

Chapter 1

■ English as the leading language of academic communication worldwide

Probably the most broadly discussed in literature problem linked with the subject of writing for publishing by EAL writers is the non-native-speaker disadvantage. Therefore, this chapter is mainly devoted to the topic of inequalities connected with English being the language of international publications and the center–periphery structure. Thus, the first section (1.1) discusses the spread of English worldwide and the problem of standards. The next section (1.2) describes the concept of English as a global language, linguistic imperialism and World English. The following section (1.3) presents the advantages and disadvantages of the dominance of English in academia around the world. Section 1.4 includes the characteristics of Poland as a semiperiphery country and describes the status of English in Polish higher education institutions in particular. Finally, section 1.5 presents the two main roles of English in academic publications.

1.1. World Englishes and the problem of standards

It is impossible to consider the dominant role of English in academia all over the world, and specifically in academic writing, without introducing first Kachru's (1985, 1992, 2001) model of the three concentric circles presenting the spread of World Englishes (i.e., varieties of English). The model will be outlined below because it provides a very useful terminology for further discussion. It classifies Englishes according to nations and acquisition patterns.

The expansion of English in this model is captured with reference to the following three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. Thus, the Inner Circle (also called *the center*) are countries in which English is spoken as the mother tongue (i.e., a native language – ENL, or first language – L1). It is the medium of everyday communication between family members, mainly at home. It is associated with white descendants of people from the British Isles and is spoken in countries such as: the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These varieties of English are standardized and provide the norms for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning (i.e., British English – BrE, American English – AmE, etc.).

The countries in which English is a second/official language (ESL) constitute the Outer Circle. These are mainly countries which are historically related to the British Empire through the process of colonization (e.g., Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Kenya,

Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zambia). These varieties of English are mainly used in the multilingual societies in such spheres of life as education, government and administration, and they are influenced by the local L1s. As Motschenbacher (2013: 11) writes, very often they are “in a process of developing their own linguistic norms, thereby emancipating themselves from BrE as the normative reference point.”

All other countries where English is learnt and used, but which are not historically connected to the British Empire, belong to the Expanding Circle. In these countries English is considered as a Foreign Language (EFL), and it is learned in formal educational environments. These are Inner Circle varieties of English which are usually the norm for countries belonging to the Expanding Circle (Motschenbacher, 2013). However, in the light of the ongoing discussion on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), also referred to as English as an international language (Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2004), this claim has been criticized, as English is very often used by its non-native speakers for international communication with representatives of the countries constituting all three circles, not only with native English speakers¹ (e.g., see: Xiaoqiong and Xianxing, 2011). Kachru (2001: 520) himself stated that in his World Englishes framework “[t]he emphasis is on pluralism, not on the dichotomy between ‘us and them,’ ‘native and nonnative.’” Thus, his intention was to treat varieties of English in egalitarian manner, and he called his approach *liberation linguistics* (i.e., anti-imperialistic), as opposed to *deficit linguistics*, referring to native standards. These approaches were the basis of the so-called *English Today* debate between the distinguished scholars: Randolph Quirk and Braj Kachru (see: Kachru, 1991; Quirk, 1990).

An equivalent of Kachru’s (1985, 1992, 2001) model in the European context consists of Berns’s (1995) concentric circles of European Englishes. In this model the Inner Circle is formed by English-speaking countries (the U.K., Ireland), the Outer Circle consists of non-Anglophone countries that use English as the second language (L2) (e.g., Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden). In those countries English is used at universities and in cross-cultural communication. The third circle is called Expanding and in the countries belonging to this circle English is used as a foreign language (Berns, 1995).

It must be emphasized that the number of EFL speakers from the Expanding Circle is the largest and it is continuously growing. Presently, it is claimed that the total number of people who use English to varying degrees on everyday basis is around 2 billion, and non-native speakers outnumber its native speakers by around three or four to one (Crystal, 2006, 2008; Rees-Miller, 2017: 595). Therefore, it is widely disputed whether native-speaker English should be the norm, the standard, and the target of language learning, and it raises the question of the ownership of the language (Widdowson, 1994).

Widdowson (1994) made a few important points with regard to the notion of standard English and the problem of who should set standards for others to follow, as the variety

¹ Although the term *native English speaker* is very controversial, it will be used here after Jenkins (2006), meaning: an educated person who uses standard English as his or her mother tongue.

of English used by representatives of the Inner Circle started to be questioned. First, he stated that in fact standard English is a written variety of English designed for institutional purposes (e.g., education, business, administration, etc.). Further, he wrote that:

Standard English is an entry condition and the custodians of it the gatekeepers. You can, of course, persist in your nonstandard ways, if you choose, but then do not be surprised to find yourself marginalized, perpetually kept out on the periphery. What you say will be less readily attended to, assigned less importance, if it is not expressed in the grammatically approved manner. And if you express yourself in writing which is both ungrammatical and badly spelled, you are not likely to be taken very seriously. (Widdowson, 1994: 381)

Although there exist other conceptualizations of standard English (e.g., Trudgill and Hannah, 2008), for the purposes of this work the abovementioned definition and the description are the most adequate.

Pennycook (1994: 115) when discussing the problem in his book referred to the process of standardization of education in the mid-19th-century Britain, which led to the standardization of the English language. He wrote that already then “[t]he standard was based on a concept of a *standard literary language*,” that is literary texts. This emphasizes the fact expressed by Widdowson (1994) that the written variety of English has set standards.

Moreover, Widdowson (1994) claims that every language variety has two functions: communicative and communal. It means that it is used not only for communication, but it also expresses the sense of community. As it is the case with all languages, standard English expresses the identity of a particular community, their conventions and values (i.e., culture). Therefore, languages are symbolic possessions of the communities. He claims that English is an international language. It serves the purposes of many communities, which “transcendent traditional communal and cultural boundaries” (Widdowson, 1994: 382). Due to this, Widdowson (1994) explains, it is not the people from the British Isles, native speakers of English, to whom standard English belongs, in its written form in particular. It is the possession of communities of researchers, scholars from all disciplines, and other professionals. He states that international English conceptualized in this way “provides for effective communication, but at the same time it establishes the status and stability of the institutional conventions which define these international activities ... they in effect create their own cultures, their own standards” (Widdowson, 1994: 382). The ideas expressed by the author are definitely very incisive. However, he did not take into consideration the fact that according to research findings, for example by Hyland (2015), among the gatekeepers of international research journals (i.e., editors and reviewers) in many disciplines, native speakers of English from the U.K. and the U.S. (the Inner Circle) prevail, and therefore the Anglo-American conventions of writing are still the standard to be followed by native speakers of languages other than English (see also: Canagarajah, 1996, 2002; Kaplan, 2001; Tardy, 2004).

Aside from the criticism linked with the problem of the ownership of standard English, Kachru’s circle model may also be regarded as an imperfect tool for describing

the spread of English around the world, because of the complexity of sociolinguistic realities in some countries (see: Motschenbacher, 2013). It has been criticized, for example, for being rigidly based on the concept of a nation with political boundaries setting a national variety of English, for not taking into consideration intra-circle diversities, for not allowing for any flexibility in categorization of countries, and for failing to account for some of them as they exhibit characteristics of more than one circle. For instance, South Africa is a country considered as very heterogeneous in terms of the use of English varieties, so it is not easily classified (Bruthiaux, 2003). Moreover, Kachru's model is regarded as flawed because it fails to take into account the changing demography of some countries, caused by immigration (Motschenbacher, 2013). Finally, as Bruthiaux (2003) claims, it overlooks the fact that the norms of spoken language differ much more across the circles than the written language norms. Despite this criticism, the terminology introduced in Kachru's model has been very helpful in discussing the role and the use of English around the world. Bruthiaux (2003: 172) has recognized it that a sociolinguistic model which would account for all the intricacies of a complex phenomenon such as language variation is impossible to create, and that "[Kachru's model] offers a useful shorthand for classifying contexts of English worldwide." Its main advantage is developing more appreciation of the contexts of the English language use beyond the varieties traditionally acknowledged as norm-giving, that is the Inner Circle ones. However, most importantly for this work, the model's rigorous categorization, and its *center-periphery* structure, now frequently forms a framework for discussions of power relations in academic writing for publication in English around the world.

The attempts to consider writing for publishing in English within the egalitarian framework of World Englishes discussed above, or ELF framework (Jenkins, 2006), in which native-speaker norms are not a requirement, have not been very successful, despite their greater currency than other models and their theoretical attractiveness. Two examples of the success in introducing ELF approach in this area are rather exceptions, namely the change in editing policies of the *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, edited by Jennifer Jenkins, Barbara Seidlhofer, and Anna Maurenen, and of the book series *Developments in English as a Lingua Franca*, edited by Will Baker and Jennifer Jenkins. According to the policies of the publications, authors are not required to submit texts written in native-like English (Motschenbacher, 2013). Also, in a book on the dominance of English in science (a volume edited by Ammon, 2001), although it was subjected to linguistic corrections by a native English speaker, non-native-speaker traces of writing were not eliminated, following the editor's advice. Apart from these, however, academic writing is still dominated by the privileged English native-speaker standards. Therefore, academic publishing is most often discussed in terms of Anglophone *linguistic imperialism* (Phillipson, 1992, 2009), the approach which emphasizes the strength of native-speaker authority, and which will be referred to in the next section.

Although Phillipson's (1992) approach is completely different from Kachru's one, he uses similar terminology in the description of Anglo-American linguistic imperialism,

namely *the core* English-speaking countries, which correspond to Kachru's Inner Circle, and *the periphery* countries, which constitute the Outer and the Expanding circles. These terms, as the author writes, derive from a metaphor for rich, dominant countries (the core or the center), and the poor, dominated ones (the periphery), and are often used in the analyses of the relationships between them. They will be also used in further discussion in this work.

1.2. English as a global language, *linguistic imperialism*, and World English

Apart from World Englishes and ELF, another phrase which is often used to describe the role of English generally in the world, and in academia in particular, is English as a global language. With regard to the latter, however, first a few issues need to be clarified.

As Blommaert (2003) rightly points out, there is a misconception concerning the term *globalization*.² In many cases the process is understood as “the creation of worldwide uniformity” which is caused by “the spread of sociocultural and economic patterns, a new universalism” (Blommaert, 2003: 611). Following Wallerstein (1983), the author explains that the process of globalization should be understood more broadly within the world system, which is “a system built on inequality, on particular, asymmetric divisions of labor between ‘core regions’ and ‘peripheries’, with ‘semiperipheries’ in between” (Blommaert, 2003: 612). The keyword that the author uses to explicate globalization in connection with the English language is *scale*. Thus, there is a relationship between English, a *world language* (i.e., global), and other languages used by local speech communities. Another word which Blommaert (2003) considers as very important in this context is *mobility*, due to which both virtual contacts and physical movement are made possible through the use of technology of modern communication and transportation. In this line, when explaining the phenomenon of *global flows* with regard to languages, he states that constant circulation certainly exists, and consequently transformation of discourses takes place (see also: Phillipson, 2009). Thus, new language varieties spread around the world, but it is “[i]nequality, not uniformity, [that] organizes the flows” (Blommaert, 2003: 612). The author claims that the interconnectedness between states is realized through worldwide elites, and whenever items (or messages) travel around the globe they cross structurally different spaces, therefore they are perceived locally, differently. Finally, he states that:

Globalization implies that the developments at the “top” or the core of the world system have a wide variety of effects at the “bottom” or the periphery of that system. For instance, developments in the field of sophisticated multimedial and multimodal internet communication have effects on other, less sophisticated forms of literacy. (Blommaert, 2003: 612)

² A comprehensive description of the phenomenon in higher education and an elaboration on different types of globalization can also be found in Becher and Trowler (2001).

In his world-systemic perspective on sociolinguistics of globalization, Blommaert (2003) stresses the need to communicate adequately in a variety of spaces because our performance is exposed to value judgments of different communities. Differences in language use are instantly assessed and “translated into *inequalities* between speakers” (Blommaert, 2003: 615). Thus, they can be the source of both prestige and stigma, as different functions are assigned to language resources depending on the location where they are received. The author gives an example of urban Africans whose English can be the sign of prestige in their local environments but when used in the countries belonging to the Inner Circle, it may be the source of stigma because of value change in the new location. As he writes, “‘Good’ and status-carrying English in the periphery may be ‘bad’ and stigma-carrying English in the core of the world system” (Blommaert, 2003: 616). The example the author gives is an extreme one, but a similar situation may also take place in the context of writing for publishing in English, that is the value attached to English writing assessed as correct at an advanced level in eastern Europe, may differ from the value it will have when assessed by native English speakers, the publication gatekeepers of prestigious Anglophone journals. In this context, when discussing their concept of the *politics of location* and the notion of scale, Lillis and Curry (2010: 141) state that “what is valued on one point on the scale (in the local context) is not valued at a higher point on the scale (in the Anglophone-centre context) and scholars are often struggling to cross from the former to the latter.” However, as research shows (e.g., Hyland, 2015), in this case the main challenge may not be just formulating grammatically correct sentences, and generally avoiding surface errors by non-native speakers of English, but rather following Anglo-American rhetorical conventions of writing, and complying with other requirements of publications in international journals.

The next question which needs to be addressed from the point of view of the sociolinguistics of globalization is what makes English a global language. The number of speakers of English as a mother tongue is approximately 400 million (Crystal, 2006), which is not the highest as, for example, Chinese native speakers amount to over twice as many. However, it is not the number of people who speak a language from their birth which makes it dominant in the world. It is most closely linked with the English-speaking countries’ economic, technological, political and military power (Crystal, 2003). As Crystal (2003: 9) writes, “A language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people – especially their political and military power.” The author gives examples from the earliest history of civilization development, namely the dominance of Greek and Latin in the ancient times, emphasizing that the correlation between the power of the countries and the spread of their languages was very strong. The dominance of the countries’ languages succeeded when the nations succeeded on the international stage and when they failed their languages also failed (Crystal, 2003).

Another fact is that English did not spread “naturally.” Its very rapid expansion, such as we are still witnessing now, and its maintenance, always required having deliberate international policies and economic power. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Britain was the leading country in trade and industry, and its political imperialism led

to becoming the world's largest economy (Crystal, 2003, 2006). When the time of colonization gained its peak, the British played the main role in English gaining the global status. At the beginning of the 20th century Britain wielded power over 23% of the world population, that is the total of 412 million people – ten times bigger than the population of Britain itself at that time (Maddison, 2001: 97). From the beginning of the 20th century, when the colonized regions started to regain independence, the U.S. has overtaken the lead. At that time its economy was the fastest growing in the world, and the country became a new superpower. British colonization was ending, but political collaboration on both sides of the Atlantic made English expansion continue. Activities promoting the spread of English were generously funded by American and British organizations, such as the British Council or the United States Information Agency (Kaplan, 2001). By the mid-20th century the promotion of English also led to the establishment of many university departments of applied linguistics, and a highly specialized English Language Teaching profession (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 2017). The best evidence that further expansion of English was the result of deliberate political activity was Winston Churchill's 1943 acceptance speech made when he was awarded an honorary doctorate at Harvard:

This gift of a common tongue is a priceless inheritance, and it may well some day become the foundation of a common citizenship. I like to think of British and Americans moving about freely over each other's wide estates with hardly a sense of being foreigners to one another. But I do not see why we should not try to spread our common language even more widely throughout the globe and, without seeking selfish advantage over any, possess ourselves of this invaluable amenity and birthright. (Churchill³; as quoted in Phillipson, 2017: 318)

Winston Churchill, as well as Franklin Delano Roosevelt were interested in promoting learning BASIC English (the acronym stands for British American Scientific International Commercial), developed by Charles Kay Ogden, a British philosopher, in 1930. It was a form of an international language consisting of only 850 words and simplified grammar. Because of its simplicity, learners were supposed to acquire it quickly and be able to use it easily. However, it is important to note that this language was not meant to be culturally neutral. Thus, the ultimate goal of much of applied linguistics work in this area at that time was not only the spread of English but also of English culture (Pennycook, 1994).

The spread of English was not only the result of politics. The fast-paced development in the U.S. in the 20th century started to have a big influence on academia by tightening the link between economy and research. The greatest in the world growth of American competitive industry, technology and innovation was fostered by international research collaboration. It gave high public prominence to scholarship and further education (Crystal, 2003). Unsurprisingly, the language of academic communication has become, by default, English.

³ Source: <https://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1941-1945-war-leader/the-price-of-greatness-is-responsibility>. Retrieved on January 15, 2018.

Furthermore, the fact contributing to the spread of English in academia through international research collaboration was that the U.S. scientific infrastructure was not damaged by World War II, therefore the country assumed the world leadership, in particular in science and technology. The greatest invention which contributed to the development and success in this area was the computer. As Kaplan (2001: 11) writes, “progress in science depends on accumulation of a written record of all previous science; that is, science requires great information storage and retrieval systems.” Thus, due to the fact that in the 1950s and 1960s the research collaboration in science and technology was conducted mostly in English, the information storage in computers was also written in English (Kaplan, 2001).

Maddison (2001) in his book illustrates well the scale of the U.S. development in economy and research in the previous century, in comparison with the one achieved by the U.K.:

The driving forces of innovation had changed from the nineteenth century, with a reduced role for the individual inventor, and greater emphasis on applied scientific research of a type which the United States pioneered. It institutionalised innovation in a way the United Kingdom had never done. In 1913, there were about 370 research units in US manufacturing employing 3,500 people. By 1946 there were 2,300 units employing 118,000. In 1946 there were four scientific workers in US manufacturing per 1,000 wage earners, five times the ratio in the United Kingdom. US government-sponsored research played a much more important role in agriculture and mining than in the United Kingdom, and the link between business firms and universities was closer. (Maddison, 2001: 101)

In the middle of the 20th century, economy became the main driving force of scholarship and international communication in business and in higher education in the U.S., and, as Crystal (2003:10) rightly states, “the language behind the U.S. dollar was English.” This development also led to establishing English-medium universities worldwide, which further strengthened the high status of this language.

Following the example of the U.S., in this internationalization process, other countries started to change the language of their academic journals into English. Graddol (1997) gives an example of a Mexican medical journal which first required abstracts in English, next translated all articles. Finally, it employed an American editor, changed the name of the journal into an English one, and started to accept articles written only in English. Another example concerns a German journal which in the 1950s accepted articles only in this language, but already in 1984 all contributions were in English. Hence, even the position of German, which before World War I was the dominant international language of science, was soon lost to English. Graddol (1997) claims that in France in the 1980s around two-thirds of scientific publications were also in English. At this point it must be mentioned that not only academic journals, but also book publishing has become the area where English prevails. Graddol (1997) cites the data from the 1990s, estimated by UNESCO, claiming that although generally the largest book publication companies have been international (as a book can be typeset in one country, printed in another, and sold in the third) and over 60 countries publish

books in English (28% of the world book publications), the largest number of book titles is produced in Britain. Interestingly, according to the author, books published in American English receive a wider circulation than those written in British English. The author predicts a considerable growth in the number of English-medium books in the future, which, he claims, will be produced in the countries where English is not the mother tongue (Graddol, 1997).

Besides the spread of English as a consequence of the development of publication companies, as Phillipson (2017) claims, the process has also taken place because in the 20th century lifelong education and the knowledge economy have started to be promoted both by international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), established in 1960, and by the European Union countries. The main language of communication in both of these domains has become English as well (Phillipson, 2017).

To explain the process of the spread of English, Phillipson (1992, 2009) proposed a controversial theory of linguistic imperialism. In his view, the continuing internationalization of many domains, but in particular of higher education institutions, points to an increasing role of English as a “means of control and influence” (Phillipson, 2009: 5). Phillipson (2017: 321) very critically describes these types of activities, calling them “the commodification of English,” and emphasizing how profitable the expansion has been for English-speaking countries, British institutions, such as the British Council in particular. As he writes, presently the policy of the U.K. government is to continuously expand the intake of foreign students, from which the British economy benefits by dozen billion pounds. This fact supports his picture of “English as a commodity and cultural force” (Phillipson, 2009: 5). Similarly to the example of the British higher education market which attracts an increasing number of foreign students, Kaplan (2001) and Phillipson (2009) consider the market of other English-speaking countries, such as the U.S., Australia or New Zealand, as highly profitable. Moreover, Phillipson (2009) claims that the skills gained through the use of English by the foreign students are regarded by the interested parties as the key to proper functioning in the world economy. Thus, the spread of English in the author’s framework of linguistic imperialism can be seen as both being fueled by economy, because establishing and running English-medium higher education institutions around the world requires large investments, and boosting it by bringing substantial profits in return. On the other hand, the author claims that the majority of native English speakers are monolingual. Having English as a mother tongue relieves the U.S. and the U.K. governments from the need to invest in foreign language education, and even leads to intolerance of linguistic diversity, as it is often the case in the U.S., or even to the phenomenon termed as *linguicism*, denoting language-based discrimination (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992, 2009).

Pennycook (1994, 2001) considers the dominant position of English in the world within the framework of cultural politics. He states that its use all over the world points to inequality and power relations both within and between nations. He rightly claims that Phillipson’s (1992, 2009) critical view on the spread of English, based on an economic model in which the dominant center exploits the periphery, is convincing,

however, when language and culture are considered, it is too reductive. It has been criticized by the author for merely reflecting the global relations, not showing the way in which the dominance of English produces the forms of imperialism which Phillipson described. As Pennycook (2001: 62) writes about Phillipson's model, "What this, of course, lacks is a view of how English is taken up, how people use English, why people choose to use English." Apart from Pennycook's (1994, 2001) works, Brutt-Griffler's (2002) approach to the problem of the spread of English, although presented from a different (i.e., linguistic) angle, also fills out this gap by emphasizing a sense of agency of English language learners. But before discussing the latter author's views, a few more points made by Pennycook (1994, 2001) are worth outlining.

The researcher describes in his book the political and cultural implications of the spread of English using the phrase the *worldliness of English* (Pennycook, 1994: 6). His basic claim is that the process is not only the result of deliberate actions, as it has already been stated by the authors cited in the previous paragraphs and sections (e.g., Phillipson, 1992, 2009, 2017), but also it is neither neutral nor beneficial. The arguments in favor of the claim that it is not natural, but resulting from the promotion of English by material and institutional structures, and by ideological positions whose aim is to maintain the dominant role of English, have been supported by historical facts. The neutrality of English, however, is a controversial issue. On the one hand, English used for international communication, detached from its natural cultural context (England and America), is assumed to be neutral – the language in which people can cooperate with each other on equal terms. On the other, it is associated with the prestige and the power of the elites who speak it. A lack of its knowledge may make some professional domains inaccessible to people. It has become the means of inclusion into or exclusion from further employment and education, emphasizing power relationships in those spheres of life. This also points to disrespect for other languages and cultures (Pennycook, 1994).

Also, as Pennycook (1994: 14) notices, "it is the language in which so much is written and in which so much of the visual media occur, [so] it is constantly pushing other languages out of the way, curtailing their usage in both qualitative and quantitative terms." In many specialized disciplines the dissemination of knowledge, not only *inter-* but also *intranationally*, happens almost only in English. The author gives an example of publishing in the area of medicine, but the same phenomenon occurs, for example, in Poland in applied linguistics. The journals which a decade ago were mainly for local audience, with editors accepting texts written only in the mother tongue, now publish articles in English regularly. The same concerns English-medium instruction in higher education, which has become very common in non-English-speaking countries. Hong Kong is an example of a country in which English dominates in higher education, and it is claimed to be promoting inappropriate for this context domains of knowledge, and causing learning problems among Chinese students (Pennycook, 1994).

The predominance of English in such areas as linguistics or technology leads to the studies pursued in this language being mainly dependent on Western knowledge and models which often appear to be inappropriate in local contexts. Pennycook (1994)