasons for *why* a certain feature might appear across varieties of English, it does not offer an explanation for *how* a feature ends up in a given variety or language system. Furthermore, if vernacular universals were truly universal, they would show up in all varieties of English, and they do not. Some features are "successful" in this regard, and some are not. The trajectory has to do with individual factors relating to the language variety at hand, including sociolinguistic processes, native language influence, and overall linguistic features within the geographical area.

In the years since Chambers presented his claims about vernacular universals, they have been tested and expanded on by a number of researchers, particularly in the field of linguistic typology. Importantly, the claims about which features might be universal have been tested on systems of English throughout the world.

***Linguistic typologists**: language scientists who seek and account for patterns across and within languages. The key aim of this type of research is to find out, structurally speaking, what languages do or do not have in common. A typologist might, for example, explore negation across languages, thereby offering evidence about the structural possibilities different languages have to perform negation.*

Tried through empirical data

To test the validity of the central claims of the vernacular universals concept, the two language scientists Benedikt Szmrecsanyi and Bernd Kortmann used the largest comparative survey of grammatical subsystems of varieties of English available at the time (2009) (see eResource). They specifically sought to find out if the universals proposed by Chambers, listed earlier in this section, would rank in an investigation of overall grammatical features of varieties of English. Their study made use of data from 46 varieties of English in total, and they looked at a total of 76 different linguistic features, all having to do with morphosyntax: pronouns, the noun phrase, tense and aspect, modal verbs, verb morphology, adverbs, negation, agreement, relativization, complementation, and discourse organization/word order. Note that the researchers Szmrecsanyi and Kortmann did not look at pronunciation features. Their focus was on Chamber's list items 4–7: the regularization of irregular verbs, default singulars, multiple negation/concord, and copula absence.

Their findings are summarized in Figure P2.1.

The first pair of columns in the figure demonstrates lack of auxiliaries in WH-questions, as well as lack of subject-verb inversion, which is the standardized way of asking a WH-question in English. A WH-question means a question asked with the words *who*, *what*, *why*, *when*, *where*, or *how*. This means that rather than asking a WH-question in the standardized form *Why are you sad?* it is often uttered as *Why you (are) sad?* or even *You sad?* This type of BE-verb deletion is the

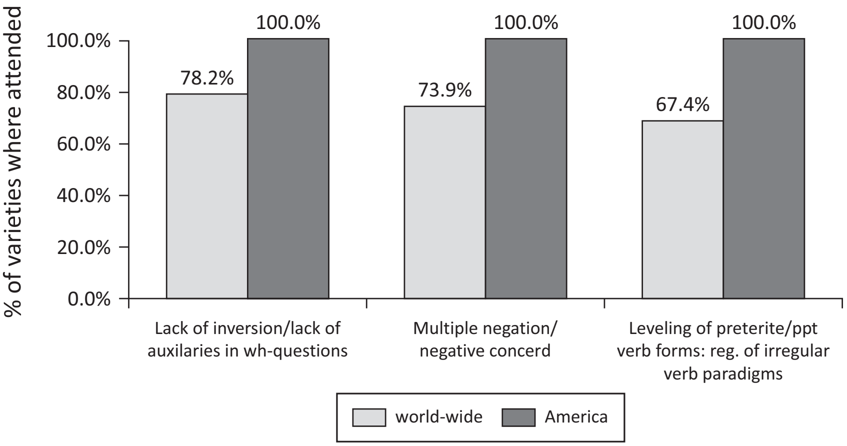

FIGURE P2.1 Morphological Angloversals: Frequencies of some candidates for vernacular angloversals in the *Handbook's* database. Reproduced from Szmrecsanyi and Kortmann 2009. Permission granted by Taylor & Francis.

closest the study came to finding universal copula absence in worldwide varieties of English, occurring in 78.2 percent of the varieties tested. Multiple negation, as shown in the figure, occurred in 73.9 percent of the worldwide varieties of English. The regularization of verb forms occurred in 67.4 percent of worldwide varieties of English. In other words, the features proposed by Chambers to be universal are widespread, but as they are attested in fewer than 80 percent of the varieties of worldwide varieties, "universal they are not" (Szmrecsanyi and Kortmann 2009: 37). Rather, as indicated in the right-hand (black) columns of Figure P2.1, it is in American varieties of English where these features are "universal," showing up in 100 percent of the nonstandardized American varieties included in the sample. Further, as the vernacular features that show up in varieties of English are specific only to varieties of English—not other languages as well—the researchers suggest using the term *Angloversals* rather than universals.

With regard to another form that occurs frequently across (nonstandardized) varieties of English, the progressive verb form *-ing* (as used in the expression *I'm loving it*), Meriläinen (2017) and her colleagues (Meriläinen et al. 2017) compared the use of the form across learner varieties of English with second language and native varieties. In other words, they performed a nuanced comparison of the use of the form *-ing* as a progressive verb form across inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle varieties. In addition, they compared the use of the form among different kinds of speakers in the expanding circle, meaning speakers who had different mother tongues.

One of the reasons for testing this form is that it is widely recognized as being used—or overused, actually—by nonnative speakers of English. Meriläinen and her colleagues wanted to test this claim. Their specific focus was not to look at how frequently nonnative speakers used *-ing* compared to mother-tongue speakers, but rather in what kind of range of meanings, and how the range of meanings for nonnative speakers compared to mother-tongue speakers. Using language corpora from English speakers of differing native languages, the researchers found distinct differences among the uses of *-ing* depending on the speaker's mother tongue. Native speakers of Chinese and Japanese tended to use *-ing* to express extended stative and habitual states. Native speakers of Indian English and Welsh English also followed this general pattern. Native speakers of Finnish and Swedish tended to use *-ing* in the so-called subjective ("I'm feeling overwhelmed") and futurate ("I'm leaving soon") uses, both of which are typical of the spoken language of native speakers of American English. In their analysis, the researchers postulate that, on the one hand, the use of the *-ing* form seems to be perpetuated by influence from the verbal system of the native language. On the other hand, for other groups of foreign-language speakers, the Finns and Swedes, the influence seemed to be socially or externally motivated, for example from the English language classroom. This study provides a fine example of why it is crucial to look at all the possible causes and explanations that might influence the use of a certain feature. The main point to take from this example is that, yes, *-ing* is a feature that occurs across varieties, but its reason for being there differs.

Researchers who work with the concept of universals caution that universals offer only one explanatory factor, and, in fact, the concept is not at odds with other explanatory factors. Throughout the course of this book, we have already encountered several other explanatory factors that account for the presence of specific features in a variety. These can include, for example, the fact that a group of speakers have learned English as a second language. Along with this type of phenomenon comes cognitive and psychological factors relating to the second language acquisition process. Another important factor might be the first language(s) of the speakers in question. It is widely held that a person from Poland sounds very different speaking English than a person from Uruguay, and not all of the differences have to do with level of proficiency. This type of phenomenon has to do with the concept of transfer from the mother tongue. Yet another factor might be the other languages that English comes into contact with through its speakers in a given geographical region. In Singapore, for example, a location discussed in Chapter 8, English overlaps in use with Hokkien (a variety of Chinese) and the heritage language Malay. It is perfectly natural that elements from all three languages combine and mix in the English (and other languages) spoken by people who live there.

The principles behind universals offer an attractive idea, and there is a compelling, even comforting explanatory power in looking toward the cognitive constraints of language in accounting for the shared features among varieties. Yet ss discussed previously, a universals view of the intricacies of English is overly simplistic. One major point comes to the forefront: if universals was the major explanatory device, then all the repertoires of English would sound much more similar than they actually do. The fact of the matter is that varieties of English *are* distinct, and while certain features may be linked to universals, there is much, much more to the story. This is why, for example, the social factors laid out in Part 1 of this book remain crucial. The forces that shape a language are not strictly cognitive, not strictly psychological, and not strictly social and demographic. Rather, each language system has its own special combination of these and other factors that makes it distinct.

Cited in this section

Chambers, J.K. 2004. Dynamic typology and vernacular universals. In B. Kortmann (ed.) *Dialectology Meets Typology: Dialect Grammar from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, 127–145. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Filppula, Markku, Juhani Klemola and Heli Paulasto (eds.). 2009. *Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond*. New York: Routledge.

Meriläinen, Lea. 2017. The progressive form in learner Englishes: Examinatin variation across corpora. *World Englishes* 36(4): 760–783.

Meriläinen, Lea, Heli Paulasto and Paula Rautionaho. 2017. Extended uses of the progressive form in inner, outer and expanding circle Englishes. In: Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola, Anna Mauranen and Svetland Vetchinnikova (eds.) *Changing English: Global and Local Perspectives*, 676–696. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Szmrecsanyi, Benedikt and Bernd Kortmann. 2009. Vernacular universals and angloversals in a typological perspective. In: Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola and Heli Paulasto (eds.) *Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond*, 33–53. London; New York: Routledge.

10

CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Aims and goals, revisited

The goals presented at the beginning of this book were to create a resource for students and other users of English that reflects the changing role and relationship with English, and to connect users of English with different attitudes, uses, and ideologies about varieties of English in differing contexts. The book has offered social explanations for "bad" varieties of English, having largely to do with attitudes towards certain groups of people and the style of English that is associated with those groups. In presenting different perspectives on English and its use in different populations, an aim was to offer readers some insights into the social side of the language in some of the places where it has found a home.

In the second part of the book, readers were presented with a collection of case studies, of which, in addition to offering historical and social context, an aim was to help readers recognize the inherent logic specific to nonstandardized linguistic features. With an exploration of African American English, for example, we were able to take a closer look at a variety of English that has earned respect and admiration from users of English around the world. Indeed, a key factor with this investigation was to offer insights into the sociolinguistic situation of African American English, so that English users outside the United States could gain an understanding of some of the tensions and ideologies inherent to the variety. For African American English, especially, some time was spent in Chapter 7 establishing the history, the social forces, and the resulting unique discourses and styles that shape this iconic US variety.

Comparing an inner-circle variety such as African American English to a linguistic phenomenon associated with the expanding circle, English as a lingua franca, was a helpful exercise in establishing that common nonstandardized features could not be based on historical or social similarities. ELF is a language phenomenon that has no collective group of speakers that "belong" to it. Its users are from every corner of the globe; unlike African American English, they have no shared social history that would contribute to the way ELF is used. There are no identifiable sources of collective linguistic input, or in other words contact languages or substrate influences we might point to and say, "this feature comes from here." ELF is unique in its breadth, adaptability, and sheer practicality for its users. Despite having virtually nothing in common historically or socially with African American English, ELF was shown to exhibit at least a few of the same nonstandardized features as African American English.

One key element of English as a lingua franca is that its users normally have learned English as an additional or foreign language. That is, for most ELF users, their English was not acquired concurrently with their mother tongue(s) from earliest childhood. Nonetheless, a few features of ELF were consistent with some of the linguistic elements of native-English-speaking children as they go through the acquisition phases of standardized English. Despite the obvious differences between these case studies, we were still able to identify certain linguistic features that ran through all of them, like a red thread, or, to put it a different way, we were able to identify some of the "usual suspects," which we termed *vernacular features*, based on research by the language scientist Jack Chambers (2004, 2007).

The "usual suspects," though, only account for a small minority of the overall nonstandard features that occur in "bad" varieties of English. Part 2 of the book also included a brief overview of two outer-circle language systems: Singlish and New Delhi English. Vernacular universals only go so far in explaining the features of such distinct varieties, and a vernacular universal feature can end up in a given variety for various reasons. In the current era, outer circle varieties in particular, offer fine examples to explore the intersection of such factors as second language learning phenomena, transfer from native languages, contact with other languages, and so on.

10.2 What is the take-home message?

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this book, ideologies of any kind, including language ideologies, offer extremely complicated territory, and reading a book on "Bad English" is not likely to change anyone's mind. However, there is a possibility that some different ways of viewing language differences can be achieved from reading a book like this one. For example, learning the social context and historical explanations for some of the varieties that are considered "bad" might at least offer readers some alternative way of describing the situation, rather than dismissing it as "Bad English."

In addition, a book like this might offer insights about what it means to have a standardized variety of a language, and where and how that variety came about. There are good reasons for having a standardized variety of English, but the existence of a standardized variety comes at a high price for those who do not participate in standard language culture. It makes good sense for many reasons to make use of the advantages associated with a standardized or prescriptive variety of English, but it is equally important to acknowledge how it came to be the standard, and to recognize the downsides of viewing it as having an almost deified status.

10.3 Has the take-home message been taken home?

As was presented in Chapter 1, a similar language survey conducted amongst university students in the US and Finland indicated that Finnish students tend to have different judgments about English than their counterparts in the US. This means that the starting point for a course based on the materials in this book is different for Finnish compared to American students, but, even so, it is worth checking if the attitudes of the Finnish students seem to change during the course. There are some drawbacks to the survey method. For starters, we cannot be sure if the Finnish students have actually internalized into their long-term world view the new information they have learned, or if they have simply learned how to write what they think the teacher wants to see on a survey about language attitudes.

Even with this consideration taken into account, let's take a look at what Finnish students report at the end of a course compared to what they report when they start. In an identical survey to the one distributed on the first day of the course, the Finnish students at the end of the course demonstrate a more open view of dialects, variation, and language attitudes by the end of the course. For example, at the beginning of the course, 8 percent of the students agreed with the statement "Compared to Standard English, dialects are a simpler form of language," but by the end of the course, no one agreed with that statement.

At the beginning of the course, 5 percent of students were not sure if "Dialects are different, but perfectly acceptable forms of English." By the end of the course, 100 percent of the students agreed with that statement. These are small differences, but they are still differences.

At the beginning of the course, 7 percent of the students agreed with the statement, "Generally, young people do not speak as well as the older generation." At the end of the course, no one agreed with this statement. This shift indicates that they internalized the fact that languages and varieties are different from each other, and that this variation can lead to change.

At the beginning of the course, 35 percent of the Finnish students disagreed with the statement "Spoken English is as good as written English." At the end of the course, 8 percent of the students disagreed. This indicates that the students have developed a more realistic perspective of the relationship between spoken and written language, and they understand how the norms and expectations differ between spoken and written language.

Ethical considerations about my students' anonymity prevent me from directly quoting the written comments they offer at the end of their course, but it is safe enough to state that the main learning outcome they cite is: "There is no such thing as 'Bad English'!"—with varying numbers of exclamation points.

This is a learning outcome I can live with, also with regard to this book. As mentioned in the rationale for this book, an aim was to offer readers some facts, definitions, demographics, and a further arsenal to help them, at the very least, back up some of their claims about English. This is necessary because critics of nonstandardized features of English (and the people who use those features) often seem to conflate the indisputable truths of language with the socially constructed truths of language; they are not able to acknowledge where one starts and the other begins.

As pointed out in an astute piece of writing by the language scientist James Milroy (2001), a living language is not comparable in the sense of a "standard" to automobiles, screws, temperature gauges, or other physical manifestations in the real world. Language is spoken by humans, and we humans are a motley crew, full of desires, wishes, issues, and complexities. Language is a social tool, and, as such, it is always on the move, forever changing, adapting, and being shaped by its users. The language scientist Anne Curzan uses the analogy of a river to describe this constant flow and change, and she likens the role of those who try to shape language to dams, embankments, and levees (Curzan 2014: 4). Like a river, language cannot be accurately assessed as "standard" at any one point in time, simply because it just does not sit still long enough.

Or at least this is the point of view of language scientists. Maybe this is the most important take-home message of this book: the notion of "Standard English" is a socially constructed truth. It does not exist in nature any more than Santa Claus does. Do you still believe in "Good English" as opposed to "Bad English"? If so, do you also believe in Santa Claus?

Cited in this chapter

Chambers, J.K. 2004. Dynamic typology and vernacular universals. In B. Kortmann eds. *Dialectology Meets Typology: Dialect Grammar from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, 127–145. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Chambers, J.K. 2007. *Sociolinguistic Theory*, 2nd edn. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Curzan, Anne. 2014. *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Milroy, James. 2001. Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5(4): 530–555.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agnihotri, R.K., and Anju Saghal. 1985. Is Indian English retroflexed and r-full? *IJOAL*, XI(1): 97–108.

Alim, H. Samy. 2006. *Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture*. New York; London: Routledge.

Alim, H. Samy and Geneva Smitherman. 2012. *Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language and Race in the U.S*. New York: Oxford University Press.

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). 2016. *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*. A national survey and state-by-state profile of worker safety and health in the United States. Available at: https://aflcio.org/sites/default/files/2017-03/1647_DOTJ2016_0.pdf

Baran, Dominika. 2017. *Language in Immigrant America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baugh, John. 2003. Linguistic profiling. In: Sinfree Makoni, Geneva Smitherman, Arnetha F. Ball and Arthur Spears (eds.) *Black Linguistics: Language, Society, and Politics in Africa and the Americas*, 155–163. New York: Routledge.

Bloomquist, Jennifer. 2015. The Minstrel Legacy: African American English and the historical construction of “Black” identities in entertainment. *Journal of African American Studies*, 19(4): 410–425.

Bloomquist, Jennifer. Forthcoming. *From dumbo to donkey: Linguistic minstrelsy in children’s animated films*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bucholtz, Mary. 2010. *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cameron, Deborah. 2012. *Verbal Hygiene*, 4th ed. London: Routledge.

Carrie, Erin. 2017. “British is professional, American is urban”: Attitudes towards English reference accents in Spain: Attitudes towards English reference accents in Spain. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 27(2): 427–447. doi:10.1111/ijal.12139.

Carson, E. Ann. 2016. *Prisoners in 2016*. US Department of Justice. Available at: https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p16.pdf

Casey, Dame Louise. 2016. The Casey Rreview: A Review into Opportunity and Integration. Crown Copyright. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk

/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review:Report.pdf

Cenoz, Jasone and Ulrike Jessner. 2000. *English in Europe: The Acquisition of a Third Language*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Chambers, J.K. 2004. Dynamic typology and vernacular universals. In: B. Kortmann (ed.) *Dialectology Meets Typology: Dialect Grammar from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, 127–145. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Chambers, J.K. 2007. *Sociolinguistic Theory*, 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Chand, Vineeta. 2010. Postvocalic (r) in urban Indian English. *English World-Wide* 31(1): 1–39.

Cheshire, Jenny, Paul Kerswill, Sue Fox and Eivind Torgersen. 2011. Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15(2): 151–196.

Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. 2007. *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. Executive Version*. Available at: www.coe.int/lang

Crystal, David. 2002. *The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language*. London: Penguin Books.

Crystal, David. 2007. *The Fight for English: How Language Pundits Ate, Shot and Left*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curzan, Anne. 2014. *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

D’Arcy, Alexandra. 2017. *Discourse-Pragmatic Variation in Context: Eight Hundred Years of LIKE*. Studies in Language Companion Series 187. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Domange, Raphaël. Forthcoming. Variation and change in the short vowels of Delhi English: Transmission, norms and the status of Indian English. *Language Variation and Change*.

EastEnders. 1985–Present. [television series]. UK: BBC Studios.

Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2019. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 22nd ed. Dallas, TX: SIL International.

Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2013. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

EF EPI: EF English Proficiency Index. 2018. Available at: www.ef.com/__/~/media/centralefcom/epi/downloads/full-reports/v8/ef-epi-2018-english.pdf

Ellison, Ralph. 1952. *Invisible Man*. New York: Random House.

Eltis, David, and David Richardson. 2015. *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Filppula, Markko, Juhani Klemola, Anna Mauranen and Svetlana Vetchinnikova (eds.). 2017. *Changing English: Global and Local Perspectives*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Filppula, Markku, Juhani Klemola, and Heli Paulasto (eds.). 2009. *Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond*. New York: Routledge.

Fox, Sue, and Eivind Torgersen. 2018. Language change and innovation in London: Multicultural London English. In: Natalie Braber and Sandra Jansen (eds.) *Sociolinguistics in England*, 189–214. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Furiassi, Cristiano. 2018. Macaroni English goes pragmatic: False phraseological Anglicisms in Italian as illocutionary acts. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 133: 109–122. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2018.02.009

Garrett, Peter. 2010. *Attitudes to Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gates, Henry Louis. 1988. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gates, Shivonne M. 2018. *Language Variation and Ethnicity in a Multicultural Secondary School*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Queen Mary University of London.

Graddol, David. 1997. *The Future of English? A Guide to Forecasting the Popularity of the English Language in the 21st Century*. London: British Council.

Green, Lisa. 2002. *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Green, Lisa. 2011. *Language and the African American Child*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, Gwendolyn M. 2005. *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Halonen, Mia. 2015. Presenting "pissis girls": Categorisation in a social media video. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 8: 55–62.

Holliday, Nicole R. 2018. Variation, race and multiracial identity in linguistic research. *WIREs Cognitive Science* 2019, 10: e1480.

Holliday, Nicole R. 2019. Variation in question intonation in the corpus of regional African American language. *American Speech* 94(1): 110–130. doi:10.1215/00031283-7308038.

Hudley, Charity, H. Ann and Christine Mallinson. 2011. *Understanding English Language Variation in U.S. Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hughes, Arthur, Peter Trudgill and Dominic Watt. 2012. *English Accents and Dialects: An Introduction to Social and Regional Varieties of English in the British Isles*, 5th ed. London: Routledge.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2000. *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2002. A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an international language. *Applied Linguistics* 23(1): 83–103. doi:10.1093/applin/23.1.83.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2007. *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jones, Taylor, Jessica Kalbfeld, Ryan Hancock, and Robin Clark. 2019. Testifying while black: An experimental study of court reporter accuracy in transcription of African American English. *Language*. Published electronically May 21, 2019. doi:10.1353/lan.0.0235.

Kachru, B.B. 1982. *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Kandiah, Thiru. 1991. South Asia. In: Jenny Cheshire (ed.) *English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, 269–287. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kiesling, Scott F. 2019. *Language, Gender and Sexuality: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Labov, William. 2001. Principles of linguistic change, *Volume 2: Social Factors*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lambert, Wallace E. 1967. A social psychology of bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues* 23(2): 91–109.

Lanehart, Sonja, ed. 2015. *Oxford Handbook of African American Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lanehart, Sonja. 2019. If our children are our future, why are we stuck in the past? Beyond the Anglicists and the Creolists and toward social change. In: H. Samy Alim and John Baugh (eds.) *Talkin Black Talk: Language Education and Social Change*, 132–141. New York; London: Teachers College Press.

Leppänen, Sirpa, Anne Pitkänen Huhta, Arja Piirainen Marsh, Tarja Nikula and Saija Peuronen. 2009. Young people's translocal new media uses: A multiperspective analysis of language choice and heteroglossia. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 14(4): 1080–1107.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2012. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*, 2nd ed. New York; London: Routledge.

Lukač, Morana. 2018. Grassroots prescriptivism: An analysis of individual speakers' efforts at maintaining the standard language ideology. *English Today* 34(4): 5–12.

Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children (etc.), v. Ann Arbor School District Board 473 F. Supp. 1371 (E.D. Mich. 1979). Available at: https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/473/1371/2148458/

Mary Poppins. 1964. [film]. USA: Walt Disney.

Matras, Yaron. 2009. *Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mauranen, Anna. 2012. *Exploring ELF: Academic English Shaped by Non-Native Speakers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McArthur, Tom. 1998. *The English Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McKenzie, Robert M. and Erin Carrie. 2018. Implicit–explicit attitudinal discrepancy and the investigation of language attitude change in progress. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 39(9): 830–844. doi:10.1080/01434632.2018.1445744.

McWhorter, John. 2019. It wasn't 'verbal blackface.' AOC was code-switching: Her critics are misreading the linguistic reality of America's big cities. *The Atlantic*, April 9, 2019, sec. Ideas. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-code-switches-black-english/586723/

Meriläinen, Lea, Heli Paulasto and Paula Rautionaho. 2017. Extended uses of the progressive form in inner, outer and expanding circle Englishes. In: Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola, Anna Mauranen and Svetland Vetchinnikova (eds.) *Changing English: Global and Local Perspectives*, 676–696. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Meriläinen, Lea. 2017. The progressive form in learner Englishes: Examinating variation across corpora. *World Englishes* 36(4): 760–783.

Milroy, James. 2001. Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5(4): 530–555.

Milroy, James and Lesley Milroy. 1985. *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Montgomery, Chris. 2018. The perceptual dialectology of England. In: Natalie Braber and Sandra Jansen (eds.) *Sociolinguistics in England*, 127–164. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Monty Python's Life of Brian. 1979. [film]. UK: HandMade Films.

Morgan, Marcyliena. 2002. *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murphy, Lynne. 2018. *The Prodigal Tongue: The Love-Hate Relationship between British and American English*. London: Oneworld.

My Fair Lady. 1964. [film]. USA: Warner Brothers.

Oakland Board of Education. 1996. Amended resolution of the Board of Education. Available at: https://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/ebonics-res2.html

Official Statistics of Finland (OSF). 2018. *Participation in Adult Education* [e-publication]. ISSN=2489-6926. Language skills 2017. Helsinki: Statistics Finland [referred: 2.4.2019]. Available at: http://www.stat.fi/til/aku/2017/04/aku_2017_04_2018-12-12_tie_001_en.html

Okwonga, Musa. October 16, 2014. The nod: A subtle lowering of the head you give to another black person in an overwhelmingly white place. *Matter*. Available at: https://

medium.com/matter/the-nod-a-subtle-lowering-of-the-head-to-another-black-person-in-an-overwhelmingly-white-place-e12bfa0f833f

Peacock, Michael. (n.d.) *English Pronunciation*. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

Pennycook, Alastair. 2007. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. London; New York: Routledge.

Pichler, Heike. 2016. Uncovering discourse-pragmatic innovations: ‘innit’ in multicultural London English. In: Heike Pichler (ed.) *Discourse-Pragmatic Variation and Change in English New Methods and Insights*, 59–84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Piller, Ingrid. 2016. *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice: An Introduction to Applied Sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Pinker, Steven. 1997/2012. *The Language Instinct*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Pitzl, Ann-Marie. 2009. “We should not wake up any dogs”: Idiom and metaphor in ELF. In Anna Mauranen and Elina Ranta (eds.) *English as a Lingua Franca: Studies and Findings*, 298–322. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Preston, Dennis. 2002. The story of good and bad English in the United States. In: Richard Watts and Peter Trudgill (eds.) *Alternative Histories of English*, 134–151. London; New York: Routledge.

Preston, Dennis R. 2005. Good and bad English in the United States. In: Richard J. Watts and Peter Trudgill (eds.) *Alternative Histories of English*, 134–151. London: Routledge.

Preston, Dennis R. 2011. The power of language regard—Discrimination, classification, comprehension, and production. *Dialectologia Special Issue*, II: 9–33.

Purnell, Thomas, William Idsardi, and John Baugh. 1999. Perceptual and phonetic experiments on American dialect identification. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 18(1): 10–30.

Reaser, Jeffrey, Carolyn Temple Adger, Walt Wolfram and Donna Christian, eds. 2017. *Dialects at School: Educating Linguistically Diverse Students*. New York; London: Routledge.

Rickford, John R. and Sharese King. 2016. Language and linguistics on trial: Hearing Rachel Jeantel (and other vernacular speakers) in the courtroom and beyond. *Language* 92(4): 948–988.

Schneider, Edgar W. 2007. *Postcolonial English. Varieties around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2011. *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca: A Complete Introduction to the Theoretical Nature and Practical Implications of English used as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sirsa, Hema and Melissa A. Redford. 2013. The effects of native language on Indian English sounds and timing patterns. *Journal of Phonetics*, 41(6): 393–406.

Smitherman, Geneva. 1981. “What go round come round”: King in perspective. *Harvard Educational Review* 51(1): 40–56.

Smitherman, Geneva. 2004. Language and African Americans: Movin on up a lil higher. *Journal of English Linguistics* 32(3): 186–196. doi:10.1177/0075424204268223.

Status of Women in the States. 2017. *Women’s Labor Force Participation*. Available at: https://statusofwomendata.org/earnings-and-the-gender-wage-gap/womens-labor-force-participation/

Szmrecsanyi, Benedikt and Bernd Kortmann. 2009. Vernacular universals and angloversals in a typological perspective. In: Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola and Heli Paulasto (eds.) *Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond*, 33–53. London; New York: Routledge.

Tagliamonte, Sali. 2016. *Teen Talk: The Language of Adolescents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tan, Peter K.W. and Daniel K.H. Tan. 2008. Attitudes towards non-standard English in Singapore. *World Englishes* 27(3/4): 465–479.

Widdowson, Henry G. 2003. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wolfram, Walt and Natalie Schilling. 2015. *American English: Dialects and Variation*, 3rd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell and Sons.

INDEX

Abramac, Gabi 72
accents 36–37, 39, 48, 88
access and isolation 62–63, 69, 73–74, 77, 102
acquisition stages of language *see* language acquisition
Aesop's Fables 20
African American English: and discourse styles 103–105; and the effect of class 74; and the historical context 64–65, 70, 100–102; and the justice system 54–56; and linguistics 51–53, 106–114; and the relationship with English and English speakers 6, 15n1, 151–152; and social power 33; and terminology 99–100
African Americans 66–68, 70, 75–76
African American Vernacular English *see* African American English
Agnihotri, R.K. 122
Agricola, Mikael 21
Alim, H. Samy 15n1, 75, 104
Alston, Vernetta 56
alternative capitals 73
American English 6, 28, 30, 118, 132, 148; *see also* surveys and language
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) 58
American Indians 65
American Verbal Inferiority Complex 11
Ammons, Shirlette 78
angloversals 82, 147
Ann Arbor decision *see Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et al., v. Ann Arbor School District Board*
Ansaldo, Umberto 118
Asian Americans 70
The Atlantic 115
attitudes about English: in Finland 7–11; and the justice system 53, 54–57; and linguistic discrimination 45–46, 48–50; in Quebec 46; and race 47–50, 55–57; and social power or prestige 33–36, 39–40, 46, 49–50; and the standardization process 18–19, 24–25; in Three Circles Model settings 7–12, 28–31, 34–40; in the workplace 57–58; and young women 29; *see also* "complaint tradition"

babbling and language acquisition *see* language acquisition
"Bad English": as a choice 59, 62, 70, 73–74, 76–77; and deviation from standard language 30–31, 34, 126–127; as linguistic development 96–97, 123; and social power 33–34, 39–40; as terminology xix–xx, 39–40, 64
Baran, Dominika 48, 63, 70
Bascom, William R. 19
Baugh, John 48–50, 54, 64, 66
Bavarian and High German 71–72
The Bible 20
Blinglish *see* African American English
Bloomquist, Jennifer 6

Braber, Natalie 36
British Broadcasting Company 28
British English: and differing forms 12, 18, 22, 132; and foreign influences 28, 30; and the London-Delhi English comparison 124–125; and realms of use 6; *see also* English (language)
Bucholtz, M. 75
Burridge, Kate 32

Cameron, Deborah 32
Canterbury Tales (Chaucer) 20
Carrie, Erin 6, 7
Carson, Ann E. 56
Carter, Jimmy 34–35
Casey, Louise 39
Caxton, William 20–21, 24
Cenoz, Jasone 13
chain migration 69
Chambers, J.K. (Jack) 82, 96–97, 145–147, 152
Chand, Vineeta 122
Charity Hudley, Ann H. xxiii, 45
Cheshire, Jenny 126
Chicano English 48
Child Trends Databank 66
Chinese (language) 118, 119, 120, 127, 148
Christmas 23–24, 25
Church, F.P. 25
Civil Rights Movement 65
Civil War (American) 66, 67, 70, 101, 102
Clark, Robin 55
class as factor *see* social factors and language attitudes
codification and standardization 18–19
colonialization and settlement 121, 130
communicative burden 39, 55, 56
"complaint tradition" 19–21, 28–30, 32
conceptions and languages *see* attitudes about English
consonants *see* phonology
Council of Europe 4
covert prestige 12, 62, 71–74, 76–77; *see also* prestige and languages
Creoles (local languages) 12, 118–119
Criss, Marika 63
Critical Age Hypothesis 88–89
Crowley, Tony 17
Crystal, David 32, 130
"cult of Santa Claus" 24
Curzan, Anne 32, 154
Cutler, Cecelia 75
cycle of disadvantage 67

D'Arcy, Alexandra 9, 29
Death on the Job (AFL-CIO) 58
Defoe, Willem 32
Delhi English 123–125, 127; *see also* Indian English
dialects: and attitudes towards 8, 17, 34–37, 40, 47–48; and language standardization 18, 22; and reasons for use 62–63, 77; *see also* variation within language
Dialects at School: Educating Linguistically Diverse Students (Reaser) 40
directed, directness and *indirectness* in discourse 105
discrimination 25, 33–34, 49–50, 57–59, 64
discursive behavior 72–73
discussion questions 15, 26, 40–41, 59–60, 77–78, 97, 114–115, 128–129, 141–143
dissing and discourse 105
Domange, Raphaël 121, 122, 123–124
double consciousness 68; *see also push-pull syndrome*
Du Bois, W.E.B. 68

EastEnders 126
Eberhard, David M. 100
education 50–53, 66
elaboration and standardization 18, 19
Ellison, Ralph 104
Eltis, David 101
Eneydos (Caxton translation) 20–21
English (language) 17–22; *see also* language acquisition; individual types of English
English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) 130–131, 133–134, 151–152; *see also* lingua franca and English
English as an International Language (EIL) 131
English Proficiency Index 13
Episcopalians 24
ethnicity *see* race
Ethnologue (website) 100
expanding circle settings: and attitudes about English 7–11, 13–14, 76, 131; and the Three Circles Model xxii–xxiii; and vernacular universals 147

Fennig, Charles D. 100
Finland-Swedish minority 68–69
Finnish (language) 148

Fischer, Eric 70
Fitzgerald, F. Scott 26
Florida v. Zimmerman *see State of Florida v. George Zimmerman*
folk linguistics *see* language regard
folklore 19, 24–26
foreign as a quality 28, 30, 39
Fought, Carmen 48
Fox, Sue 126
French (language) 17, 22, 46, 120
Furiassi, Christiano 140

Gallup, Amber 58
Garrett, Peter 31, 48
Gates, Henry Louis 105
Gates, Shivonne 126
"Good English" xx–xxi, 24–26, 34
Gould, Elise 66
Graddol, David 131
grammar 18, 139–141
"Grammar Vigilante" 18
"The Great Migration" 70
Green, Lisa 99, 106, 108
Griffin, Simon 18
The Guardian 28
Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe (Council of Europe) 4
Guy, Gregory 60

Hall, Gwendolyn M. 100
Halonen, Mia 29
Hancock, Ryan 55
Haugen, Einar 18
Helsingin Sanomat 14
hip-hop 74–75, 100, 105
Holliday, Nicole R. 99
Hughes, Authur 35

identity and language 10–11, 62–63, 65, 74–77, 102
ideologies: and the "American Dream" 68; and the communicative burden 55–56; and "English only" 63; and secular individualism 67–68; and standardization 17–19, 44, 49; and their formation 7; *see also* attitudes about English
"I Have A Dream" (King) 114
immigration 39, 58, 65, 69–70, 101
implementation and standardization 18, 19
Indian English 117, 120–125, 127, 148
indirectness and *directness* in discourse 105
"inkhorn terms" 20, 21, 30
inner circle settings: and attitudes about English 7–11, 28–31, 34–40, 57, 131; and covert prestige and identity 76; and settlement territories 121, 130; and the Three Circles Model xxii–xxiii; and vernacular universals 145–149
innovation in language 29; *see also* Caxton, William
International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) 91, 112–113, 135
Invisible Man (Ellison) 104–105
isolation *see* access and isolation

Jansen, Sandra 36
Japanese (language) 148
Jeantel, Rachel 54–55, 56, 57
Jenkins, Jennifer 131–138, 142
Jessner, Ulrike 13
Jones, Charles 24
Jones, Taylor 55, 56
Jones, William 82
justice systems and language 53–57

Kachru, Braj xxi–xxiii, 131
Kalbfeld, Jessica 55
Kandiah, Thiru 121
Kennedy, John F. 34–35
Kiesling, Scott F. 29
King, Martin Luther, Jr. 114
King, Sharese 53–54, 55
Knickerbockers 23
Korean (language) 120
Kortmann, Bernd 146–147
Kroeger, Teresa 66
Kuha, Mai 15
Kuteva, Tania 120

Labov, William 29, 71, 99
Lambert, Wallace 46
Lanehart, Sonja 99, 113
language acquisition: and acquiring linguistic features 86, 148; and the Critical Age Hypothesis 88–89; and ELF 130–131; and exposure to language 3–4, 13–14, 130; and implicit learning 87–88; and the importance of relationship 85; and Indian English 122–123; and language as a cognitive and social system 85; and stages of acquisition 89–91
Language and Life Project (NCSU) 102
language attitudes *see* attitudes about English

language attrition 89
language contact 117, 127
Language Files 87
language input 88
language regard 46
language sandwich 4–5
language systems 81, 97, 99, 133
Latin (language) 19, 22
Latino Americans 58, 66, 70
Leppänen, Sirpa 5
lexicogrammar 139–141; *see also* English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)
The Life of Brian (Monty Python) 44
Lim, Lisa 120
lingua franca and English xxii–xxiii, 4; *see also* English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)
linguist as terminology xxi
Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice (Piller) 57
linguistic features: and acquiring specific elements 92–96; and the "complaint tradition" 29; and English variations 102, 106–111, 119; and social power 33; and vernacular universals 145–149
linguistic or language discrimination 25, 33–34, 49–50, 57–59, 64
linguistic profiling 50, 103
linguistic typology 146
Lippi-Green, Rosina 19, 31, 39, 48, 53, 55
Lukač, Morana 32

Makoni, Sinfree 63
Mallinson, Christine xxi, 45
marginalization 33–34, 50; *see also* discrimination
Martin, Trayvon 54, 55
Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et al., v. Ann Arbor School District Board 51–53
Mary Poppins 126
matched guise tests 46, 103
Matras, Yaron 48
Mauranen, Anna 132–133, 139, 140
McArthur, Tom 131
McKenzie, Robert M. 7
McWhorter, John 115
Mendoza-Denton, Norma 48, 57
Meriläinen, Lea 147–148
Milroy, James xxi, 18, 19, 21, 31, 32, 154
Milroy, Lesley xxi, 18, 19, 32
Miranda Warning 57
Moessner, Lilo 18
Monty Python 44
Moore, Clement Clarke 23, 24
morality and language 31, 32
"more than two words" acquisition stage *see* language acquisition
Morgan, Marcyliena 104–105
morphology 139–141
morphosyntactic features 108–111, 146–147
Mortensen, Janus 141
mother tongues xxi–xxiii, 5, 85–97
Mufwene, Salikoko S. 118
Multicultural London English 126; *see also* British English
Multilingua 63
Murphy, Lynne 11, 30, 37
My Fair Lady 126

"native speaker model" 132
natural language 88
The New York Sun 25
"The Night Before Christmas" (Moore) 23–24
Nissenbaum, Stephen 23, 24, 25
"The Nod: A Subtle Lowering of the Head You Give to Another Black Person in an Overwhelmingly White Place" (Okwonga) 103
nonverbal communication 103

Oakland School Board District 51
Obama, Barack 103–104, 105
Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria 115
Okwonga, Musa 103
"one-word" acquisition stage *see* language acquisition
othering 39
outer circle settings: and attitudes about English 11–12, 76, 131; and English acquisition 14; and Singapore English 117; and the Three Circles Model xxii–xxiii; and trade colonies 121, 130; and vernacular universals 147

Pavlenko, Aneta 57
Peacock, Michael 142–143
Pennycook, Alastair 15n1, 100
People's Linguistic Survey of India 121
phonology and phonetics 92–93, 132, 134–138; *see also* linguistic features
Pichler, Heike 33
Piller, Ingrid 57, 63
Pinker, Steven 31–32
Pitzl, Ann-Marie 140
pragmatics 92, 95–96
prescriptivism 18–19, 22–23
prestige and languages 17–18, 29, 35, 46, 49, 64; *see also* covert prestige

Preston, Dennis xix, 19, 46–47
printing presses and language 20–22
profiling 50, 103
pronunciation *see* phonology and phonetics
Protestantism 24
Purnell, Thomas 48
push-pull syndrome 68, 104

race and language: and control 31; and discrimination 33–34, 47–48, 58, 63–64; and identity 65, 126; and the legal system 51–57
"Rally English" 14
rap music and rappers *see* hip-hop
Reaser, Jeffrey 40
Received Pronunciation (RP) xx, 35, 124
Redford, Melissa A. 123
reduplication 91
rhetoric and discourse styles 104–105
Richardson, David 101
Rickford, John R. 53–54, 55
ritual *see* folklore
"Roots" (Salt) 38

Saghal, Anju 122
Salt, Chrys 36–38, 64
Sandburg, Carl 31
Santa Claus 23–25, 154
Schaefer, Ursula 18
Schilling, Natalie 34, 40, 70, 102
Schneider, Edgar W. xxiii
Second Language Acquisition 130–131
secular individualism 67–68
segregation and language 66–70, 74
Seidlhofer, Barbara 141
selection and standardization 18
separation or unity through language *see* covert prestige
Shea, Ammon 19
Sick, Bastian 32
signifying and discourse 105
similects 132–133
Simons, Gary F. 100
Singlish (Singapore English) 12, 34, 117–120, 127
Sirsa, Hema 123
slavery *see* Transatlantic slave trade
Smitherman, Geneva 52, 104, 114
social factors and language attitudes 29–31, 33–36, 39, 47–49, 73–74; *see also* covert prestige; prestige and languages
social power dynamics 31–35, 39–40, 63
socioeconomic class *see* social factors and language attitudes
Sociolinguistics in England (Braber and Jansen) 36
The Souls of Black Folk (Du Bois) 68
South African Indian English 120
Southern US English 101, 102, 108
spoken language and written language 20–22, 25–26, 49
Standard English: and "Bad English" 152–154; and "Good English" xx–xxi; and language acquisition 86, 93, 96–97; and the legal system 51–57; and morphosyntactic comparisons 108–111; and other varieties 6, 12, 30–31, 34–35, 49, 77; *see also* English (language)
standardization: and Caxton, William 20–21, 24; and English xxi, 8, 12, 18, 22, 24–25, 49; and its process 18–19; and Santa Claus 24–25; *see also* "complaint tradition"
standard language culture 44–46, 49, 54–55, 58–59, 73–74, 153
State of Florida v. George Zimmerman 53–57
Statistics Finland (Official Statistics of Finland) 4
The Story of Good and Bad English in the United States (Preston) xix
Strunk, William Jr. 32
surveys and language 7–11, 153–154
Swedish (language) 148
Swift, Jonathan 32
syntax 92, 94–95
Szmrecsanyi, Benedikt 146–147

Tagliamonte, Sali 29
Talking Black in America 78, 102
Tan, Daniel K.H. 12
Tan, Peter K.W. 12
Tannen, Deborah 96
terminology xix–xxiii
Thatcher, Margaret 35, 37
Three Circles Model (Kachru) xxi–xxiii, 122, 130
Till, Emmett 54
Torgersen, Eivind 126
Transatlantic slave trade 65–66, 69, 100–101
transfer effects 117, 122, 123, 127–128, 145, 148
Trudgill, Peter 35, 71, 77
"two-word" acquisition stage *see* language acquisition
typology and linguistics 146

United Kingdom 31, 33, 35–40;
  see also British English
United States (America): and British English 30, 37; and English 6, 22, 34–35, 39–40, 46–47, 64; and race 31, 48–49; and Santa Claus 24; *see also* American English
US Census 67, 70
US Department of Labor 58

valuation and language 12, 29, 64
variation within language 6, 12, 30–31, 34–35; *see also* standardization
verbs and verb forms 106–108, 139, 140
vernacular universals 82, 145–149, 152
"A Visit from St. Nicholas" 23–24
vocabulary 95
vowels and vowel systems 124;
  see also phonology and phonetics

Watt, Dominic 35
Webster, Daniel 32
Welsh and English 72
Welsh English 148
White, E.B. 32
Widdowson, Henry G. 131
Wie gut ist lhr Deutsch? (How good is your German?) (Sick) 32
Wolfram, Walt 34, 40, 70, 73, 99, 102
workplace 57–58
written language and spoken language 20–22, 25–26, 49

Yiddish and Hasidic Jews 72
young people and language 28–29

Zimmerman, George 54