

## Chapter 5

# World Englishes

In this chapter, you will:

- Explore how and why English has become a global language
- Explore some varieties of World Englishes, and ways of classifying these
- Examine how different varieties of World Englishes come about
- Consider some of the issues related to language endangerment and death

So far this book has looked at change within the English language itself; this chapter now turns to large-scale changes in how and why English has spread around the world. It will consider the current conditions and varieties of World Englishes, some of the different attitudes towards these varieties, and what the consequences of this spread are for other languages. As you read through this chapter, it might be worth thinking back to Activity 2.4 in Chapter 2, where you explored different metaphors for English, such as ENGLISH IS A FOREST FIRE and ENGLISH IS A SPIDER WEB. This way of thinking and talking about World Englishes offers an interesting perspective on the way that English has ‘moved’ across the globe.

### 5.1 Defining World Englishes

English can truly be thought of as a **global language** – it is spoken by millions of people across hundreds of different countries, and is a language of international science, business and education. It is heard on television all over the world, and can be seen in signs, advertisements and menus in most of the places we travel to. In this section we will consider *why* this is the case. What is meant by a global language, and why do they exist? Do we talk about Englishes in the plural form? What does the presence of global languages mean for other languages? Why English? Will it always be a global language, or might this change in the future?

The terms *Global English*, *Globish*, *International English* and *World Englishes* have all been used to try and capture the enormity and complexity of English’s global status. In this chapter, the term *World Englishes* will be adopted, because this recognises the existence of multiple varieties of English, rather than it just being one language that is used in uniform ways.

A language achieves global status when it develops a ‘special role’ that is widely recognised in a high number of countries around the world. This special role might exist due to the sheer number of native speakers – for English, this means in Britain, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, parts of the Caribbean and a number of other territories. Native speakers are those who are born and brought up speaking the language, in what is known as someone’s **L1** or ‘first language’. Rough estimates, such as those by the *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* website (Simons and Fennig, 2017), place the number of native English speakers at around 372 million. But numbers of native speakers alone won’t guarantee global status: other countries must take up the language and give it a special place, even though there may be few or no native speakers. This happens when a language is made an **official language** of a country, meaning that it is the medium of communication used by the government, the legal courts, the media and education. So, countries such as Jamaica, Singapore, Ghana and South Africa have multiple official languages, with English being one of them (see Figure 5.1).

Of course, native speakers are not the only people to use English. François Grosjean (2012) estimates that around half of the world’s population is bilingual, meaning that



Figure 5.2: Shop sign in Mumbai, India – in English, Hindi and Gujarati

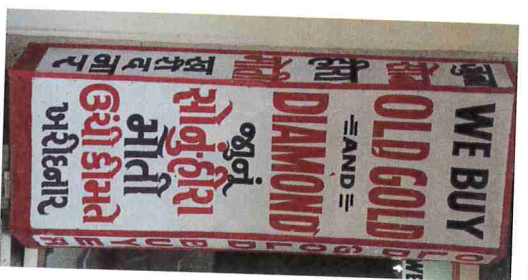


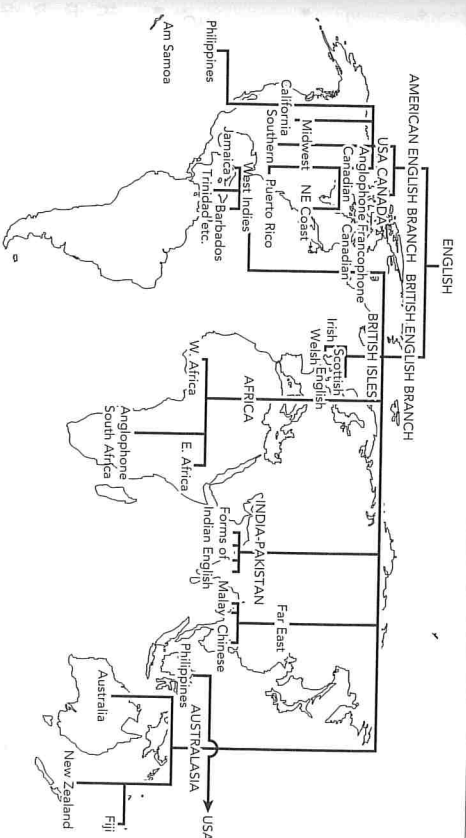
Figure 5.3: Sign in Jaffna, Sri Lanka – in Sinhala, Tamil and English



## 5.2 English around the world

Figure 5.4 is a map first published by Peter Strevens in 1980, which was one of the earliest attempts to show the global distribution of English. It shows the distribution of English from the two main branches, American English and British English.

Figure 5.4: English around the world



This map shows just how far English has reached around the world, but is fairly limited and one dimensional – it only shows us some of the places where English is used, not how it is used. Furthermore, the map only shows us a limited number of places where English is used as an L1 and L2. There are enormous parts of the world (e.g. South America) where, according to Strevens' map, English is not spoken at all – but this is obviously not the case. There are a number of other 'models' or ways of looking at World Englishes; some of which are explored in the following sections. You will see that modelling any global language is a difficult process, and there remains no satisfactory and complete way of doing so. Any model of a global language needs to take into account the political, social and linguistic complexities surrounding it. But, despite their limitations, models are a useful tool for exploring the different ways that English is used around the world. Before reading on, complete Activity 5.1.

### ACTIVITY 5.1

#### Modelling World Englishes

Draw up a list of things you think it is important to know about World Englishes, and design a model to capture this information. You might want to think about the following:

- In your model, which variety is the reference point or 'standard' with which other varieties are compared? Why?
- What linguistic aspects would you be interested in capturing and including in your model?

- How will you ensure that your model does not suggest a hierarchy of varieties with 'better' and 'worse' varieties of World Englishes?
- Can you represent your model visually, using diagrams or maps?

### 5.2.1 The three circles model

A model of World Englishes was proposed by Braj Kachru in the 1980s and onwards, in what is known as the 'three circles model', reproduced in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5: Kachru's three circles model

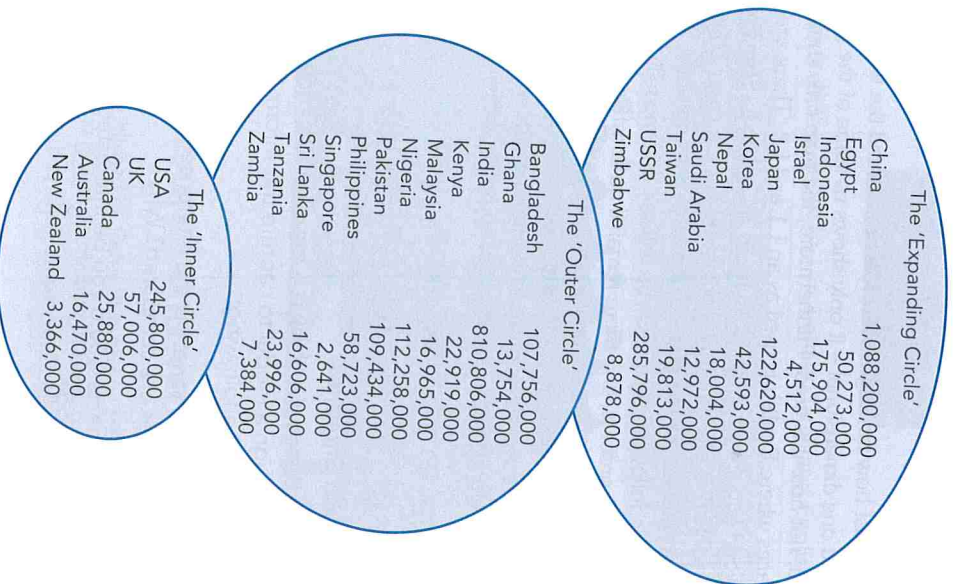


Figure 5.5 gives numbers for whole populations rather than number of English speakers, which are now out of date. The three circles are:

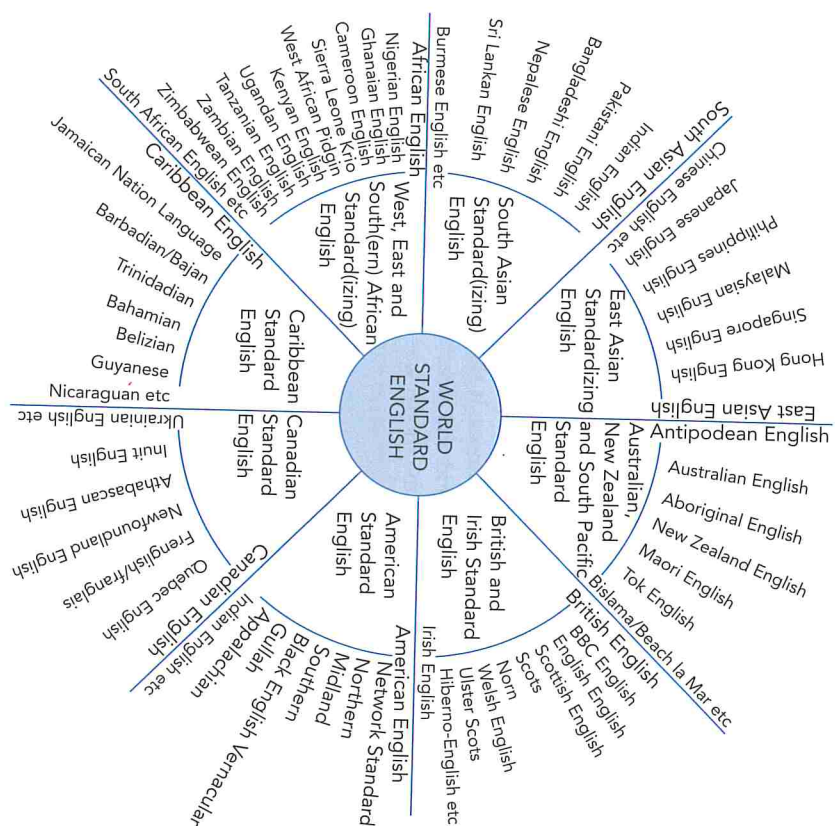
- **Expanding circle:** parts of the world where English is recognised and used as an international language but does not have a colonial history. It is used for practical rather than cultural purposes, and often taught as an L2 (or L3 or L4).
- **Outer circle:** the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where English is used as an L2. In these parts of the world, English is firmly established as an everyday language, is part of a country's political profile and an important second language.
- **Inner circle:** the traditional bases of English, where it is used as an L1.

Kachru's model is useful in some senses: it shows that English is used for different purposes around the world and gives us an idea of how it operates within multilingual contexts. But the model was devised in the 1980s, and despite its popularity it is perhaps not an accurate representation of what present-day World English looks like. Indeed, David Crystal (2003: 60) suggests that a more appropriate term for 'expanding circle' would be 'expanded circle', to reflect the fact that English is recognised and used virtually everywhere. Furthermore, not all varieties of English will fit neatly into one of the three circles, and the model is limited in that it doesn't show the diversity *within* each circle, or the boundaries between circles. Because the model is based on geography rather than the way speakers use and identify with English, information about multilingualism is missing: many English speakers grow up speaking more than one language, using different languages to fulfil different social functions. The model has also been criticised for its rather prescriptivist labels, as 'outer' and 'inner' seem to suggest 'better' and 'worse' varieties.

### 5.2.2 McArthur's circle of World Englishes

Tom McArthur's 1987 circular model (seen in Figure 5.6) places 'World Standard English' at its centre, from which all other varieties are derived. The next layer shows regional varieties, which includes standard and standardizing forms (where 'standardizing' means undergoing a process of standardization). The outer layer divides the world into eight regions, described by McArthur as a 'crowded (even riotous) fringe of sub-varieties such as Aboriginal English, Black English *Vernacular*, *Gullah*, Jamaican Nation Language, Singapore English and Ulster Scots'.

Figure 5.6: McArthur's circle of World Englishes



Although McArthur's model is more detailed than Strevens' map or Kachru's circles, it is still limited and doesn't recognise the complexities of multilingualism. And it shares the same problem with data of this sort in that it becomes quickly outdated, especially when dealing with a concept that changes rapidly.

### 5.2.3 Schneider's dynamic model

A more recent attempt to capture the complexities of World Englishes was proposed by Edgar Schneider in 2007. His *dynamic model* accounts for the nature of language contact, which you will explore further in Section 5.3. This is a particularly useful way of looking at global change because it shows how languages co-exist with one another (either at peace or in conflict), rather than simply existing as varieties by themselves that bear no relation to each other. The model is detailed and tracks changes in language and society over a number of years, beginning with the process of colonisation. Underlying the theory is an evolutionary metaphor to explain language change, suggesting that language evolves as a process of 'competition and selection'. The case of English

in India, as discussed earlier, is a particularly good example of the model in action. Schneider proposes 5 'phases' of global change, attempting to describe sociolinguistic conditions and how languages are affected structurally within each of these. They can be summarised as follows:

- **Phase 1, Foundation.** This phase is when English is brought in to a country where it was not previously used, normally by English speaking settlers. Here there is likely to be tension between settlers and indigenous groups, as they see themselves distinct from one another and tend to communicate within their own confines. A bilingual community emerges.
- **Phase 2, Exonormative stabilisation.** As English begins to have more influence, two varieties co-exist: the settler strand and the indigenous group strand. This phase sees the gradual movement of the settler variety towards the indigenous variety, as local vocabulary is incorporated, code-switching occurs and English starts to be seen as an asset.
- **Phase 3, Nativisation.** The most important and dynamic phase, which sees the establishment of a new identity as the gap between settler and indigenous varieties is reduced. There is increasing pressure on indigenous speakers to acquire English. At a linguistic level, there are significant changes in the phonology, lexis and grammar of English.
- **Phase 4, Endonormative stabilisation.** This is when the new variety becomes gradually accepted as the local norm, moving towards a linguistic homogeneity. Members of the settler groups start to see themselves as part of the 'new nation', and ethnic boundaries are redefined for indigenous groups.
- **Phase 5, Differentiation.** The new variety reflects local culture and identity. More local varieties of English develop, perhaps as settler and indigenous groups seek to re-establish their ethnic heritage.

### 5.2.4 Classifying varieties by prestige

One further way of classifying language varieties is to use a sociolinguistic criterion, based on the kind of attitudes and types of prestige that speakers hold towards a particular variety. To understand this, it is useful to consider the difference between William Labov's 1972 terms *covert* and *overt prestige*.

#### KEY TERMS

**Covert prestige:** where local, vernacular varieties are positively valued in subversive and subconscious ways

**Overt prestige:** where varieties to be valued are publicly and explicitly recommended by powerful institutions and social groups, and are seen as socially desirable

- In covert prestige, local, vernacular varieties are positively valued, emphasising community 'togetherness' and local identity. The word *covert* is used because prestige is usually demonstrated subconsciously between members of a group.
- In overt prestige, varieties to be valued are publicly and explicitly recommended by powerful institutions and social groups, and are seen as socially desirable.

So, different varieties can have different levels of prestige, depending on their status within a local and global speech community. For example, a dying language that is rapidly losing speakers may be held in low prestige by speakers who have abandoned the language in favour of another, higher prestige variety. Of course, the speakers who still use the dying language may feel exactly the same way about the bigger language, and view the dying language as the more prestigious form. Varieties may also be stigmatised by outsiders and given labels such as 'crude' and 'ugly', but actually have covert prestige status, where speakers are seen to be warm, tough, fashionable or humorous. For example, Jamaican Creole and American Vernacular English are often seen as inferior and not 'proper' forms of a language. Then there are standard or near-standard varieties of World Englishes (such as Standard Singaporean English and Nigerian Standard English) that carry overt prestige labels, with speakers being seen as powerful, cultured and polite and educated. Finally, there are varieties that carry global overt prestige – typically British Standard English spoken with a Received Pronunciation accent and US Standard English spoken with a General American accent. Such attitudes are pervasive throughout the world, both in countries where English is and isn't an official language. For example, consider the message in Figure 5.7, a poster produced in September 2017 by the Američki Institut, a centre for the promotion of American culture based in the Croatian capital of Zagreb. Melania Trump, who is shown on the poster, was born in the region. What does it reveal about attitudes to language and what they mean?

Figure 5.7: English language school advert



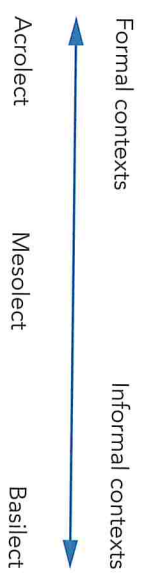
**ACTIVITY 5.2**  
Evaluating the models

Critically evaluate the different models of World Englishes. What are the advantages/disadvantages of each? How do they compare with one another? Which one, in your opinion, offers the most ideal model? Do you have any suggestions for how the models might be improved so that they are more relevant for today's world?

### 5.2.5 A continuum of speech forms

In many societies, there is a continuum of speech forms – from a standard variety typically used in formal contexts through to a non-standard variety typically used in informal contexts. The labels *acrolect*, *mesolect* and *basilect* can be used for the 'high', 'middle' and 'low' points of the continuum, as shown on Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8: Speech forms



These labels are generally used when describing pidgin and creole forms. What is useful about these labels is that they recognise the fact that context affects how people use language. So, the same person may use the acrolect form at work but switch to the mesolect or basilect form when at home or with friends. In terms of their linguistic properties, extreme ends of the continuum are the most different from one other, so an acrolect and a basilect are the most linguistically remote from each other.

**KEY TERMS**

**Acrolect:** a prestigious or standard variety of a language

**Mesolect:** an intermediate prestigious variety of a language

**Basilect:** a low prestigious variety of a language

## 5.3 Language contact

You have seen how and why English has spread far and wide around the world, and you will look at what happens when English 'bumps into' other languages, in a process known as **language contact**. Mixed varieties involving English are often given nicknames to reflect their intermingled nature – Chinglish, Spanglish, Singlish, Franglais, Tex-Mex, and many more. Indeed, it may be more useful to think of languages 'meshing' together rather than just coming into 'contact'. Contact has substantial consequences for the historical development of the languages involved: borrowing words from other languages, changes in phonology and grammar; a general increase in bilingualism and the creation of pidgins and creoles. Most languages around the world have some form of contact with one another – it is very rare that a group of speakers exist in a completely isolated environment with no contact with other linguistic communities.

English is often described as a *scavenger language*, taking words from other languages that it comes into contact with. It has also lost words, such as the ones it has given up from Old English in favour of words from French, Latin, Greek, Turkish, Hindi – the list goes on and on. After British colonisers originally exported the language around the world, migration has brought English 'back' to Britain in a variety of altered forms. In these linguistic cocktails, used predominantly in large cities, speakers of non-British heritages have blended their L1 speech patterns with existing local dialects. The result is a vast array of fabulous new varieties of English, such as London Jamaican English and Bradford Asian English. British English itself has also been developed and enriched by an explosion of new terms, such as *baati* (a type of curry invented in Birmingham, which would translate as 'bucket' in Urdu, Hindi and Bengali) and *bhangra* (traditional Punjabi music mixed with reggae and hip-hop).

### KEY TERM

**Language contact:** a process of language change whereby multiple languages come into social contact and have linguistic influence on each other, in the form of borrowings, grammatical and phonological change, formation of pidgins and creoles, and higher rates of bilingualism

### 5.3.1 English as a lingua franca

A *lingua franca* is a language used between speakers who have no common language between them, to enable communication for purposes such as trade. *Lingua francas* are built on a base language, which tends to be a global language such as English, for obvious reasons. Thus, English is the world's most common *lingua franca*, and Arabic, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili and several others are also used in this way. A *lingua franca* is often described as an 'auxiliary' language, used for functional rather than social purposes, and speakers are just as likely to be native users as they are non-native. It is a convenient method of communication to serve global human relations, and is appreciated by millions worldwide. Jennifer Jenkins (2006) lists five common characteristics of English as a *lingua franca*:

- 1 It provides a mutually intelligible language, used by speakers of different languages allowing them to communicate with one another.
- 2 It is an alternative to English as a Foreign Language, rather than a replacement – it serves a functional communicative purpose rather than being associated with education.
- 3 It is just as likely to include elements of Standard English as well as linguistic features reflective of more local forms.
- 4 Accommodation and code-switching are common practice during *lingua franca* communication.
- 5 Language proficiency in speakers may be low or high.

In terms of the linguistic structure of English as a *lingua franca*, Barbara Seidlhofer (2011) identifies the following typical characteristics:

- non-use of the third-person present tense –s (e.g. *she look very sad*)
- interchangeable use of the relative pronouns *who* and *which* (e.g. *a book who; a person which*)
- omission of the definite (*the*) and indefinite articles (*a/an*) where they are obligatory in native speaker English and insertion where they do not occur in native speaker English
- use of an all-purpose question tag such as *isn't it?* or *no?* instead of *shouldn't they?* (e.g. *they should arrive soon, isn't it?*)
- increasing of redundancy by adding prepositions (e.g. *we have to study about*) or by increasing explicitness (*blue colour* vs. *blue* and *how long time?* vs. *how long?*)

- heavy reliance on certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do*, *have*, *make*, *put* and *take*
- pluralisation of nouns which are considered uncountable in native speaker English (e.g. *informations*, *staffs*, *advices*)
- use of *that*-clauses instead of infinitive constructions (e.g. *I want that we discuss about my essay*).

These characteristics demonstrate that English is shaped as much by its non-native speakers as by its native speakers. However, many people adopt the rather prescriptive view that *lingua franca*s are somehow inferior or deficient forms of a language, with crude and basic grammatical and phonological systems. Jenkins (2007) discusses the implications of this – that there can be a bias against non-native forms such as *lingua franca*s, because of a preference for the ‘correct’ native forms of English. She argues that speakers should have a choice about the forms they use, and that the use of standard, native forms is unnecessary for most of the world’s English speakers.

### 5.3.2 Types of contact

Language contact is common and one of the main reasons for language change. For example, English has borrowed extensively from French, Greek and other languages throughout the course of history. Indigenous languages in Papua New Guinea, the Amazon and Australia have changed as a result of contact with other, non-native forms. In the Balkans, different languages such as Albanian, Bulgarian and Greek all share certain features of lexis, grammar and phonology due to sustained contact and convergence.

Linguists differentiate between **superstratum**, **substratum** and **adstratum** contact situations. In superstratal contact, the language of a socially powerful group influences the language of the less powerful. This type of contact is common in post-colonial contexts, with words from the colonisers’ language finding their way into the language of the colonised, or replacing the indigenous language completely. Substratal contact is the reverse: when a dominant language is influenced by a less dominant one. This often happens when the less dominant language is losing speakers, such as the influence of Irish upon the English spoken in Ireland. Adstratal contact is where two (or more) languages come into contact, but there is no dominant community. This often happens with neighbouring languages.

#### KEY TERMS

**Superstratum:** a type of language contact where the language of a more powerful group influences the language of a less powerful group

**Substratum:** a type of language contact where the language of a less powerful group influences the language of a more powerful group

**Adstratum:** a type of language contact where there is no dominant language

## 5.4 Language birth: pidgins and creoles

Whereas a *lingua franca* is typically a language with a broad base of native speakers that share the same language family, when people from different parts of the world meet they do not often have such a language in common. Instead, the two (or more) groups use their native languages as a basis for a new, rudimentary language of reduced vocabulary and grammatical rules, in what is called a pidgin. When a pidgin becomes so well established that it becomes the mother-tongue of a speech community (when children are brought up speaking it), it becomes a creole.

### 5.4.1 Case study: Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin English has its origins in trade contact between the British and locals in the 1800s, and is spoken widely in large cities and ports in south Nigeria. Throughout history Nigerian Pidgin English was associated with non-educated people and perceived negatively by the educated, however in recent years there has been a shift in its status: it is now widespread among the educated, used by young people, musicians and writers, and perceived by many as ‘more Nigerian’ than English. It also serves as a social identity, when speakers want to emphasise their *Nigerian* identity as opposed to their ethnic group identity. So, Nigerian Pidgin English is advantageous in that it can express a sense of belonging to Nigeria, which English, the language of the ex-colonial power, cannot.

Although no official status has been granted to Nigerian Pidgin English in Nigeria, many people have suggested it would be a good candidate for a national language largely due to its identity marking function. However, the language is not yet developed enough to satisfy all the duties of a national language: there is no standard spelling system due to its little use as a written form, and for many people it still carries negative connotations of being uneducated. Text 5A is an example of what Nigerian Pidgin English looks like, along with its English transcription.



## Text 5A

How bodi? / How you dey?	How are you doing today?
Wetin dey happen?	What's going on?
Comot for road	Make way/get out of my way
I wan chop	I want to eat
Dem send you?	Did they send you?

### 5.4.2 Case study: Tok Pisin

Tok Pisin is an English-based creole widely used in Papua New Guinea, where it is classified as an official language (along with English). It has around 4 million speakers (combining L1 and L2 speakers), making it the most widely used of the 750 or so languages used in the country, including English. It is widely regarded as the most developed pidgin-creole in the world, with a standardised grammar and spelling system. English is the superstratal language, but Tok Pisin is also influenced by Tolai (an indigenous language of Papua New Guinea), German, Samoan and various other local languages. Christian missionaries first brought English to the island in the 1600s in an attempt to convert the local population, and the whaling trade in the 1700s introduced even more contact. Despite the fact that it is historically based on English, over time Tok Pisin has transformed into a language in its own right. Text 5B is an example of what it looks like, and its English translation.

## Text 5B

Wanpela taim rokkrok i bin save stap klostu long wara. Em i bin naispela na em i save wok hat. Rokrok i bin save stap em wanpela tasol. Na em i bin tingting long painim wanpela man bliong en. Long maunten klostu long wara wanpela snek i save stap. Em i naispela snek. Long dispela taim snek i gat lek olsem ol narapela animal.

Once upon a time a frog used to live near a river/water. She was beautiful and she was in the habit of working hard. Frog was living alone. And she decided to look for a husband. On a hill near the lake lived a snake. He was a handsome snake. At that time snakes had legs like other animals.

#### ACTIVITY 5.3

##### Linguistic properties of pidgins and creoles

Examine the examples of pidgin and creole in Texts 5A and 5B and analyse the lexical, grammatical and phonological properties of each one. You might want to think about:

- Grammar: Are there any grammatical words that are missing or added? If so, what kinds of words are these? What grammatical rules have been retained/adapted from English?
- Semantics: Have any words changed/adapted their meaning? How?
- Phonology: How have speech sounds been affected? Can you find any significant patterns of sound change?

## 5.5 Language endangerment and death

English is just one of the many thousands of languages in the world, and recent estimates by *Ethnologue*, the largest present-day survey of world languages, put the total number at somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000. But whatever the true number may be, it is a number that is decreasing rapidly. The rise of a global language may bring benefits, but it also brings dangers, and linguists studying endangered languages (e.g. Nettle and Romaine, 2000) suggest that 90 per cent of the world's languages are expected to disappear by 2100. The most looming threat to such endangered languages is the rise of global languages. A very small number of languages account for a vast proportion of the world's population (over 7.3 billion people), and the 8 languages with over 100 million speakers (Mandarin, Spanish, English, Bengali, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese) have around 2.5 billion speakers between them. Looking at all the world's languages, 96 per cent of them are spoken by just 4 per cent of the world's population.

### 5.5.1 How and why do languages die?

What is language death, and what are the reasons that a language would die? Larry Trask (1994: 69) defines language death as where 'people abandon their language in favour of some other language seen as more prestigious or useful'. In short then, a language dies when nobody speaks it any more. One possibility is that all its speakers might die – through natural causes, or, more likely, killed by more powerful neighbours. For example, when the British arrived

in Tasmania in 1803 they found that the native people rather got in the way of their plans for settlement, and so ordered them out of their own territory and killed anybody who tried to resist. It is reported that the last living native, a 64-year-old woman called Truganini who died in 1876, spoke not a single word of English.

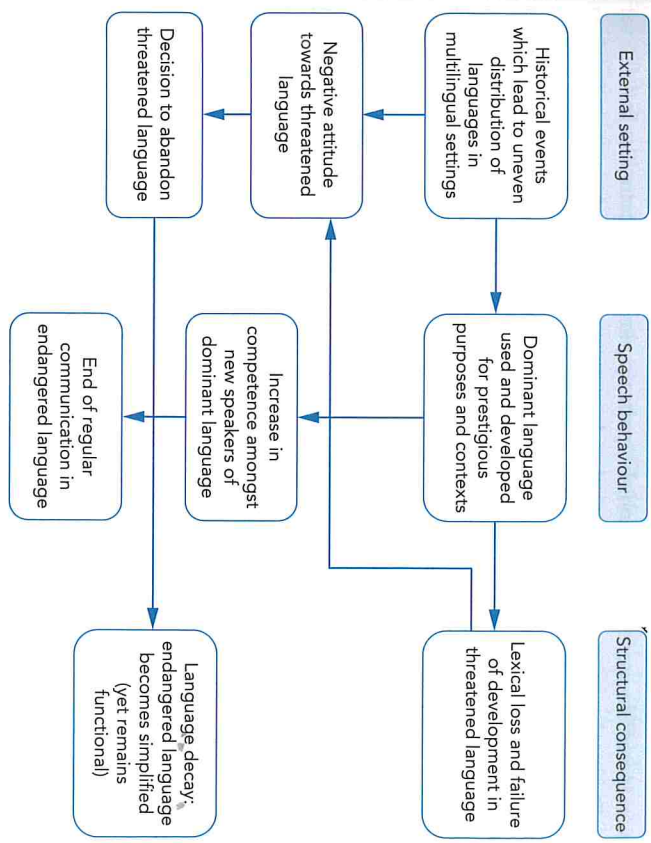
Language death doesn't have to involve such violent means, but read any book about language endangerment and you will find plenty of violent metaphors: some people talk of 'language murder' and 'language suicide', suggesting that languages do not die natural deaths, but are rather killed by other languages, drawing on the metaphor of a LANGUAGE IS A PERSON. English has been described as one of these 'language killers', as seems to be the case in the Tasmanian example just cited. But of course a language itself can't be a killer, so are such emotive and loaded terms really that useful, or are they harmful and potentially dangerous? To understand language death, it is important to consider local and global contexts, and examine the types of human behaviour that lead to it.

Speakers of a language often abandon their native tongue in favour of another, that is seen as more prestigious or powerful, in a process called **language shift**. Many people see English as one of these more prestigious and powerful languages, and there are many examples of speakers abandoning their own language in favour of it. But why does English hold such prestige? It certainly isn't anything to do with the language itself, and there's no reason that the vocabulary, grammar and phonology of English contributes to its prestige. No language is inherently superior to another, rather it is the associations of the language that make it so popular: English is the most widely used language of the internet, the language of much international trade, the language of international culture (such as the Hollywood film industry), and much, much more. In short, it is not languages themselves that 'kill' other languages: it is when a politically, economically and culturally powerful society imposes itself on a less powerful one.

Hans-Jürgen Sasse (1992) proposed a model of 'language shift' to demonstrate what processes are at work when languages are endangered. It is simplified here in Figure 5.9.

**KEY TERM**  
**Language shift:** a term used to describe a speaker's / speech community's sudden or gradual shift from the use of one language to another

Figure 5.9: Sasse's model of language shift (1992)



### 5.5.2 Should we care?

In short, yes. Languages carve the world up in very different ways, and languages offer a window into the human mind. Language reveals the many creative ways in which humans organise and categorise their experience. For linguists, the preservation of languages may seem to appear a little self-serving. Linguists need to study as many languages as possible to refine theories of language structure and to train future generations of linguists. There are new and exciting discoveries about languages still being made, and there is every reason to believe that what is now known about language is just the tip of the iceberg. Diversity is good for the human race – it allows us to express identity, community and celebrates difference. In linguistics, such celebration of diversity is known as **peace linguistics**, a movement that seeks to promote peace and human rights by emphasising the value of language diversity and multilingualism.

**KEY TERM**  
**Peace linguistics:** an approach to linguistics that emphasises the value of language diversity and the need to respect the dignity of individual speakers and speech communities

The rise of global languages can be good in that it increases levels of communication and shared understanding around the world. A global language is an incredible world resource which opens up plentiful opportunities for multicultural communication, mutual understanding and shared co-operation. It can help to create advancements in science, education and politics, and can make exploring the world easier, in some senses. But the rise of a global language means that smaller languages suffer – and are threatened with extinction. A major reason that languages become endangered is because of the threat of global languages such as English.

**PRACTICE QUESTION**  
Linguistic jingoism

Text 5C is a screenshot of an online petition that surfaced in June 2016, shortly after Britain voted to leave the European Union. What kinds of attitudes towards language does this text show?

Text 5C



international travel. Large global bodies such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Health Organization depend on global languages for efficient and economic communication. Global languages are undeniably useful, and allow us to communicate with an increasing range of speakers from diverse backgrounds. Countries may well choose to adapt a global language for economic reasons and to be seen as more 'credible' by others.

But we have seen the dangers and impact a global language can have on other languages, as well as cultural identity. People have a natural desire to use their mother-tongue and to see it flourish, and do not react well when an alternative language is forced or imposed upon them. Many speakers may have no desire to be part of a 'global village'. But to reject a global language in favour of a local language is often seen as a risk – if a community chooses to use English, they have a greater chance of accessing global amenities; but this means sacrificing aspects of their cultural and linguistic identity. Language is political and global languages often have a rather unsavoury history, due to associations of colonial violence, pressure and oppression. Global language speakers have a responsibility to understand and celebrate the nature of linguistic diversity, to respect people's linguistic choices and to be aware of the power that speaking a global language has.

**RESEARCH QUESTION**  
Investigating Englishes

This research task asks you to investigate a range of World Englishes. Prepare a report, presentation or case study about a particular global variety of English. If you are working in groups, then it might be useful to each take a variety from the 'outer', 'inner' and 'expanding' circles by Braj Kachru. You should include the following elements:

- How the particular variety came about – its roots and its history
- Number of L1/L2 speakers, where it is spoken, and its status as an official/unofficial language
- How it has been shaped by language contact
- What type of prestige (e.g. covert/overt) it carries across different local/global social groups, and why
- Some of its phonological and grammatical properties, and in what ways these are similar/different to British English.

**5.6 Do we need global languages?**

It is often suggested that we need global languages to communicate in our modern 'global village', particularly for trade, education, politics and

## Wider reading

Read more about World Englishes by exploring the following books:

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saraceni, M. (2015). *World Englishes: A Critical Analysis*. London: Bloomsbury.

Schneider, E. (2011). *English Around the World: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# Ideas and answers

## Chapter 1

### Activity 1.1

These statements are designed to be rather contentious and provoke debate. Of course, there is no one 'correct' answer but, as with all work with language, a descriptivist view should ultimately be agreed on. An important aspect to consider for all statements is context; for example, discussions around statement g, could come to the conclusion that a more accurate term for 'correct' language use should be 'appropriate' language use. You could also discuss how language use is tied up with wider ideological issues, as implied in h, and i.

### Activity 1.2

After doing this activity, it should be clear that people belong to multiple speech communities that overlap with one another. Different speech communities draw on different linguistic repertoires, according to the context and situation of use.

## Chapter 2

### Activity 2.1

You could make use of an Old English dictionary to help with this activity. There are a number of these available online, such as: [old-engli.sh/dictionary.php](http://old-engli.sh/dictionary.php). The text is about God creating things in the universe: the sun (*sunne*), the moon (*mona*) and various animals such as whales (*hwaldas*), fish (*fiscgyrn*) and serpents (*wyrmgcynn*). The most obvious pattern is the 'on the [number] day' (*on ðam [number] dæe*).

### Activity 2.2

- The writer of the poem clearly feels strongly about the way that English and French are used. English is seen as the 'low status' variety, French as the 'high status' variety. This reflects some of the linguistic attitudes that were present during the ME period.
- Both groups were probably fiercely proud of their language but recognised the fact that different languages held different levels of prestige. Many Norman invaders wished to impose their language onto native speakers, in an act of power that would force English speakers to 'conform'. Many native English speakers wished to resist this change, staying true to their English linguistic identity.