

## 1.1 English as a Lingua Franca

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### Transcript

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#### Slide 1

Welcome to the 'English as a Lingua Franca' main section of the course. In this segment, you will find out about some current models of World Englishes and International English, and the role of English as a global language and as an international lingua franca.

#### Slide 2

In order to set the tone for what is about to take place in this section, we would like you to take some time and think about your personal experience as a user of the English language. It is also important that the ideas discussed previously in the 'Using English' section are still present.

Firstly, think about the contexts English is used in around the world, for what purposes and among whom?

Secondly, why would you say English is a global language nowadays? Do you believe we actually need a global language?

Pause the video to think about these questions and click the link under the video to s-share your opinions

#### Slide 3

As you might know, there have been several attempts to explain the spread of English around the world. The most influential model of the spread of English is Braj Kachru's three-circle model of World Englishes which was developed in 1985. It still remains one of the most influential frameworks for studying the various roles English plays in different countries of the world as well as in a wide range of sociolinguistic situations.

This model consists of three concentric circles of language: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. Each of these circles represents the type of spread, patterns of acquisition and functional domains in which English is used in different countries and cultures worldwide. As you can see from the figure we have provided, in the centre we find the Inner Circle, which represents the countries in which English is a primary language and consequently acquired

as native language. Kachru claims the Inner Circle countries are the traditional bases of English and provide standards and norms for non-native speakers, to which they must conform. These countries are the UK, US, Australia, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand. The total number of English speakers in this circle ranges from 320 to 380 million.

The Outer Circle is comprised of nations such as Ghana, India, Kenya, Singapore or Zimbabwe, which are not norm-providing but norm-developing. In this Outer or extended circle, English is largely acquired as a second language and is primarily used in the country's main institutions. Note that Outer Circle countries are, for the most part, former colonies of Inner Circle countries, which means English has a colonial history as it spread to a non-native setting, where it is now a useful lingua franca between different ethnic and language groups. It is estimated that these speakers number about 150 to 350 million.

Finally, the Expanding Circle contains countries in which English is taught as a foreign language and functions widely as an international language. There is no colonial history in the acquisition of English and it does not play any historical or governmental role. However, the English language in these countries is becoming more and more influential as the number of its learners is increasing (or *expanding*) rapidly. They are also norm-dependent upon the norm-providing Inner Circle countries. Much of the rest of the world's population not categorized in the previous circles are included in this Expanding circle: Portugal, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Norway, Brazil, China, Russia and so forth

#### **Slide 4**

To recap, the English spoken in the Inner Circle is said to be *norm-providing*. Speakers in these countries use English as a native language and look to the norms in their own society as standard, which is to say they use *endonormative* varieties.

The English as a Second Language varieties spoken in the Outer Circle are *norm-developing* and have become *nativized* or institutionalised.

Finally, the Expanding Circle refers to the English as a Foreign Language varieties. These are regarded as *performance varieties* without any official status. As a result, they are *dependent on the norms* set by native speakers in the Inner Circle.

#### **Slide 5**

As with all linguistic models we shall study in this course, Kachru's work has several limitations which have been widely discussed.

Jenkins lists what she calls "the most serious problems" identified by the academic community, some of which we shall look at very briefly. First, this three-way categorization of English is based on geography and genetics rather than on the speakers' use of English. Second, there is what she calls a grey area between the Inner and the Outer Circles, as well as between the Outer and the Expanding Circles. For instance, approximately twenty countries are in transition from an EFL to an ESL status, including Denmark, Belgium, Sudan and Costa Rica. Jenkins also claims that there is difficulty in using the model to define speakers in terms of their proficiency in English.

Although Kachru's model implies uniformity of linguistic situations for all countries within a particular circle, the truth is that there is a large amount of linguistic diversity within and between countries of a particular circle, which this model does not account for.

Nonetheless, and despite these shortcomings, it is still widely regarded that Kachru's model has been a helpful approach in describing the present-day world status of English.

### Slide 6

After reflecting upon Kachru's model, take into consideration **now Activity 2**.

Two links are provided to two different videos – "How English became a global language" and "Global English with David Crystal". In both videos the speakers stress the global role of English because of the power of those who speak it.

From your viewpoint, does this power simply refer to native speakers? And what about non-native speakers, what has been their role in the spread of English?

Once you have watched the videos, consider these two questions and click on the link under the video to share your views. Pause the video now to complete this activity.

### Slide 7

So why is English an international lingua franca? As was mentioned in the previous video, and as Crystal here emphasizes as well, historically, its leading role is essentially based on two factors. Firstly, there was the expansion of the British Empire, which spread out all over the world, and secondly, there was the role of the US as the main economic power, which still justifies the global position of English today. However, we cannot forget the power of all those who speak it as well, especially since nowadays non-native speaker interactions outnumber by far native speaker interactions.

### Slide 8

The use of English is so widespread nowadays that it plays an important role in many domains, even in countries where English does not have an official status. For instance, in international relations and organizations, English is generally the most used common language, even when other official languages exist, such as is the case in the European Union and United Nations.

When considering the fields of research and higher education, English is also the language of choice, with many journals and courses being offered exclusively in English. As for business, publicity, ads and shop names, English is once again the main choice, as it reaches a broader audience. We have all witnessed this when walking around the streets of our respective cities. And we cannot forget pop culture and the mass media, especially the Internet, which have played a fundamental role. Some of the most popular films and television series of all time are in English, and more recently, interactive internet games have connected players from all over the world. Lastly, there is also communication with foreigners. As it has become easier to travel from one country to another, more and more people are connecting with each other.

### **Slide 9**

In 1999, Modiano proposed a model to describe the spread of English as an international language based on centripetal circles. It is quite remarkable that instead of focusing on the historical and geographical perceptions of more traditional models, he is concerned with the speakers' proficiency. Therefore, the centre of this model is occupied by both native and non-native speakers, as long as they are proficient in international English.

However, if you look at the circle surrounding the centre, you will see that a native speaker or any other non-native speaker may not be proficient in the international scope of the language because they may speak a dialect or have a strong regional accent. Although they may function well in their own first language communities, they may not perform satisfactorily in international contexts where English is used as a lingua franca.

The other circles in this model represent those learners, or potential learners, of English who are in the process of acquiring some kind of proficiency. Finally, the thicker arrows in this model indicate that learners and users of English are likely to move towards the centre and become competent users of English internationally, consequently increasing the number of speakers in the core circle.

### **Slide 10**

However, even though Jenkins acknowledges the usefulness and advantages of Modiano's model of centripetal circles in emphasizing the use of English as an

international language and the focus on the proficiency of its speakers, she also points out to some problems of this model. Firstly, she refers that it is difficult to determine what is or is not a strong accent. Who would decide and what would be the basis of such decision?

Also, Jenkins asks what does it mean to be proficient in international English? Besides the idea that it has to do with the speaker's ability to communicate successfully in international contexts, she says that the lack of any precise definition of 'International English' makes it difficult to distinguish proficiency and non-proficiency in international English.

All things considered though, it is undeniable that Modiano's model of centripetal circles has put the competent users of English in the centre regardless of their place of birth, displacing the conventional division between native and non-native speakers.

### **Slide 11**

Due to the criticism to his model of centripetal circles of international English, shortly after Modiano reformulated it and proposed a new model based on the features of English which are shared by all varieties of the language, which make up what he called 'English as an International Language' (or EIL). In other words, in the centre of this model are the features which are understood by most native and proficient non-native speakers (remember the circle in the centre of Modiano's centripetal circles?).

Surrounding these internationally comprehensible features are those which may or may not become part of EIL. All these features come from basically five groups of varieties (American English, British English, other major native varieties such as Canadian English, Australian English, South African English, etc., ESL or Outer Circle varieties such as Jamaican English, Singapore English, etc., and foreign or EFL 'varieties'). It is clear, however, that all these varieties possess features which are not part of the core EIL most likely being understood just by the speakers of that same variety.

### **Slide 12**

Again, Jenkins notes some problems in this model. Firstly, she stresses that it is quite difficult to distinguish core and non-core varieties, that is, those features that should be placed in the centre of the model. Moreover, Jenkins criticizes the reference to native varieties of English as 'major' as opposed to established ESL or Outer Circle varieties, such as Nigerian English or Indian English, which Modiano refers to as 'local' varieties. Despite these handicaps, Modiano's model of English as an International Language offers a noteworthy attempt to consider the global role of English based on the features which are comprehensible to most users, regardless of their origin or first language.

### Slide 13

The increasing use of English as a global language, in particular its use as a means of communication among non-native speakers of English, makes it necessary to draw a distinction between English as a Lingua Franca and English as a Foreign Language.

This issue has been the source of much debate over recent decades and there is already abundant literature on the topic. Jenkins, for instance, proposes a distinction between ELF and EFL which is listed in the table before you. Firstly, she places EFL under the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm, meaning people who learn English as a foreign language are doing so in order to be able to communicate with native English speakers.

Furthermore, differences from English as a Native Language are noticeably regarded as errors in EFL, in other words, from a *deficit perspective*, so conformity to a native speaker standard variety is encouraged.

ELF, however, has been placed within the World Englishes paradigm, one which recognizes that the majority of the world's English speakers are non-native English speakers and accepts the sociolinguistic implications of this fact, namely that the majority have the right to determine the kind of English they wish to use. As a result, ELF is seen from a difference perspective in the sense that ELF speakers find some forms of English as a Native Language communicatively important and consider others to be less significant. This means deviations from native speaker norms become *differences* rather than *deficits*.

Jenkins highlights yet another distinction: whereas ELF is founded on metaphors of language contact and evolution, EFL has its roots in metaphors of transfer, interference and fossilization. This means that bilingual ELF users may resort to code-switching, which in turn is perceived as a practical resource.

In the case of EFL speakers, code-switching is disapproved of and typically considered an error—a sign of gaps in knowledge. Consequently, in the case of EFL, native English provides a yardstick against which non-native English speakers' use is measured, and wherever it differs from native use, it is considered to be deficient.

To conclude, Jenkins points out the distinct goals these two concepts have: on the one hand, ELF is aimed at successful intercultural communication, mainly between non-native speakers of English; on the other hand, EFL aspires to successful communication with native English speakers.

### Slide 14

Considering the previous slide, the key notion seems to be “lingua franca” – a language that is generally used as a means of communication between interlocutors who share a different first language. This was the case with Latin and Arabic in the past, for instance. If English is the lingua franca of nowadays, Graddol believes that it should no longer be taught as a foreign language, in other words, with a native speaker paradigm in mind. Instead, he views it as a “new phenomenon now recognized as English as a Lingua franca”, which will inevitably bring about change to ELT.

### **Slide 15**

Seidlhofer goes on to highlight that, many of the times, the English that is taught in schools is not the English that is actually learnt. And the English that is actually learnt, either in or outside of school, is the one that is afterwards used internationally. Bearing this in mind, it is vital that the English that is taught be useful for learners to afterwards communicate effectively with whomever they may come across.

### **Slide 16**

Now that you have been introduced to some models of World Englishes and of English as an International Language, have thought about the roles of native and non-native speakers as English becomes an international lingua franca, and have reflected upon the distinction between ‘EFL’ and ‘ELF’, watch the video of the link on screen. In this video, David Crystal talks about what he likes most in English. After you answer the questions, click the link under the video so you can share your opinion at the Forum at this section of the course.

### **Slide 17**

The aim of this video was to introduce you to the notion of English as a Lingua Franca. The following sub-sections will further delve into other issues that will help you better understand ELF. Not only will it be defined more specifically, but so will the key issues associated with it and its discourse as well. Furthermore, the use of different communication strategies and translanguaging will likewise be explained, as key aspects when using English as a lingua franca.