

Daniela Cesiri

# Variation in English across time, space and discourse

An introductory textbook

*Daniela Cesiri, PhD*  
University of Venice "Ca' Foscari"  
Palazzo Cosulich Dorsoduro 1405  
30123 Venice (Italy)

I lettori che desiderano  
informazioni sui volumi  
pubblicati dalla casa editrice  
possono rivolgersi direttamente a:

Carocci editore

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 229  
00186 Roma  
telefono 06 42 81 84 17  
fax 06 42 74 79 31

Siamo su:

[www.carocci.it](http://www.carocci.it)

[www.facebook.com/carocceditore](https://www.facebook.com/carocceditore)

[www.twitter.com/carocceditore](https://www.twitter.com/carocceditore)



Carocci editore

Questo volume è pubblicato con il contributo  
del Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali  
Comparati dell'Università "Ca' Foscari" di Venezia.

1<sup>a</sup> edizione, dicembre 2015  
© copyright 2015 by Carocci editore S.p.A., Roma

Impaginazione e servizi editoriali:  
Pagina soc. coop., Bari

Finito di stampare nel dicembre 2015  
da Grafiche VD srl, Città di Castello (PG)

ISBN 978-88-430-7802-8

Riproduzione vietata ai sensi di legge  
(art. 171 della legge 22 aprile 1941, n. 633)

Senza regolare autorizzazione,  
è vietato riprodurre questo volume  
anche parzialmente e con qualsiasi mezzo,  
compresa la fotocopia, anche per uso interno  
o didattico.

List of abbreviations	11
Introduction	13
1. Language variation and change in the English language	15
1.1. The English language: linguistic studies and collocation	15
1.1.1. Some geographical notions	
1.2. Language variation and change: some definitions	18
1.2.1. The notions of dialect, accent and variety / 1.2.2. Standard language /	
1.2.3. Linguistic prestige	
1.3. Mechanisms of language change and variation in English	22
1.3.1. Mechanisms of language change: pronunciation / 1.3.2. Phenomena of	
language change in pronunciation / 1.3.3. Changes in morphology, syntax	
and vocabulary	
1.4. Semantic change	28
1.4.1. Specialisation / 1.4.2. Generalisation / 1.4.3. Metaphorical transfer /	
1.4.4. Amelioration / 1.4.5. Pejoration	
1.5. Word-formation in English	31
1.5.1. Clips (shortening) / 1.5.2. Blends (blending) / 1.5.3. Compounds	
(compounding) / 1.5.4. Loan words (borrowings) / 1.5.5. Affixation / 1.5.6.	
Conversion / 1.5.7. Analogy / 1.5.8. Calque or loan translation	
Test yourself: activities and practice	36
2. The history of English and its global spread	41
2.1. Introduction	41
2.2. Celtic Britain (1500 c. BC-50 AD)	42
2.2.1. Celtic traces in PDE	

## Vikings in England and the Danelaw

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century (793-794) the Scandinavians (a.k.a. Vikings) began raiding neighbouring coasts. Initially, this just consisted in plundering rich and fertile places and returning back to their villages. However, the Scandinavians eventually crossed the North Sea, attacking rich monasteries in Scotland, Ireland and the entire North of England.

The early Viking raids were carried out by Norwegians followed, during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, by the Danes who attacked the eastern coast of England. They were soon able to control firmly Kent and East Anglia, favoured by an initial weak Anglo-Saxon resistance. Permanent Danish settlements were, then, established into the so-called **Danelaw**, the area in eastern and north-eastern England under Danish rule. The Danes never left England entirely since they finally assimilated themselves into the English population.

Despite his attempts at defending the kingdom from the Viking raids, King Alfred was forced to make a peace treaty (866) with the Danish King Guthorm. The terms of the treaty 'confined' Alfred's reign to Wessex; the Danes settled in East Anglia and Mercia. Hence, they established the so-called **Danelaw** (from 'Dane Lagu', land of the Danes), where the Scandinavian linguistic influence was most deeply felt especially in lexis and pronunciation.

2.5.1. THE SCANDINAVIAN (LINGUISTIC) INFLUENCE:  
PLACE NAMES AND SOUNDS

The Scandinavian linguistic influence can be traced in Britain (in those places formerly in the Danelaw) and Ireland along the East coast (Co. Waterford, Co. Wexford and Dublin). In Scotland, we find a consistent Scandinavian influence in the Shetland and Orkney Islands and in the North-West of the mainland. The most evident traces are in place name endings. There are, for example, more than 600 places with the ending -BY (meaning village, e.g. in names like 'Fleckeby', 'Schysby' etc.). The ending is also found in the word BYE-LAW in which it means 'town-law'. In PDE it indicates a rule issued by some local authority or institution concerning the area under its jurisdiction.

Three other endings from Scandinavian are also evident: -THORPE meaning 'village' again (cf. German 'Dorf') as in 'Althorp', 'Gawthorpe', 'Linthorpe'; -THWAITE meaning 'an isolated piece of land or clearing' as in 'Applethwaite',

'Braithwaite', 'Satterthwaite'; -TOFT meaning 'a piece of ground or homestead' as in 'Brimtoft', 'Eastoft', 'Nortoft'. Personal names of Scandinavian origin end in English in -SON as in 'Stevenson', 'Johnson'. The equivalent in OE was the ending -ING as in 'Browning'.

In addition, the Scandinavian linguistic influence introduced the sounds [j] and [g] for 'g' instead of the OE aspiration (e.g., 'æg', PDE 'eye') and which will produce ME EY[E] and EGG. There is also the differentiation in [tʃ] ('church') and [k] ('kirk') as well as the differentiation in [ʃ] (of OE origin) and [sk] (of Scandinavian origin) for words having 'sk' as in SHIRT/SKIRT, SHRUB/SCRUB and SKIN, SKULL, SKY.

2.5.2. THE SCANDINAVIAN (LINGUISTIC) INFLUENCE: THE LEXICON

When Scandinavian words appeared in written texts they were given English inflections, such as indication of the plural, to form adverbs and to indicate the gender. The total number of Scandinavian borrowings is rather small but they are important because they entered common usage and are words of frequent, everyday use.

In some areas of England and Scotland, dialects preserve a large quantity of Scandinavian loan words, such as BIG (to build), HOAST (cough), LAIK (to play), LAIT (to search), LATHE ('barn', shed, shelter), LIE ('scythe' pron. [saið], to slice). The semantic fields in which Scandinavian brought new words are those in the list below:

- **close family relationships:** SISTER;
- **parts of the body:** LEG, NECK, SKIN, SKULL;
- **common nouns:** BAG, CAKE, DIRT, FELLOW, FOG, KNIFE, SKILL, WINDOW;
- **everyday adjectives:** FLAT, LOOSE, LOW, ODD, UGLY, WRONG;
- **everyday verbs:** CALL, DRAG, GIVE, RAISE, SMILE, TAKE;
- **conjunctions:** THOUGH, TILL, UNTIL;
- **pronouns:** THEY, THEM, THEIR (OE HIE, HIM, HIERA).

2.6

The ME period (1066-1500 c.): historical background

ME is the name given by historical linguists to the English language in use between the late 11<sup>th</sup> century and about 1470, when a form of London-based



English began to become widespread, a process aided by the introduction of the printing press in England by William Caxton in the late 1470s. ME as a written language displays a wide variety of dialectal forms. However, the diversity of forms in written ME suggests the gradual end of the role of Wessex (and of West Saxon) as a centerpiece and model for the written language. This led to the emergence of more distinct local scribal styles and written dialects as in Northumbria, East Anglia and London, which successively developed as major centres of literary production.

Conventionally, the beginning of the ME period is set in the year 1066 when the Normans took control of England. Between the OE and the ME periods we have fifty years of passage during which England underwent many changes from a political and social viewpoint. After the death of King Alfred the Great (899), Danish kings seated on the throne of England.

For political reasons, King Ethelred II and his family (his wife Emma and their son, Edward) were exiled in Normandy where the Queen's family lived. Edward returned to England only in 1041. He became king in 1042 and was given the nickname of 'the Confessor' because he was very pious. In 1066, Edward the Confessor died heirless; thus, because of the unclear situation in the line of succession, the English throne was claimed by two possible successors, The King of Norway (Harold) and William Duke of Normandy, who had kept Edward in his castle and freed him under the promise he would succeed to the 'English' throne after Edward's death.

On 28<sup>th</sup> September 1066, William landed in southern England (at Pevensey, near Hastings) with a well-organised army of Norman supporters and on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1066 he defeated Harold of Norway, marching towards London to claim the throne of England. He will be crowned King of England on Christmas Day 1066 during a ceremony held at Westminster Abbey in London, probably to mirror the famous Charlemagne's example. This event started the tradition of using Westminster Abbey for religious ceremonies regarding the most important and significant events for the Royal Family and the Kingdom in general, such as Coronations, weddings, funerals, celebrations and commemorations.

#### 2.6.1. SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

William becoming King of England meant not only a political turn in the history of the country but also a socio-cultural and linguistic revolution since he

brought a consistent group of Norman supporters (members of the Norman aristocracy and normal soldiers) who settled permanently in England.

The Normans brought with them the feudal system. It was a system where all land was owned by the King. One quarter remained the King's personal property, another quarter was given to the Church and the remaining land was leased out under strict control to Norman landlords who became the King's vassals (barons, knights and other members of the Norman nobility who had followed William in England).

This system was based also on the Norman division in rigid social classes and social hierarchies which brought a revolution in the composition of the former OE society. In addition, social mobility was unknown and made impossible by the rules governing the feudal system of land's ownership. Changes were introduced also in the Church, in which the Roman-like division of the clergy was introduced to replace the monastic kind of religious life typical of Anglo-Saxon Christianised England and the former Celtic areas.

The feudal administration of the land brought by the Normans introduced also a new land division which will led to the establishment of present-day English counties, slightly changed only in 1974. In addition, the Normans used a new military system, composed of professional warriors, and in which loyalty had to be given to the King or the overlord. In Anglo-Saxon England, instead, loyalty was for the land and the tribe first.

The Normans brought with them also the extensive (far more extensive than in the Roman period) use of keeping written records of their daily life and activities such as administration of the land and of law, religion and culture in general. They also introduced the Common Law which consists of law proceeding from precedents and cases, developed by judges through decisions of courts and tribunals rather than through the legislative power.

The linguistic impact of the Normans on OE and on the formation of a new national language was enormous. Indeed, they introduced Norman French (a language belonging to a different family than OE) and used it as national language of the upper classes as well as the language of administration, law, religion, culture.

#### 2.6.2. ENGLISH VS. FRENCH

William replaced most of the native English nobility with Norman aristocracy to gain supporters and imposed Norman French (and French culture) as the



language of the ruling classes. During this period the ruling classes include the Norman nobility, higher church officials such as archbishops and abbots as well as French-speaking Norman troops garrisoned in England.

200 years after the Norman Conquest (i.e., 1266 c.) only the 10% of the population in England was composed of monolingual French speakers. The remaining 90% of the population still spoke OE, which was only tolerated by the Norman overlords as they wanted to keep their own political, linguistic and cultural supremacy over the populace. This led to the creation of a situation of **diglossia** (cf. CHAPTER 1), in which OE was the language used for everyday situations and Norman French was the prestige language used in specific, higher register contexts.

Subsequently, **three** languages were spoken in England at the same time. **Latin** was the official language of law, petitions to Parliament, official documents from the Royal Chancery, court records etc.; **French** was used for commercial and city records as well as in writings from English monasteries and to write literature in the court, but only until the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. A **third language (ME)** emerged as a consequence of intermarriages, everyday contact and commercial/business needs between French-speaking settlers and OE-speaking population. These contacts produced a group of bilingual speakers, including knights, merchants, stewards, bailiffs, minor landlords, parish priests, monks, who started to speak ME, in which traits of the West Midlands and of the southern dialect areas converged.

The emergence of ME as a new national language is testified by manuscripts circulating in different parts of England: no one would have understood their language if a standardised form had not been already familiar to the literate population.

### 2.6.3. TOWARDS A NEW STANDARD LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND

The everyday contact between Anglo-Norman speakers and local populations using regional varieties of OE promoted grammatical change in ME which is recorded in manuscripts by scribes who could speak no French and, thus, wrote in the dialect they knew.

In addition, in England Norman French started to decline; between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> century Norman French had lost its influence in France in favour of the French of Paris that held a higher prestige. Hence, by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Anglo-Normans stopped using Norman French, they became more

and more detached from the native Normandy, considering themselves English rather than French. To this growing sense of nationalism two main political and historical factors contributed: 1. the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) between England and France for commercial and political supremacy; 2. the growing political power gained by the English labouring classes who were highly demanded after the Black Death (1348-50) for the reconstruction of towns; they started to exercise their influence on the nobility but also on religious and lay institutions through the creation of corporations that marked them as influential social groups.

The growing power of social classes who were speakers of ME and spoke no other language forced the ruling classes to adopt that specific variety as the prestige language. Indeed, since the 1350s many documents are written in ME such as guilds and city records, commercial accountings, wills, deeds, government documents as petitions to Parliament and court records.

In addition, the 14<sup>th</sup> century witnesses the flourishing of literature in English with names such as Wyclif, de Trevisa, William Langland, Geoffrey Chaucer. By the reign of Henry V (1413-22) written records definitely attest the fact that English is now the national, overt prestige language of England. The variety chosen is, in particular, the so-called **Chancery English**, used by the Royal Chancery in London and taken as model by institutions in the rest of the Kingdom.

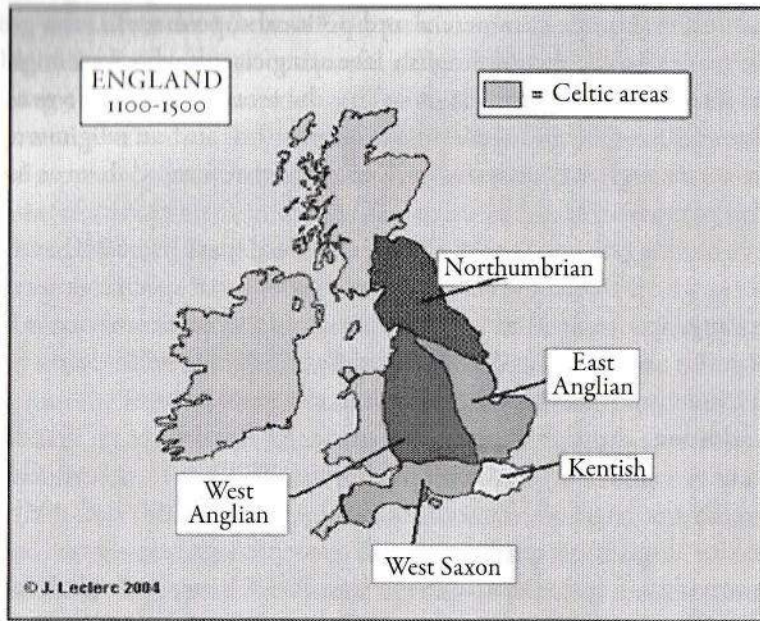
Chancery English was largely based on the London and East Midlands dialects, i.e. those areas that were the political and demographic centres of Medieval England. However, we can find also some borrowings from the Northern English dialects which served to avoid misunderstandings and make communication clearer (FIG. 2.1); for example, **THEY**, **THEIR** and **THEM** (Scandinavian words from the Danelaw) were used instead of the OE/London **HI**, **HIR** and **HEM** because the latter forms could be confused with **HE**, **HER**, and **HIM**.

In the early stages of development, the clerks who used Chancery English as a common language would have been familiar with French and Latin. The strict grammar of those languages influenced the construction of what was later to develop into EModE and, eventually, into present-day StE. The situation was further complicated by the fact that, apart from some exceptions, English had been for 200 years only a spoken language, thus we can find inconsistent spelling repeated even in the same document.

By the 1450s, Chancery English was used for official purposes. The only exceptions remained the Church (which used Latin) and the legal field (for



FIGURE 2.1  
ME dialect Map



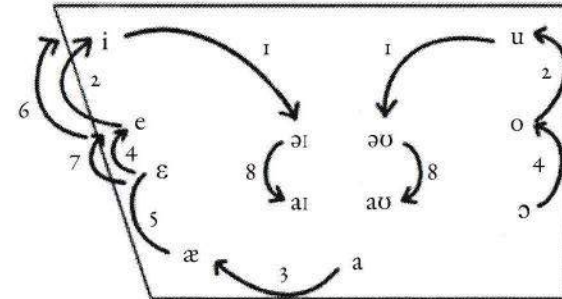
Source: [https://slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=english\\_history](https://slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=english_history).

which Law French and some Latin were still used). The new overt prestige variety was disseminated around England by clerks and public officials sent on behalf of the Court and its administrative offices, slowly gaining prestige because institutions and Royal offices in the rest of the country had to adapt to this new 'standard' if they wanted to keep contact with the Court.

In this period, a very important event for the development of RP is the so-called **Great Vowel Shift (1350-1500)**. It is typical of the EModE period but it actually started during the ME period and reached its full effects only during the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Great Vowel Shift is defined as **a change in the quality of all the long vowels and (as a consequence) of some diphthongs** (FIG. 2.2). It influenced mainly EModE pronunciation but has its causes during the late Middle Ages. We have three main causes to list for The Great Vowel Shift: 1. **demo-**

FIGURE 2.2  
Changes introduced by The Great Vowel Shift



- Step 1: i and u drop and become əɪ and əʊ
  - Step 2: e and o move up, becoming i and u
  - Step 3: a moves forward to æ
  - Step 4: ɛ becomes e, ɔ becomes o
  - Step 5: æ moves up to ɛ
  - Step 6: e moves up to i
  - Step 7: ɛ moves up to e
  - Step 8: əɪ and əʊ drop to aɪ and aʊ
- A new e was created in Step 4; now that e moves up to i.  
The new ɛ created in Step 5 now moves up.

Source: <http://www.thehistoryofenglish.com>.

**graphic:** mass migration from the North to the South-East of England after the Black Death (the Great Plague, 1347-50) increased social mobility and lower classes adapting to new roles or moving higher in society brought changes in pronunciation; 2. **social:** change in the nobility from a French-speaking to an English-speaking ruling class meant a change in the prestige accent of English with new sounds emerging from the contact between English and French; 3. **political or historical:** the political and social upheavals during the 15<sup>th</sup> century brought a change in the social composition of England with new ruling classes imposing new regional accents. These changes in pronunciation led also to changes in the lexicon, with the introduction of new spellings or of different spellings to distinguish terms of different grammatical category (e.g., a noun from the verb or a noun from the adjectival form).



2.6.4. ME LEXICON<sup>4</sup>

The lexicon is one of the most interesting aspects of ME. The OE vocabulary is enriched with a massive use of external borrowings which will cause, in PDE, the parallel existence of OE (indigenous) words and synonyms of foreign (French or Latinate) origin. They are called **doublets**.

In other cases, only the external borrowing has been kept in PDE. However, traces of parallel OE/French-Latinate terms for the same concept are kept especially in Legal English and some ESP. In PDE they are used in different registers (terms from OE are generally less formal while terms from Norman French or from Latin are usually more formal). In the following list some examples are provided in which the first term is of OE origin whereas the second term is of French/Latin origin:

- NEW - NOVEL;
- EARL - COUNT;
- WILL - TESTAMENT;
- GAOL/JAIL - PRISON;
- names of human organs (HEART, BRAIN, and so on) - their adjectives (CARDIAC, CEREBRAL, and so on);
- some phrasal verbs *vs.* verbs of Latin origin (borrowed directly or through French).

During the ME period, major influences come from Latin through French (for terms regarding religion and the law) and from French to refer to the Norman, French-speaking culture. French suffixes which will become extremely productive in English are also introduced such as **-ABLE** (e.g., SUITABLE, RELIABLE, COMFORTABLE) and **-OUS** (e.g., DANGEROUS).

The French loan words in English are so numerous that an extensive list is almost impossible. For this reason, the following table will provide some illustrative examples. The text in bold indicates the semantic fields in which borrowings from French are usually divided:

<b>Government administration</b>	<b>The Law</b>	<b>The feudal system</b>	<b>Literature, the arts, science, culture</b>
government, court, crown, peace, country, county, power, authority, parliament, property, money	justice, judge, debt, prison, jury, cause, crime, family, marriage, heir, age	baron, count, prince, honour, glory, noble, sir, madam, serve, servant, order, obey	art, verse, poem, adventure, poetry, beauty, colour, nature, season, isle, river, perfect, doubt, reason
<b>Fashion, food, recreational activities</b>	<b>Military terms</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Everyday language (general terms)</b>
sport, music, melody, fine, flower, company, cards, comfort, dress, boil, fry, roast, dinner, mutton, pork	war, army, standard, tower, soldier, navy, enemy, danger, force	miracle, charity, virtue, saint, religion, pilgrim, virgin, grace	place, cry, matter, point, course, chamber, people, change, arrive, very

2.7

The EModE period (1550 c.-1700 c.)

From the historical viewpoint, this period is characterised by many important events. First of all, the historical 'era' which defines the EModE period is the Renaissance. The term indicates a period of rebirth, or cultural and political renovation, which started in Italy in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, reaching Northern Europe only around 1500 (and lasting until 1650). The cultural and political ideas that shaped this period were basically influenced by a new interest in the classical cultures of ancient Rome and Greece. The search for cultural rebirth led also to the promotion of a great number of cultural and political changes that mark the transition from medieval to modern life, in England as in continental Europe.

This period brought also a new social order in which the middle classes supported the national economy and in which social mobility progressively increased. The structure and organisation of society, people's world-views and national identity, the organisation of religious life were modified, and the arts and literature saw further development.

The Norman feudal social system was subject to gradual transformation especially after the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century Black Death. After the plague, indeed, there was a sudden lack of cheap manpower. Thus, the lower classes had the possibility to claim wages for their work. This led peasants and other crafts-

4. The following lines are a sample text for the ME period; they are taken from the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400) by Geoffrey Chaucer: "Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote / The droghte of March hath perced to the roote / And bathed every veyne in swich licour, / Of which vertu engendred is the flour". In PDE, "When in April the sweet showers fall / That pierce March's drought to the root and all / And bathed every vein in liquor that has power / To generate therein and sire the flower".



men to free themselves from their ancient feudal obligations and to become economically self-sufficient; hence, the lower classes and gifted craftsmen and merchants started to establish a new, economically-defined middle class protected by guilds and powerful trade unions.

The Early Modern is also a period in which new ways of thinking are introduced such as a scientific (empirical) way of approaching knowledge and scientific and technological research. In the Middle Ages, education was characterised by a combination of medieval theology and classical philosophy. This was called 'scholastic thinking' and was pushed to the background with the advent of humanism. Later, the scholastic method was heavily criticised by the emerging natural sciences.

Approaching the investigation of reality with new eyes, the world is not seen as the kingdom of God any longer but as a natural space governed by universal rules. In England, essential figures for modern science publish their innovative works, such as the philosopher and empiricist Francis Bacon, the physician William Harvey, or the physicist Isaac Newton.

In the field of religion, during King Henry VIII's reign (1509-47) England establishes the Anglican Church (in line with the contemporary Protestant Reformation in other countries in Northern Europe) with its own saints and martyrs and in which the monarch, and not the pope, is the Head of the Church.

In addition, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1547-1603), England experiences great improvements in sea trade and territorial expansion with the discoveries of new lands and the establishment of overseas colonies, which are actually the roots for the British Empire that will see its heyday during the Victorian era (19<sup>th</sup> century).

The exploration of overseas countries was triggered not only by economic reasons and greed but also by a scientific interest in nature. In the late Middle Ages, the North and East Seas were economically dominated by the Hanseatic League, a trade union whose power and influence went well beyond economic matters. London constituted one of the centres of this early form of coordinated international trade. More importantly, the Renaissance constituted the basis for the Spanish and Portuguese exploration and colonisation of the Americas and Africa. These two sea powers brought enormous riches from far-away continents to Europe.

At first, England was not a real protagonist. However, the merchant and adventurer Francis Drake pirated Spanish merchant ships coming from the

Americas; this made him a national hero in England. In addition, he won an important sea battle against the 'invincible' Spanish *armada*, earning him the favour of Queen Elizabeth I and, actually, giving a halt to the Spanish prominence as a colonising power. Drake's successful actions are of great importance for the history of England as he opened the way for the English expansion to the American continent and the Southern hemisphere that will lead to the creation of the glorious British Empire of the later centuries.

#### 2.7.1. EMODE DIALECTS AND THE EMERGENCE OF RP: THE EAST MIDLANDS TRIANGLE

During the EModE period, the status of English was extended dramatically. By mid-14<sup>th</sup> century English had already become the language of administration and government. Latin, however, remained the high-prestige *lingua franca* of learning and wisdom, especially among the higher clergy.

By the end of the EModE period, though, English substituted Latin and became the language of science. This improvement in status and the political development of England as a sea power around the world constitute the historical basis for English to become a *lingua franca* around the world and in many professional domains, including business, the academia and the sciences. But, most importantly, English took its predominant status of prestige language in Great Britain. Chancery English contributed significantly to the development of this status, and the political, commercial and cultural dominance of the so-called East Midlands Triangle (London as the national capital, then Oxford and Cambridge as important centres for higher education) was well established long before the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but it was the printing press that really prompted the final stages of the standardisation process of English.

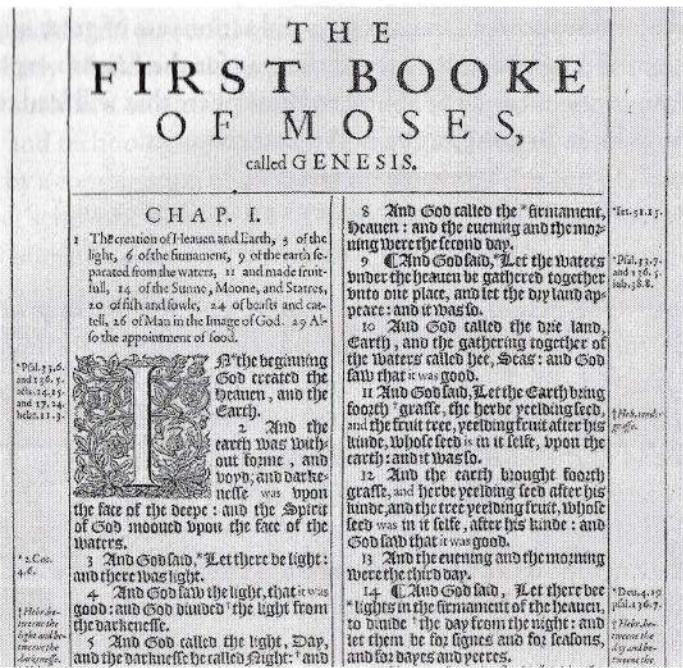
The dialect and spelling of the East Midlands were spread thanks to newly introduced mass (and increasingly cheap) printing techniques; its speakers constituted a very mobile portion of the population, taking the dialect in other parts of the kingdom, and even overseas, so the new national prestige language became the *de facto* standard and, over time, spelling and grammar gradually became stabilised.

#### 2.7.2. THE AGE OF THE BIBLES

The EModE period is also called the **age of the Bibles** because of the massive publication of Bible translations. The reason for these publications lies in the



FIGURE 2.3  
Sample page from the *King James Bible* (1611 edition).



religious controversies of the Reformation period. The more discussions about the Gospel were made accessible to the public by the reformers, the more people became interested in reading the holy texts for personal interpretation.

Many of those attracted by Protestantism were of humble origin, had no education in Latin and spoke only English. Consequently, translations of the Bible and the Holy Texts were needed. English Bibles, and Bibles in English, raised the prestige of English in general, whereas Latin was despised by many as a ‘popish’ language, the language of the pope in Rome.

The only Authorised Bible of the Anglican Church, the *King James Bible*, was published in 1611 (FIG. 2.3). This official translation was worked out by 54 translators who followed strict guidelines. The translators preferred to use a dignified and rather archaic style. Therefore, the language represented in this *Bible* is very conservative and can help historical linguists to retrace relic forms of older usages but still present in the 1611 *Bible*.

2.7.3. ENGLISH VS. LATIN

The influx of Latin vocabulary, through the classics and the Roman Catholic religion, was not generally appreciated by all speakers of English, especially as regards new Latinate but obscure terms purposely created by some intellectuals of the time to isolate themselves from laypeople and novices. Language purists opposed this development violently by calling those who used these words snobbish intellectuals, ‘inkhorn writers’. Others, however, considered this process more positively and stressed the importance of those words for the English language, especially in those cases and fields of knowledge in which English had a very limited (if any) tradition in a specific terminology.

These two different viewpoints are at the basis of the so-called **Inkhorn Controversy** or **Inkhorn Debate**, i.e. a dispute about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ English. For many Latin had still the aura of the stylistic and rhetorical model. Meanwhile, English was in the process of becoming a language that could adopt all discursive functions without depending on the lexical support of Latin. In other words, the Inkhorn Controversy reflects the search for a stronger English linguistic identity but it also shows that this linguistic identity had always been subject to influences from a great number of other languages. Moreover, the debate clearly shows that the English language and scholars’ writing in English were in search for linguistic authority because a generally acknowledged standard had not been established yet.

2.7.4. EMODE VOCABULARY:  
PHENOMENA OF WORD-FORMATION

As regards morphology during the EModE period, we should say that much had already been fixed during the late ME period. However, many words were still borrowed from other languages and a great number was also created afresh, especially through the word-formation processes of **affixation**, **compounding** and **conversion** (cf. CHAPTER 1).

In this period, we have the creation of new ordinary words or words dealing with practical activities of everyday life. As for **affixation**, we have four different cases:

- **nouns** were formed with -NESS added to adjectives (BAWDINESS, BRISKNESS) and -ER added to verbs (FEELER, MURMURER);
- **adjectives** formed by adding -ED (LATTICED) or -Y (BATTY, BRINY);



– **adverbs** were formed from adjectives and adding **-LY** (BAWDILY) or **-WISE** (SPORTING-WISE);

– **verbs** formed with **-ISE** (ANATOMISE).

The prefix **UN-** was used freely with nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs (UNCIVILITY, UNCLIMABLE, UNAVAILING, UNCLASP, UNCIRCUMSPECTLY).

The process of **compounding** was used mainly to create new **nouns**, especially in the combinations:

– noun + noun (SHEEP-BRAND, WATERDOCK);

– adjective + noun (FRENCHWOMAN, FRESHMAN);

– verb + object (SCRAPE-PENNY).

Finally, the process of **conversion** was employed to create verbs from nouns (TO BAYONET, TO GOSSIP, TO INVOICE), nouns from adjectives (AN ANCIENT, A BRISK), nouns from verbs (AN INVITE, A LAUGH).

#### 2.7.5. EMODE LEXICON

The lexicon of EModE was greatly enriched for many reasons, such as international trade and exploration. English speakers had new contacts with speakers of other languages, with objects, substances, plants, animals, and even abstract concepts that were brought to the continent from the American continent and Africa.

These abstract concepts and real objects were in many cases unknown, therefore they needed new names that could be easily pronounced and remembered by everyone. The easiest thing to do in these cases was to borrow the name used in the original language, adapting its spelling and the way it sounded to the English of the time. Thus, a great number of new words entered the English vocabulary via Spanish, Arabic, Dutch, Italian, and other languages. **External borrowings** from other languages include borrowings from:

– Latin: GENIUS, SPECIES, LENS, MILITIA (more formal and literary terms, used chiefly in specialised fields such as science, medicine, religion, classical culture and the liberal arts);

– French: naval, military fields (PIONEER, COLONEL, MACHINE), artistic words (SCENE, GROTESQUE);

– Spanish: ARMADA, CANNIBAL, NEGRO, POTATO, TORNADO, RENEGADE, COMRADE, SHERRY, BANANA;

– Italian: ARTICHOKE (from a Northern Italian variant and distorted term

of an original Spanish name), ARTISAN, BALLOT, ESCORT, PISTOL, SONNET, PASTEL, STANZA, BUFFOON;

– Dutch: YACHT, DECK, CRUISE, ICEBERG;

– Other languages: ZEBRA (Africa), TEA/KETCHUP (China), CARAVAN (Persia).

#### 2.8

#### The LModE period (from 1700-20 to 1900-20)

The LModE period includes the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The period is a complex one, leading the Western(ised) world into modernity. The LModE period takes also, for this reason, various names given to account for its complexity. The LModE period is in fact known as the age of:

– prose;

– personal letters;

– letter writing;

– manuals;

– professional/academic writing;

– linguistic stability;

– further standardisation;

– dictionary-making;

– grammar-writing.

The last four terms are particularly relevant from a linguistic viewpoint. What should be remembered about this period is that, by now, England is an established European and world power mainly through colonialism and the consolidation of the British Empire, started during the EModE period.

The main historical events (relevant to the HEL) that can be listed for this age are certainly the Industrial and the Scientific Revolutions, which will change the United Kingdom (and rest of Europe) into a 'modern' country and will introduce new concepts and new terms in the language itself. In addition, we should also mention the development of the North American continent from a colonised territory into proper nation (e.g., the USA).

Finally, Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901) marks the heyday and probably the end of the British Empire but is certainly to be considered an age of reforms in the living conditions of British citizens and in the conditions of the working classes in particular, through several reforms in education, health and



sanitary systems, regulations in children's and women's labour, the creation of the unions, the first fights (towards the end of the period) for the recognition of women's fundamental rights as individuals equal to men etc.

### 2.8.1. ESTABLISHING A PROPER ENGLISH STANDARD

The main linguistic achievement in the LModE period is certainly a general awareness of the existence of a **standard English**. After the codification process of a standard language had been completed towards the end of the EMod- and the beginning of the LModE period, the central and final decades of the Victorian Age witness the concern and debates about the right form to be used in spelling, pronunciation and grammar. Issues on linguistic politeness (very roughly defined as the use of the right language to the right person in the right situation) are widely discussed and manuals for the correct usage of English mushroom.

The publication of the first dictionaries and prescriptive grammars triggers the standardisation of spelling and the further codification of the language. The first and most important works are certainly Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) and Robert Lowth's *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762). The former will be the basis for all future dictionaries of English, containing the main lemma, its standard pronunciation, its meaning explained through a paraphrase and a series of literary quotations (in chronological order) to illustrate the contexts of occurrence of the lemma. Johnson's *Dictionary* is considered the first dictionary of English on historical bases and the inspirational work for the creation of the world-wide renowned *Oxford English Dictionary*. Lowth's text, on the other hand, will start a tradition in prescriptive (normative) grammars that will 'teach' English to native and non-native speakers alike for the next decades, well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.8.2. EXPANSION OF GENERAL VOCABULARY

The completion of the codification and standardisation processes by the 18<sup>th</sup> century does not stop the constant expansion of the LModE lexicon. This happens through several sources, such as word-formation processes which include **affixation** (with suffixes and prefixes mainly taken from Greek, Latin and French) as in UNFORGIVING, UNFUNNY, DECONTROL, DENATIONALISED. The most frequent suffixes and prefixes used in LModE are, respectively,

ANTI/DIS/INTER/MIS/NON/PRE/PRO/SELF and ISE/ISATION/ABLE/EER/IST/LY. Other word-formation devices used during the LModE period are the following ones:

- **compounding**: BUSINESS-MAN;
- **conversion**: mainly nouns from verb phrases (TO HANDOUT/A HAND-OUT);
- **shortening**: VAN ('caravan');
- **blending**: SMOG ('smoke + fog').

In addition, the LModE lexicon is enriched by and through **external borrowings** in two different cases:

1. External borrowings enriching general vocabulary:
  - French: CRITIQUE, POINTILLISM, COUTURE, ROUGE, SUEDE, ÉLITE, ETIQUETTE, PARVENU, CHAUFFEUR, GARAGE, HANGAR;
  - Dutch: GIN, TAFFRAIL;
  - Italian: DIVA, FIASCO, SCENARIO, STUDIO;
  - German: BLITZ.
2. External borrowings enriching scientific terminology:
  - Latin: FORMULA, BACILLUS, VERTEBRA;
  - Greek: ION, IRIS, LARYNX;
  - German: COBALT, QUARTZ;
  - Eponyms (terms created from personal names): AMP(ÈRE, from French), VOLT (Italian), GAUSS (German), KELVIN (English), WATT (Scottish scientist); all these terms originated from the names of the scientists who made the discovery or introduced the new idea/process.

### 2.8.3. ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE FOR THE SCIENCES

The LModE period sees also the foundation of English as the language for international communication and the spread of scientific knowledge. This is due to the increasing economic and cultural role played, and technological advancement brought, by English-speaking countries.

It is interesting to notice that the basis for the present-day role of English in academic research papers derives from the work of Robert Boyle (1627-1691), who was the first to introduce the experimental method in scientific research and one of the founders of **The Royal Society** (1662) for the diffusion of scientific knowledge. Boyle and his colleagues in the Society encouraged the use of a clear English to describe experiments and research methods, which had to



be communicated and circulated among the scientific community and novices to the discipline through specific text types. Hence, the creation of the experimental essay which is considered the first instance of present-day scientific research articles.

The use of a clear language and of a specific text type are two of the reasons why English is now the language of the sciences and of the international diffusion of scientific/technical (ESP) and academic knowledge (EAP).

## 2.9

## The spread of English

English has now become a language spoken worldwide, as we witness every day with the diffusion of English around the globe via the former colonies and the advancements of English-speaking countries in the sciences and technologies that help the adoption of English as main language for international, general and domain-specific communication.

The first territories where English was 'exported' as a language through colonisation are actually in the same British Isles and in Ireland, i.e. in the former Celtic-speaking countries which are now part of English-speaking countries where English is L1 (first language, or mother tongue). Simplifying a far more complex phenomenon, we can say that – in the HEL (ancient and recent) – language diffusion happened in three main cases:

1. English spread through **colonisation**: permanent occupation of new territories by English-speaking settlers that led to the creation of the overseas colonies of the British Empire; these countries are now listed in the group of English-speaking countries, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, India. In this case we have new, fully formed varieties (in some cases new standards) of English;
2. English spread through **occupation**: it is a process similar to colonisation but in this case only a minority of the original English-speaking settlers resides permanently in the territory. This is the case of English brought in the Pacific area. During a relatively short-term occupation, English intermingles with local languages, producing a local form of English; when this new variety takes a proper, complete linguistic form, the so-called New Englishes are created;
3. English is diffused worldwide for mere **communication purposes**: in this case no actual colonisation or settlement takes place. English is adopted by

international institutions, in business contexts and in countries where ethnic differences raise issues on language. The cultural concept of global village certainly favours the use of one global language (English, for the time being) for international, culturally-neutral communication.

In this context, a term is introduced to refer to the plethora of varieties of English that are found worldwide, i.e. **World Englishes**. Generally used for varieties emerged from case (2) above, the expression includes a range of meanings and interpretations from "an umbrella label referring to a wide range of differing approaches to the description and analysis of English(es) worldwide" (Bolton, Kachru, 2006: 240) to "the 'new Englishes' found in the Caribbean and in West African and East African societies [...] and to [...] Asian Englishes" (*ibid.*). In this textbook, the second sense will be implied; 'World Englishes' will be used as an umbrella term to include varieties of English that emerged from middle- to short-term (non-permanent) contacts with English-speaking settlers and from the use of English as global language and as a *lingua franca*.

## 2.10

## Classifying varieties of English: the Three-Circle Model

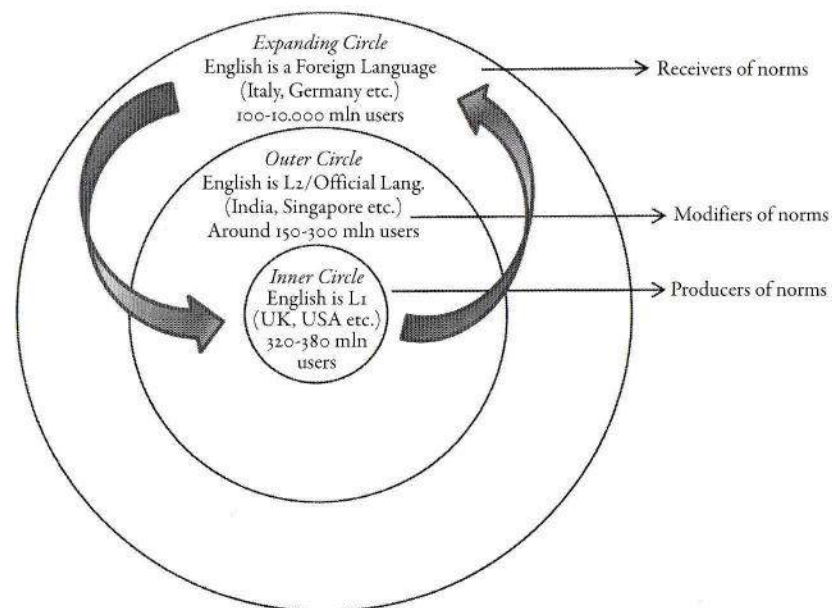
As it was mentioned in the previous paragraph, many varieties of English are spoken and used across the world. Kachru (1992) proposes a model, still valid, to classify these varieties in order to understand their characteristics and to collocate them with respect to the 'source' language, that is StE, as also with respect to new standards that are now full native varieties, such as AmE (or, e.g., AusE and NZE).

Kachru theorised a model in which three concentric circles help to group the several varieties of English in a shared environment. The names of the circles are **Inner**, **Outer** and **Expanding**.

The **Inner Circle** includes those countries such as the United Kingdom and all the other countries where native English speakers have settled down permanently in large numbers, namely: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States (whose AmE is now considered the second standard language existing after StE). In these countries English is a first language for the majority of the population. The **Outer Circle** includes countries in which English is a second language, such as Hong Kong, India, Singapore. In these countries English is spoken **along with** another language. The **Expanding Cir-**



FIGURE 2.4  
The Three Circle model today



circle comprises those countries in which English is a foreign language such as Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, China, Japan etc. (FIG. 2.4).

McArthur (2001) suggests that users of English in the Inner Circle are around 375 million, the same amount (375 million users) is counted for the Outer Circle (ESL) societies but that around 750,000 to around 1,000 million are the users of EFL that are included in the Expanding Circle. Since the publication of the study, the figures might have changed but the third one is likely to be in constant dramatic increase considering the use of English for communication via the new digital and social medias. In addition, the vast majority of teachers of ESL and EFL (responsible for the teaching and further diffusion of English to younger generations in the world today) are non-native speakers of English. This means that today English is spoken mainly by non-native than by native speakers.

These figures and their implications are of extreme importance for language change. Indeed, in the past speakers in the Inner Circle were producers of norms, which were followed by speakers in the Outer Circle who, in turn, could

adapt these norms to local usages but who actually did not produce new norms. The norms produced in the Inner Circle were also passively received by speakers in the Expanding Circle. The recent use of English mainly by non-native speakers, who use it as a (culturally neutral) *lingua franca*, is changing roles. The more consistent group of speakers in the Expanding Circle is starting to develop its own norms, especially thought for purposes of successful communication as in the case of ELF and ESP/EAP. This means that those who were passive receivers of the norms become active producers, while the former producers are now the receivers. In the middle ground we still have the Outer Circle in which speakers modify to their own needs the norms produced by the other two circles (FIG. 2.4).

## 2.11 English as a global language

The concept of **English as a global language** arose in the 1990s and was further expanded by David Crystal, who provides this definition: “a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognised in every country” (2003: 3). Then, a global language (in our case, English) – to be considered as such – is to be found at the same time both in countries where it is L1 and in other countries around the world where it is adopted as L2 or as main foreign language; most importantly these countries must give it officially a special place within their own communities. These three cases must happen at the same time, not in different periods in the history of the language.

For this reason, we rightfully say that English is today’s global language: it is given overt prestige and used as a medium of communication in governmental institutions, the law courts, the media, the educational system in those countries included in the Outer Circle, in which we have ESL, such as Ghana, Nigeria, India, Singapore etc. In addition, English is, at the same time, given priority in many other countries’ foreign-language teaching programmes (EFL) even though it does not have an official status (countries in the Expanding Circle).

### 2.11.1. WHY ENGLISH?

English has achieved the status of global language not for particular linguistic merits or because it is simpler than other languages. The global status is achieved mainly through means of the power of its people, thus because of the



political and military power of English-speaking nations (as it happened for Greek, Latin and French in the past).

When France started to lose its colonial power and influence around Europe and overseas, then English found itself in the right place at the right time to replace French as language for international communication. There are two main reasons behind this: 1. **geographical-historical reasons:** events such as the colonisation in Africa and the South Pacific and pioneering voyages of English people to the Americas, Asia, the Antipodes with the great discoveries of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries gave importance to English-speaking countries; 2. **socio-cultural reasons:** since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people around the world have become dependent on English for their economic and social well-being. In this case, the USA join the UK in this role, especially since the end of WWII. Furthermore, we have to consider the spread of English also thanks to several other channels which may be summarised mainly in the medias (the press, radio and TV broadcasting, cinema/movies, music, the Internet), international trips (English used even in small airports), international security (through linguistic, English-based codes known as 'Seaspeak' and 'Airpeak' which are conventionally used even by people with the same nationality), education and scientific research (most of research papers and monographs are published in English to ensure greater diffusion), international relations (politics, diplomacy and international institutions).

A global language used around the world by any human being has certainly some positive aspects, which are mainly: easier intercultural communication, access to education worldwide and greater possibilities in improving social/financial conditions and living conditions in general. Some negative aspects could also be mentioned, such as linguistic power (predominance of one cultural model), linguistic laziness in learning other foreign languages and even linguistic death (in those countries where English is preferred to local, minority languages).

## 2.12 ELF

One of the linguistic products of English as a global language is certainly ELF. The existence and features of ELF are still at the centre of many debates, but it is certain that something like ELF is being used by non-native speakers of

English for the purposes of international communication. Therefore, scholars are studying its features and usages.

ELF can be defined as a "contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth, 1996: 240).

The phenomenon of ELF implies the use of a language with very limited cultural implications and in which what really matters is effective communication. However, even in this case, a standard model is needed; then, the choice fluctuates between BrE (StE) and AmE depending on the area of influence of the speakers involved in the communicative process in which ELF is used.

The average user of ELF has a quite defined profile: s/he may be either a native or a non-native speaker of English, s/he is typically bi- (or multi-)lingual, or bi-dialectal. In the latter case, "English-knowing bilingualism" (Bolton, Kachru, 2006: 117) is not the same concept as knowing Flemish and French in Belgium or Spanish and English in the Southern States of the USA, or Italian and German in Bozen: in the case of English-knowing bilingualism we have no identifiable 'owner' population or geographical base, no clearly defined accompanying culture or ethnic identity; the language is plainly instrumental and linguistic skills are similar to computer skills, driving, basic numbering etc.

Finally, the average ELF user is likely to be skilled in communicative and comprehension strategies and, above all, s/he is a speaker with full and accurate mastery of the grammar and lexis of the language, with an accent that is easily comprehensible to other ELF speakers.











## Variation in English across time and space

### 3.1

#### Introduction

The present Chapter provides an introduction to the standard, overt prestige accent currently accepted in England (RP) and to the hidden prestige accent (EE) that is rapidly spreading in the country. In addition, an overview of some of the most characteristic dialects of England and of the so-called Celtic Englishes will be introduced.

The second part of the Chapter considers the spread of English around the world with particular attention paid to overseas standard and national varieties used in those countries included in Kachru's Inner Circle.

### 3.2

#### Received Pronunciation (RP)

##### 3.2.1. THE ORIGINS OF RP

RP is the common abbreviation for 'Received Pronunciation', which indicates the fact that this **accent** (as RP is **not** a dialect) was passed from one generation to the following one, thus younger generations received the standard accent from the older ones. Its geographical origins are in the so-called **East Midlands Triangle**, the area from where a standard accent with the highest social prestige emerged already in the Middle Ages and, especially, during the EModE period (cf. CHAPTER 2).

It is during the 16<sup>th</sup> century that, in England, social prestige starts to be associated to one particular type of accent together with the general wish to establish a standard language. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century issues of correctness and purism in spoken and written language involve intellectuals as a direct conse-



quence of the increasing power and prosperity of the middle classes who want to climb the social scale not only through their new wealth but also by means of appropriate behaviour and distinguished accent. It will not be until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the notion of a completely non-localised accent to be spoken by educated, polite and refined society emerged. This role was given to RP, the accent spoken by the upper classes and the aristocracy in London. It was also considered the reference accent by the upper classes in the rest of England and imitated by social climbers and non-native speakers of English.

Since the 1980s the role of RP has been challenged by a newly-emerging accent, Estuary English (EE) which is spoken in London and along the Estuary of the river Thames, but it is gradually expanding to the rest of England, progressively becoming a full dialect with its own linguistic features.

### 3.2.2. RP: ITS SPREAD

The main means of diffusion of RP was certainly the public (i.e., privately-owned) school system formed by a nationwide network of residential schools for children of the upper and upper-middle classes. It is only in 1870 that the word RP is used for the first time to define this accent, formerly known as Public School English. The rise of an educated middle class favoured the spread of RP as superficial marker of social standing; its status was made even more successful by a diffused Victorian and Edwardian conformist practice to socially-valuable linguistic norms and a general middle-class desire for social acceptability.

In addition, the spread of RP as national, standardised accent was favoured by the first BBC sound broadcasting in 1922, and TV broadcasting in the 1930s. By using only RP speakers as announcers and newsreaders, the BBC accentuated the social importance of the accent and, in the public mind, RP became even more closely linked with high social status and intellectual competence (Wotschke, 1996).

Over the years, especially after WWII, thanks to a greater social mobility, the phenomenon of RP grew in complexity so much that Gimson (1980: 91) identified three types of RP:

- **conservative RP**, “used by the older generation and, traditionally, by certain professions or social groups”, it is the case of the aristocracy, the higher members of governmental institutions, a.k.a. the Establishment, and the Royal Household;

- **general RP**, “most commonly in use and typified by the pronunciation adopted by the BBC”;
- **advanced RP**, “mainly used by young people of exclusive social groups”.

The latter social group, however, seems to be the one most open to linguistic innovations, thus favouring the substitution of RP with new accents, such as the emerging EE. However, despite its declining fortune in the UK, RP is still taken as reference accent in many countries in which English is taught as a foreign language (EFL countries, for instance, such as Italy).

### 3.2.3. THE SOCIAL MEANING OF RP

The socio-linguistic status of RP is the aspect that constitutes the most peculiar characteristic of this accent: it is commonly linked to conceptions of social identity, being spoken by those upper classes in society that other speakers, who wish to climb the social scale, tend to imitate. Sociolinguistically speaking, RP can be considered an unusual accent because (1) it is supraregional (nowadays it is not associated to any particular area of England, despite its origins in the East Midlands Triangle) and (2) it has enjoyed a unique social prestige which is still hard to lose despite ‘dangers’ coming from other emerging accents such as the AmE accent and EE.

During the heydays of the BBC social influence, the media company mostly associated to the Establishment, RP was associated to BBC journalists and newsreaders so much that it was called also BBC English. For a certain period in the recent past several linguists defined RP as ‘the form generally used by newsreaders of the BBC’. RP is nowadays mostly known with the synonym of the Queen’s English, since the Royal Family (represented by the Queen) remain the stronghold of this accent by education, social rank and family tradition.

In this respect, the dialectologist Trudgill (2002: 176) affirms that “the RP accent is no longer the necessary passport to employment of certain sorts that it once was [...]; in many sections of British society, some of the strongest sanctions are exercised against people [using RP] who are perceived as being ‘posh’ and ‘snobbish’”.

This quotation implies that traditional social-prestige accents may lose ground in favour of new sociolinguistic styles. In fact, as Coupland (2000: 632-3) rightly pinpoints “traditional social structures of class, sex and age-based distinction are weakening”. The deep changes in the structure and composition of British society are bringing the formation of new elites and the aristocracy is



not considered an example to imitate any longer. These changes lead necessarily to new forms of linguistic stigmatisation (RP) and new patterns of standardisation (AmE and EE above the others) taken as models for linguistic imitation.

### 3.3 Estuary English (EE)

RP's loss in social prestige implies that another accent is available to both native and non-native speakers of English to be used and imitated as socially accepted. This role is being taken by EE.

EE's existence as a new 'replacement' variety was first theorised by Rosewarne (1984), who was also the first to name it. According to Rosewarne, "[EE] is a variety of modified regional speech. It is a mixture of non-regional and local South-Eastern English pronunciation and intonation. If one imagines a continuum with RP and London speech at either end, EE speakers are to be found grouped in the middle ground".

A more updated definition of EE would extend its localisation to "the form(s) of English widely spoken in and around London and, more generally, in the South-East of England – along the river Thames and its estuary where it seems to be the most influential accent" (Wells, 1998)<sup>1</sup>.

Since the 1980s, EE has quickly spread in other areas of the UK, to the extent that EE "can nowadays be heard throughout London and the Home Counties<sup>2</sup> and well beyond [...] as far as the north Norfolk coast, [...] the Dorset coast, [...] the south Kent coast [...] beyond the northern boundaries of Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire" (Coggle, 1993). In other words, EE is becoming so popular that it is influencing and affecting those very areas which originated RP.

After Rosewarne's (1984) first hypothesis of the existence of EE, it will be only in the 1990s that the name enters popular usage and the existence of EE taken as a fact even by the general public. However, when scholarly accounts based on considerable field research appear in the 2000s, they show that EE

1. The Thames Estuary area includes London and surrounding areas, the London Gateway to the open sea as well as the counties of Kent and Essex.

2. The term 'Home Counties' refers to the counties around London, such as Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey and Sussex. The latter is included even though it does not border with London.

has already taken independent, more complex linguistic features and a different status, thus evolving from an accent into a dialect.

#### 3.3.1. WHO SPEAKS EE?

When EE was first 'discovered' by linguists, it showed specific geographical origins but no particular social connotations or connections. As it started to be used by an increasing number of speakers, in London especially, EE has become very popular among the younger generations. Its obscure social origins favoured its adoption as a socially neutral accent.

EE has the function of increasing more 'popular' connotations among the younger generations with an RP background, at the same time providing young people with local, low-status accents a new accent which makes them sound more 'sophisticated'.

Nowadays, EE is generally considered typical of the middle classes but it has also been heard among members of the House of Commons (who are generally – and traditionally – of middle-class extraction) and even among some of the members of the Lords (probably to sound less 'snobbish' to the public opinion); the BBC, too, now allows its journalists and newsreaders to use EE, and even local accents along with RP. EE is well established among the business men in the City who use EE as a neutral accent: they have constant financial and business relations at international levels and with people from different social backgrounds, thus they need a socially-neutral accent understandable to other speakers of EFL.

Summarising the spread of EE with respect to the spread of RP, we can say that if **RP** spread **from above**, from the aristocracy down to the middle classes, then **EE** underwent the opposite process, spreading **from below**, from the middle classes up to the aristocracy.

#### 3.3.2. THE SOUNDS OF EE

Rosewarne (1984) rightly affirmed that EE can be positioned halfway between RP and Cockney, which is the working-class London dialect and with which EE shares some phonetic features. For instance, for -ING EE optionally uses /ɪn/ and, for -THING, EE optionally allows /θɪŋk/. Instead of RP dark /ɪ/, EE has /o/ (e.g., in words like PEOPLE). In addition, RP /t/ becomes EE /ʔ/ when it occurs between a vowel or sonorant and a consonant or word boundary, as in GATWICK which EE pronounces as GAʔWICK.



EE contains also the phenomenon of TH-fronting (I THINK becomes EE I FINK) and T-glottalling. In fact, for words such as TWENTY, PLENTY, WANT(ED, ING, IT, US), WENT (before a vowel), EE optionally omits the /t/.

### 3.3.3. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF EE

As already mentioned, EE is not only an accent but it is acquiring the status of a dialect of English with its own linguistic features. For example, as for its syntax, EE uses AIN'T instead of ISN'T, AM NOT, ARE NOT, HAS NOT, and HAVE NOT. EE also uses multiple negatives, as in I AIN'T GOT NO MONEY, probably because AIN'T starts to be perceived as one single unit instead of a contracted form for a negation.

EE presents the use of never as in I NEVER KNEW HE WAS A TEACHER, hence a past tense negative instead of DIDN'T. This construction is becoming extremely popular in EE to negate the sentence (cf. Coggle, 1993), while in StE NEVER has the sense of 'not on any occasion'.

### 3.3.4. FURTHER SPREAD OF EE

EE is gradually expanding also to non-native English speakers living in London through a process of imitation of the local accent and to increase their integration in the London community. Imitation, and consequent diffusion of EE, involve also the role of the medias. Non-native speakers of English, indeed, imitate EE as a 'British accent' at a distance. This favours the spread of EE to learners of EFL (outside school and education, where RP is preferably taught).

In other words, if RP still keeps the status of overt-prestige accent, EE is gradually holding a hidden prestige, which involves the use of "linguistic forms of low prestige in the community as a whole but which are of crucial importance in maintaining a speaker's position in a particular social group" (Trask, 2004: 83).

## 3.4

### Categories of English varieties: diatopic variation at home and overseas

As already explained in Chapter 2, the English colonisation period started during the EModE period; it led to the subsequent establishment of the British

Empire, bringing the English language spoken in England, and its accents, to an unprecedented spread around the globe until the current use of EFL and as a global language.

The varieties of the English language that were formed through the colonisation process, and that are still present today around the world, can be divided in four main macro-categories, not necessarily coinciding with Kachru's Three-Circle Model:

- **native varieties** are those varieties emerging in countries where English is spoken as L1, i.e. those countries included in Kachru's Inner Circle (cf. CHAPTER 2); in these countries English is recognised as the only official, overt-prestige language (e.g., the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa);
- **non-native varieties** are used in those countries where English is spoken as L2 and is recognised as essential (but not exclusively) in the country's social life (hidden prestige). These are countries included in Kachru's Outer Circle (e.g., Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Malta, Cyprus, Barbados, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Nigeria, and other countries in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa). In non-native varieties, sometimes English is used as a *lingua franca* for different ethnic groups and the presence of English is a direct consequence of a process of relatively recent colonisation. Here colonisation was never too deep or never completed and did not absorb local culture/language as it did in native varieties;
- **contact varieties** emerge through colonisation processes in which local and English-speaking cultures come into middle-term contact. In these cases, English is used for 'intra-national' communication with a situation in which the variety is at an earlier stage than English as L2 but is not a foreign language any longer (e.g., in the Caribbean or South Pacific countries);
- **new Englishes** are usually the result of a more recent or short-term contact between English and local languages (i.e., Singlish or Singapore English, EuroEnglish, Spanglish, Franglais, and so on). Sometimes these varieties remain at a dialectal level, sometimes they evolve into full varieties. New Englishes are found in specific areas around the world, namely in East and West Africa, in Northern South Africa, in South Asia and in South-East Asia<sup>3</sup>.

3. For more detailed maps, please cf. the website <http://www.uni-due.de/SVE/>.



## English-based pidgins and creoles

Among the several New Englishes and Contact Varieties that are created through colonisation, we could also include the so-called pidgins and creoles. Generally speaking, pidgins and creoles are **contact languages** which emerge from a relatively short-term period of colonisation and can be considered as different 'stages' in the life of a new language. The first 'stage' is the pidgin, in which a new variety is created after the contact between two different languages. The next 'stage' is the creole which can, subsequently, evolve into a dialect or a more complex variety and, ultimately, into a proper national language with a full-formed structure. Pidgins and creoles are spoken by about ten million people around the world.

**Pidgin** is known as the language used by groups of people, originally speaking different languages, when they come into contact. A pidgin is a contact language, which means that it is acquired and not learned natively. In addition, and most importantly, **it implies an unequal relationship between the two communities of speakers**. Indeed, we have one language spoken by the dominant group and one language spoken by the weaker group. The two languages are completely different from one another, thus a pidgin emerges because the members of the two groups have to communicate in/for everyday situations.

When a pidgin is created, the dominant language provides the lexicon, while the weaker language provides basic syntactic structures. Usually, it is said that a pidgin is based on the dominant language, e.g. Tok Pisin is the pidgin spoken in New Guinea where there are over 500 mutually unintelligible languages; English is the dominant language, which makes Tok Pisin an English-based pidgin.

Pidgins can develop to become **creole languages**. This requires the pidgin to be learnt as **mother tongue** by children of the second generation after the contact. The second generation, then, generalises the features of the pidgin into a fully-formed, stabilised grammar. This is however not always the case as pidgins can die or become obsolete.

The term **creole** comes from the French *créole* (meaning 'indigenous') that was borrowed from Spanish *criollo* (meaning 'native'). It is commonly known as a former pidgin which has become the mother tongue of a community. The pidgin must, of course, undergo a number of evolutionary steps before it can be considered a creole or a full language. Some of the changes occur before it is

acquired as first language whereas others are created by the new native speakers (Zanna *et al.*, 2015).

Most creole languages emerged in plantations that used slaves taken from different language communities. Hawaiian Creole English, the Caribbean creoles, Torres Straits Creole (in a territory between Australia and New Guinea) are some examples.

When a pidgin becomes the native speech of a community it is 'depidginised' into a creole. If and when a creole merges gradually with the standard (dominant) language on which it is lexically based, it becomes 'decreolised' or enters a post-creole continuum, that is a range of speech varieties which vary from the European language to the creole, with all kinds of intermediate varieties.

A complete decreolisation implies that the grammar of the original pidgin becomes more or less integrated into the grammar of the European language, whereas the pure creole disappears and its remains acquire features reminding those of the European language's dialects. A decreolisation is thus a mere shift from a fully formed language to another.

## 3.5.1. EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH-BASED PIDGINS AND CREOLES

English-based pidgins are found all around the world; we list, in particular, those of the Atlantic Group, including the areas of the Caribbean islands (Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas and Jamaica) and the West African region (Kamerun, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia and Sierra Leone). In addition, we have the Pacific Group, including Papua New Guinea and the local Tok Pisin. The following is a very short list of some cases of English-based pidgins and creoles which emerged as a result of a contact situation between English colonisers and local populations:

- **Hawaiian pidgin/creole**: it presents influences from Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, Portuguese and Filipino. It is spoken by nearly 500,000 people;
- **Gullah**: a creole spoken on the USA South-Eastern coast. It counts 250,000 speakers and includes influences from Western African languages;
- **Fanagalo**: a pidgin with influences from the Zulu languages spoken in the mines of Johannesburg (South Africa), in Namibia and in Zimbabwe;
- **Caribbean creoles**: there are nearly 30 creoles spoken in the Caribbean area, such as the Jamaican creole and the creole spoken in Trinidad and Tobago;



– **Pochismo**: an Anglo-Spanish pidgin spoken in certain areas of Arizona (USA) and Southern California (USA).

3.6

Native varieties of English: the UK

In the case of the UK and of England in particular, where we have one standard language established and recognised nationwide as the only official language, all non-standard varieties are considered more dialects than varieties, i.e. they are used only in limited areas and for limited contexts (among family and friends, for colloquial language and in informal registers etc.). Some of these dialects are famous outside the UK and other English-speaking countries because they were used by characters in literature or on TV (shows, soap operas etc.).

In this part of the Chapter, only some of the most characteristic dialects of England will be described, i.e. those which still preserve distinctive features, namely (FIG. 3.1): Cockney (and Rhyming Slang), Northern English, urban dialects such as Liverpool (Scouse), Newcastle (Geordie), the South and the West Country<sup>4</sup>.

3.6.1. COCKNEY (AND RHYMING SLANG) – LONDON

Cockney can be considered the broadest form of London's local accent. It refers traditionally to specific regions and speakers within the city. Today, many Londoners speak a general kind of 'popular London' dialect (Wells, 1982); the number of EE speakers is increasing, but they do not necessarily speak Cockney. The true Cockney accent is heard only inside the capital, whereas a popular Londoner accent (like EE) is also found outside.

The Cockney dialect is considered typical of the working classes and the term refers to both the dialect and the people who speak it. By definition, a true Cockney is born within hearing distance of the bells of St. Mary le Bow, Cheapside, in the City of London.

The etymology of the term Cockney has long been discussed and disputed. One possible explanation (cf. OED) is that Cockney literally means 'cock's egg', indicating a misshapen egg sometimes laid by young hens (this is considered

4. These specific dialects were chosen in order to provide a general representation of the dialectal variation encountered in English.

FIGURE 3.1  
Dialects of England: in the circles the dialects described in the Section



its original meaning used during the ME period). During the EModE period it was used in reference to a weak townsman, opposed to the tougher countryman and by the 17<sup>th</sup> century the term, though colloquial, came to indicate a Londoner (cf. OED).



This traditional working-class accent is also associated with other suburbs in the eastern section of the city such as the East End, Stepney, Hackney, Shoreditch Poplar and Bow. The Cockney accent is generally considered one of the broadest among the British accents and is heavily stigmatised.

The area and its colourful characters and accents have often become the foundation for English 'soap operas' and other television specials. Currently, the BBC is showing one of the most popular soap operas set in this region, *East Enders* whose characters' accents and lives provide interesting opportunities for observers of language and culture (*The Language Samples Project*, 2011).

Cockney is also the dialect of Eliza Doolittle in the famous George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* or its adaptation for the movie industry as a musical in *My Fair Lady*.

#### *Main Pronunciation Features of Cockney*

The Cockney accent is characterised by rhoticity and H-dropping. Indeed, 'h' is usually omitted as in HOUSE ('OUSE), OR HAMMER ('AMMER). Cockney presents also TH-fronting (e.g., THIN = FIN; BROTHER = BRUVVER; THREE = FREE; BATH = BARF) and the glottal stop (the 't' sound is not pronounced in intervocalic or final positions) as in GATWICK (GA'WICK), SCOTLAND (SCO'LAND), STATEMENT (STA'EMEN), NETWORK (NE'WORK). In addition, the long vowels are all produced as diphthongs. Some of these features were passed to EE, as already seen in the previous Sections.

#### *Grammatical and Lexical Features of Cockney*

The most characteristic grammatical features of Cockney can be summarised as in the following list:

- use of ME instead of MY, for example, AT'S [that's] ME BOOK YOU GOT 'ERE;
- use of AIN'T instead of ISN'T, AM NOT, ARE NOT, HAS NOT, AND HAVE NOT (as in EE);
- use of double negatives, for example I DIDN'T SEE NOTHING;
- use of the invariable tag question INNIT (also used in EE).

Cockney has also its own special vocabulary and usage, for instance MATE for 'friend', or CHEERS for 'thank you' etc. However, the Cockney vocabulary is famous for its use of the so-called **Rhyming Slang (RS)**. Cockney RS sub-

stitutes words, usually two, as a coded alternative for another word. The final word of the substitute phrase rhymes with the word it replaces (for example, the Cockney RS for the word LOOK is BUTCHER'S HOOK). Usually, only the first word of the replacement phrase is used and, in these cases, the meaning might be difficult to guess (e.g., BUTCHER'S which means 'look').

Cockney RS is an amusing, widely underestimated part of the English language. Its use began 200 years ago among the London East-End dock builders. Cockney RS, then, developed as a secret language of the London underworld from the 1850s, when criminals used this coded speech to confuse police and eavesdroppers. Since then the slang has continued to grow and reflect new trends and wider usages, leading to Australian RS expressions, and some American RS as well. Many original Cockney RS words have now entered the language and many users are not aware of their origin.

#### 3.6.2. NORTHERN ENGLISH

Northern English is considered one of the most conservative dialects in England since it preserves features derived from OE, especially from the period in which the region was part of the Danelaw. It also shows some linguistic influence from Scotland and Ireland. The Yorkshire dialect is known for its sing-song accent and for being a rhotic dialect. Indeed, some Northern dialects resemble southern-most Scottish dialects.

In Yorkshire English, for instance, some interesting features of the pronunciation are the RP sound /ʌ/ becoming /u/, as in LUCK (/luk/). In addition, THE is reduced to 't' and initial 'h' is dropped. Northern English dialects make a consistent use of WAS for WERE and still use THOU (pronounced /tha/) and THEE. AUGHT and NAUGHT (pronounced /aut/ or /out/ and /naut/ or /nout/) are used for ANYTHING and NOTHING.

Moreover, the Northern English dialects retain many old Scandinavian words, such as BAIRN for child and the following features, in which StE features (left) become the features in Northern English (right):

- -ER > /æ/, so FATHER > /fædhæ/;
- TALK > /ta:k/;
- MY > ME;
- ME > US;
- OUR > WOR;
- YOU (PLURAL) > YOUSE.



## 3.6.3. GEORDIE (NEWCASTLE)

Geordie is the dialect typical of the area around Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Northumberland). It is considered the best-preserved regional dialect because of geographical isolation and keeps distinctive accent, grammar and lexis.

Geordie is a rhotic dialect and if 'r' is an initial letter, then 'a' is added at the beginning of the word, thus this feature is called – in a derogative sense – 'the burr', as in *ARRAIGN* for *RAIN* and *ARROAR* for *ROAR*. Geordie is also characterised by intrusive *y* as in *PALE/PYEL*, *GIVE/GYEV*, *HOME/HYEM*, *AGAIN/AGYEN*, *SCHOOL/SKYUL*. *YOU* is usually repeated at the end of the sentence (*YA YOUNG MONKEY YA*) and the subject is often placed at the end of the sentence (*THEY'VE WON AGYEN THE LADS*). As for the Geordie lexicon, some words keep a local meaning as in *BACKEEND* (*AUTUMN*), *BAD* (*SICK*), *BAIRN* (*CHILD*), *KELTER* (*CONDITION*), *JANNOCK* (*HONEST, GENUINE*), *SKEMP* (*SHORT CHANGE*).

## 3.6.4. SCOUSE (LIVERPOOL)

The dialect spoken in Liverpool is also known as Scouse; it evolved from local accents and Irish migration. It was unknown to the rest of the country until WWII, when it became famous through radio comedians and, later, through TV comedians who used their own Scouse accent with comic results. In more recent times, the Beatles sang and delivered interviews with a Scouse accent.

The word Scouse comes from 'Lob-Scouse', a potato stew containing onions, carrots and meat and has the three meanings of: a stew made from cheap cuts of meat (typical of Liverpool's working classes), a native of Liverpool and a dialect spoken by Liverpool's inhabitants. The Scouse dialect was confined to Liverpool until the 1950s then it spread in the suburbs after urban redevelopment and forced relocation.

As for the linguistic features of this dialect, Scouse pronunciation is characterised by an adenoidal (nasal) tone, *T* and *TH* becoming *D*, or *D* is added, as in *ID DOES*, the *-Y* ending becomes *-EE* (*WINDY = WINDEE*), *T* at the end of words becomes *TCH* (*TIGHT = TIGHTCH, FRONT = FRONTCH*).

Scouse vocabulary shows some peculiar idioms and phraseology as in the following examples:

- *SLING YER HOOK = RESING, CLEAR OFF;*
- *ON ME HOOK = OUT OF WORK;*
- *BLOWING FOR TUGS = PANTING, OUT OF BREATH;*

- *UNDER THE LAMP = PAID LESS THAN THE RATE FOR THE JOB;*
- *FOG HORN = BIG MOUTH.*

## 3.6.5. THE WEST COUNTRY

According to the general belief, dialects in the South of England are not distinguishable from RP on the one hand and Cockney/EE on the other, because they underwent dialect levelling<sup>5</sup> one or two generations ago. However, dialects in the South show a variety of accents and greater local variation than expected, including features of Northern English dialects, such as the glottal stop, rhotic accents in some areas, and the use of *YE* and *YOUSE*.

The so-called West Country includes South-Western England, in particular the counties of Avon, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Somerset. It is a rhotic dialect (survival from the Anglo-Saxon retroflex 'r') and uses initial 'w' in words such as *OLD OAK* which become *WOLD WOAK*.

A very traditional feature of the West Country dialect is the use of the second person pronoun, *YE*, and the use of the verb *DO* for habitual actions. The latter is a traditional feature of spoken language in parts of the West Country and Wales, although it is now rare among younger speakers. It rather accurately expresses the idea of repeated or habitual action, i.e. something someone does on a regular basis. For example, speakers in the West Country use the verb *DO* in the following statements: *IF WE'D EVER SPOKE TO THE TEACHERS LIKE THEY DO SPEAK TO THE TEACHERS TODAY* and *MOTHER DID COME AND GET US OUT OF BED*<sup>6</sup>.

## 3.7

## Native varieties with a substratum: Celtic Englishes

The term **Celtic Englishes** is usually attributed to varieties of English originated from a linguistic contact between English and a Celtic language. Usually, these varieties are considered dialects of English with a Celtic **substratum** (cf.

5. Dialect levelling is "the loss of localised features in urban and rural varieties [...] to be replaced with features found over a wider region" (Kerswill, 2003: 223).

6. For some audio samples and transcriptions of the West Country dialect, visit the website: <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/text-only/england/melksham/>.



CHAPTER 1) and are spoken in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cornwall, and to a minor extent in the Shetland and Orkney Islands.

Celtic Englishes in the UK and Ireland share similar features according to the kind of Celtic substratum involved in the contact (cf. CHAPTER 2), thus ScE/Scots, IrE and Manx English have a Goidelic (Gaelic – Q-Celtic) substratum, while WEng and Cornish English have a Brythonic (or P-Celtic) substratum.

### 3.8 English in Wales

Wales was one of the first Celtic countries to pass under total English domination. The name Wales comes from OE 'Wealas' (meaning 'foreigners') but in Welsh the region is called *Cymru* (pron. 'Kumry').

The 100% of the Welsh population speaks English, of which around 25% uses Welsh; according to some statistics, 60% of population in Wales is bilingual which means that a consistent part of the population has only a passive knowledge of Welsh.

In 1982, *Channel 4 Welsh* on TV and some state-supported Welsh-medium schools started to encourage active use of Welsh among the population by broadcasting programs in Welsh and providing courses in Welsh, respectively.

#### 3.8.1. MAIN EVENTS IN WELSH HISTORY

The Roman invasion of Wales started in 74-78 BC; after the Romans left England (in around 410 AD), Wales remained independent until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Norman occupation remained partial during the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Only in 1301, Edward II (heir to the English throne) is proclaimed Prince of Wales. After this event, Wales is made, first, Dominion of the English King (1282-1535) and, then, Independent Principality (1400-16). Wales came into existence as a country only with Henry the VIII's Act of Union in 1535. Between 1707 and 1801 it is a Constituent of the Kingdom of Great Britain and, from 1801, of the United Kingdom.

Until the arrival of the Normans in 1066 Welsh was spoken in the entire territory as L1. After the Norman Conquest, English becomes the L1 with Welsh rapidly dying out of use. The first Welsh political party is created only in 1925 (*Plaid Cymru*) and in 1967 the 'Welsh Language Act' is issued, establishing the

FIGURE 3.2  
Road sign in English and in Welsh



existence of Welsh as L2. In 1962 the promotion of bilingual education (English and Welsh; see, e.g., FIG. 3.2) began but the first state-supported Welsh-medium schools started to operate only in the 1970s.

In 1927, Radio Eireann (an Irish radio in Irish) is the first and only to broadcast in Welsh (in programs meant for the Welsh public) followed by the BBC which, in 1935, starts broadcasting programs in Welsh. The first properly Welsh radio (Radio Cymru) starts broadcasting in 1977 and, finally, in the 2000s Welsh becomes the second official language in Wales (the first one remaining English).

#### 3.8.2. WENG PRONUNCIATION

WEng pronunciation appears similar to StE with substratum influences which are revealed in a so-called 'sing-song intonation' (if compared to the generally descending intonation of English). WEng is a non-rhotic variety but speakers of Welsh do pronounce the 'r' in all positions, while in some areas 'h-dropping' is also present. Some sounds in particular demonstrate the Celtic substratum more clearly: the first three consonants in the following examples are absent in RP and they are a direct consequence of the Welsh Celtic substratum. Diphthongs are divided into two syllables, e.g. we have initial LL as in LLYWELLYN, RH (RHONDA), aspirated CH (PENTYRCH), StE [iə] (BEER) becomes [ijə] and StE [uə] ('poor') becomes [uwə].



## 3.8.3. WENG GRAMMAR AND LEXICON

As for WEng grammar, some of its features are shared with other dialects and varieties of English. For instance, we have the double negation, non-standard forms of verbs (I *CATCHED*), the use of pronouns such as *HISSELF* (for *HIMSELF*) and *THEIRSELVES* (for *THEMSELVES*).

Some other features are typical of WEng only, such as the use of *DO* and *DID* to indicate an action performed regularly (*HE DO GO TO RUGBY ALL THE TIME; SHE DID GO REGULAR LIKE*).

Vocabulary is the part of WEng that contains and reveals most of the Welsh substratum. However, some words are shared with those English dialects spoken immediately beyond the border with Wales (words such as *DAP*, a plimsoll, heard also in Bristol). Some words are from StE but are used in WEng with a different sense or meaning (*DELIGHT*, for instance, means 'strong interest' instead of StE 'pleasure, amusement', as in *SHE HAS A DELIGHT IN TRAVEL; TIDY* means 'good' in WEng as in *HE'S GOT A TIDY JOB*).

Many words were also borrowed from Welsh, such as *EISTEDDFOD* (a festival of the arts), *HIRAETH* (longing for place or person), *CARREG* (a stone), *CLENNING* (a present in money), *GLASTER* (a typical drink of milk and water), *JECHYD DA* (expression used in toasts and meaning 'good health'), *BARA BRITH* (bread loaf made with currants). Peculiar to WEng are two particular words such as *BOYO* or *BACH*, meaning 'mate', 'brother', sometimes with a negative connotation, as in *LISTEN BOYO, I'VE SOMETHIN' TO SAY TO YOU*<sup>7</sup>.

### 3.9 English in Scotland

#### 3.9.1. SCOTLAND'S SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE

During the OE period, the Anglo-Saxon tribes pushed the Celtic populations towards the more isolated northern parts of Britain. Scotland was one of the Celtic strongholds in Britain, in fact southern Scotland was conquered by the Anglo-Saxons only in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Highlands kept their Celtic-based

7. The website <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southeast/sites/voices/pages/treorchy.shtml> has some audio samples and transcriptions of people speaking WEng and/or with a Welsh accent.

identity until the 12<sup>th</sup> century. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Highlands were still Celtic-speaking areas but the Lowlands were completely anglicised. Indeed, since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, we have a phenomenon of diglossia in southern Scotland in which a London-based English is used along with Scots. This complex historical situation led to the present-day peculiar linguistic situation in which **three languages** are spoken in Scotland today:

1. **Scottish Gaelic** is the first national language of Scotland. It is spoken by 1,4% of the total population especially in the most isolated areas in the Highlands and the Hebrides but it is not recognised an official status, however it can be used (along with English) to apply for the British citizenship. Scottish Gaelic is also offered in bilingual education in the Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland;

2. **Scots** is a direct descendant of the OE Northumbrian dialect. It is the local dialect of Lowland Scotland but, historically, it enjoyed a special status since it is the only Germanic variety in Britain (beside StE) to have ever functioned as a full language within an independent state (the Kingdom of Scotland) as well as to have been used for all domains and registers. This is testified by a brilliant and consistent corpus of literature from the early 14<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition, Scots exhibited a whole range of genres, styles and registers as any national language. In the variety of Ulster Scots it is spoken in Northern Ireland. As for Scots in Scotland today, it is increasingly anglicised but in 1999, when the Scottish Parliament was re-opened, a group of MPs sought to keep and promote Scots as the official language of Scotland to preserve its status and its heritage from extinction;

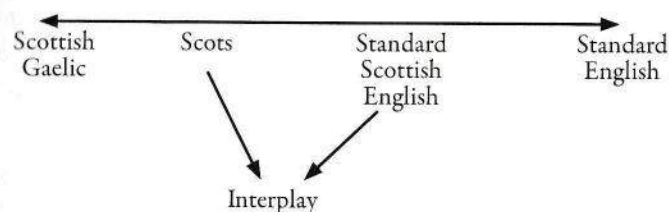
3. **Scottish English** (ScE) is also known as **Scottish Standard English** (SScE) and emerged during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as a compromise linguistic system between London-based English and localised Scots norms. It is more anglicised than Scots with which SScE shares some vocabulary and syntactic constructions. It is preferably spoken by middle-class speakers; it forms the basis for Highland and Hebridean English, being an L2 for Gaelic speakers.

The linguistic continuum in Scotland today is represented in FIG. 3.3. Scots and SScE are two linguistic codes and speakers have a conscious feeling of this distinction as they are felt and sometimes considered two distinct varieties.

The description in the following paragraphs refers to features shared between Scots and SScE and which will be generally referred to as ScE.



FIGURE 3.3  
Linguistic continuum in ScE



### 3.9.2. SCE PRONUNCIATION AND GRAMMAR

ScE shows a rhotic accent with vowels before /r/ remaining unchanged. Some words show a distinct pronunciation with respect to StE, e.g. BEARD, BIRD = BIRD; MOORED = MURED; HEARD = [herd]. In addition, /r/ is often realised as a tap (like in Italian) but with a shorter sound, /ch/ is pronounced with an aspiration [x] testifying the Gaelic substratum (e.g., LOCH = [lox] pronounced as the German word DOCH). Finally, /wh/ is pronounced [hw] in words as WHICH and WHAT pronounced with initial aspiration. Finally, diphthong [aɪ] becomes [əɪ] in words such as TIDE, RISE, SLY, WHY, WHILE.

In ScE informal speech SHALL and MAY are **not** used and are substituted with WILL (WILL I SEE YOU AGAIN?) and CAN (for permission as in CAN I COME IN?). MIGHT and WILL MAYBE are used for possibility (HE MIGHT COME LATER; HE'LL MAYBE COME LATER) while MUSTN'T (as in AmE, probably brought by Scottish immigrants) is used instead of CAN'T (HE MUSTN'T BE AT HOME). The passive form is expressed by GET (I GOT TOLD OFF *vs.* StE I WAS TOLD THAT). Finally, ANYBODY, EVERYBODY, NOBODY, SOMEBODY are preferred to forms as ANYONE, EVERYONE etc.

### 3.9.3. SCE VOCABULARY

ScEng vocabulary presents a complex but interesting 'composition'. First of all, there are words of Scottish origin which are commonly used in StE even though they are not immediately perceived as Scottish, for instance we can list CADDIE, COLLIE, COSY, EERIE, GLAMOUR, GOLF, PONY, RAID, SCONE, WEIRD. Then, we have words borrowed by StE and openly perceived as Scottish such as CEILIDH, CLAN, KILT, WEE, WHISKY.

Moreover, typical Scottish words are BAIRN (child, also in Northern English, of possible Scottish import), BONNIE (beautiful, fine-looking), HOG-MANAY (New Year's Eve), KIRK (Protestant church), PINKIE (little finger), CANNY (thoughtful).

Finally we have also a Scottish use of Latinate terms in specific fields pertaining to the semantic field of law and administration such as, e.g., ADVOCATE (barrister), JANITOR (caretaker in a school), LEET (list of accepted candidates for a post), PROVOST (mayor).

## 3.10 English in Ireland

### 3.10.1. HISTORY

The history of the English culture, language and people in Ireland is extremely complex and, to some extent, history-related conflicts have not been completely resolved yet. For brevity's sake, the main historical events, significant to the linguistic history of Ireland, are reported in the following list (referring mainly to the present-day Republic of Ireland):

- Ireland is a Celtic country until 1169;
- 1169: first Anglo-Norman warlords settled in the South-East of Ireland and quickly included Dublin;
- 1172: **Charter of Dublin** after which the Anglo-Normans strengthen their presence in the city;
- 1366: the **Statutes of Kilkenny** are issued, proscribing the Irish language and Irish customs (this is the first known attempt to control the rapid gaelicisation of the Anglo-Norman settlers);
- 1541: Henry VIII accepted by Irish parliament as King of Ireland;
- 1549-57: Plantations in the counties of Laois and Offaly (at the time, important centres in the country);
- 1558: Elizabeth I, last of the Tudors, ascends the throne;
- 1586-93: Plantation of Munster;
- 1595-1603: Rebellion of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone;
- 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries: Gaelic revival (English has a weaker position);
- 1601-02: the last Irish lords are defeated (the so-called Flight of the Earls) and, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, aggressive plantations are promoted by Oliver Cromwell first in Ulster, then in the rest of Ireland;
- 1801: Act of Union to the UK;



- 1841-50s: The Great Famine;
- Late 19<sup>th</sup> century: Celtic/Gaelic Revival;
- 1916: Easter Rising;
- 1919-21: War of Independence (constitution of the Irish Free State);
- 1922-23: Civil War;
- 1937: Irish Constitution (Éire);
- 1948: The Republic of Ireland.

## 3.10.2. THE HISTORY OF IRE

Ireland is the first country beyond Britain to which English was taken. In the late 12<sup>th</sup> century (1169) the Norman Conquest of Ireland with ensuing settlement began in the South-East of the country and quickly encompassed the capital Dublin. The leaders at this time were Anglo-Norman warlords but there were English speakers involved as well and the English language gained a foothold on the East coast of Ireland which it kept throughout the rest of Irish history<sup>8</sup>.

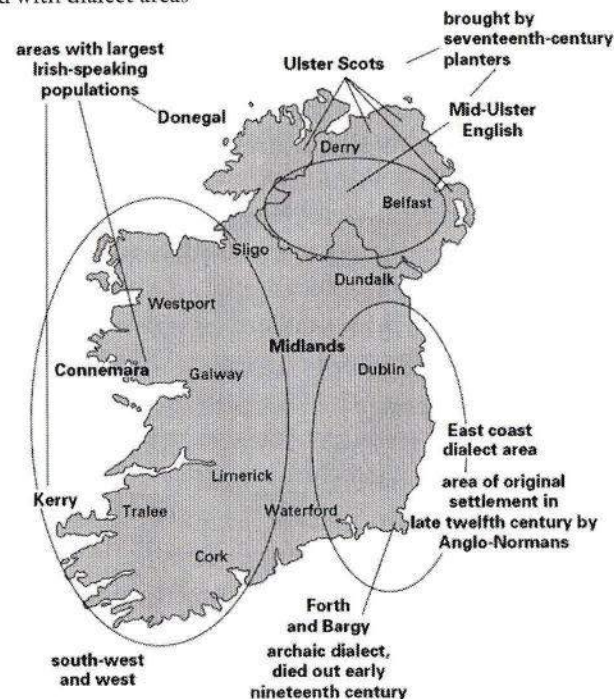
In the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the Irish language regained much of its former position. The Anglo-Normans were assimilated entirely to the native population and soon they spoke only Irish. English was largely confined to the towns, especially on the East coast. The linguistic situation changed dramatically with the plantations of the North of the country in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. "The demographic movement from Scotland to Ulster formed the basis for the later split in the community of the North into an Irish and a Scottish/English section" (Hickey, 2015).

In the South of the country (see FIG. 3.4), the 17<sup>th</sup> century saw more plantations (British settlements on lands taken from the native Irish) than the first ones in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Irish language was pushed back increasingly to the western seaboard where today Gaelic-speaking areas are to be found.

Although some scholars of IrE believe that there was a break between the English language of the late medieval period and that of the early modern period (as of the 17<sup>th</sup> century), it is clear that on the East coast, the specific features of vernacular English left some traces in late medieval IrE. These traces are attested in the *Kildare Poems* and other minor pieces from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. The glossaries representing the now extinct dialect of Forth and Bargy (pron.

8. Cf. Hickey (2015). The website is a useful resource for IrE; it contains also many audio sample of IrE accents from different parts of Ireland.

FIGURE 3.4  
Map of Ireland with dialect areas



Source: Hickey (2015).

/bargi/) show that the latter was archaic in character and represents a continuation of medieval IrE into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The map in FIG. 3.4 shows the main dialect divisions in present-day Ireland.

The 'East Coast' region is where English was first introduced into the country in 1169 and stretches from Waterford up to the area beyond Dublin. In the South-East of the country the archaic dialect of Forth and Bargy survived until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

"The North of Ireland is characterised by a cluster of Ulster Scots varieties spoken along the coastal crescent with the English-based, Mid-Ulster English spoken in the centre of the province" (Hickey, 2015). The large area of the 'South-West and West' is fairly uniform. This is the area where Irish was spoken longest and shows features (above all in syntax) resulting from the language shift which largely took place between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Irish is still spoken in small 'pockets' along the western seaboard, namely in Kerry (the tip



of the Dingle peninsula), in Galway (west of Galway, a city in Connemara) and in Donegal (along the North-West coast). The English of native speakers of Irish can be termed Contact IrE. Indeed, the first forms of IrE are believed to be one of the first instances of English-based pidgin brought with colonisation.

### 3.10.3. IRE PRONUNCIATION AND GRAMMAR

IrE is considered a very conservative variety of English with a rhotic accent. Its main features, as regards pronunciation, are the following ones:

- RP [eɪ] → IrE [e:] as in FACE;
- RP [əʊ] → IrE [o:] as in LOAD;
- RP [i:] → IrE [e:] as in MEAT, STEAL, TEA;
- RP [θ] and [ð] → IrE [t] and [d], respectively – in the South they are more ‘breathy’, as in THRY, DHRY, BUTTHER, UN-DHER (StE TRY, DRY, BUTTER, UN-DER);
- RP [s] and /z/ → IrE (South) [ʃ] and [ʒ];
- RP /t/ → IrE [ts] or [tʃ] as in WHAT = WATCH;
- intrusive [ə] → ARM, FILM pronounced as ARRUM, FILLUM ([arəm], [filəm]).

The Irish Gaelic substratum is more evident in IrE grammar than in pronunciation. IrE shows the use of pronouns YE, YA and uninflected auxiliaries such as DO, BE, HAVE. In addition, DO and BE are used for the habitual aspect (SHE DO BE WORKING LATE ON FRIDAYS). IrE shows also the feature of copula deletion, as in SHE Ø A TEACHER IN THE TECH, THERE Ø NO HURRY ON YOU.

Furthermore, the perfective aspect is expressed with two sub-types: the immediate perfective (for hot news) as in SHE’S AFTER SPILLING THE MILK (from the Gaelic substratum, StE SHE HAS JUST FINISHED SPILLING THE MILK) and the resultative perfect as in SHE HAS THE HOUSEWORK DONE.

Other characteristic syntactic features of IrE are the so-called negative concord (HE’S NOT INTERESTED IN NO CARS), clefting for topicalisation (giving emphasis to a sentence by moving the element to be emphasised to the front position in a sentence) as in IT’S TO DINGLE HE’S GOING and the typically Irish ‘subordinating and’ (AND HIM NO MORE THAN A MINISTER’S MAN *vs.* StE WHILE/BUT HE IS NO MORE THAN A MINISTER’S MAN), in which AND takes the meaning and functions of StE ‘although, while, even though, however etc.’, according to the cases.

### 3.10.4. IRE VOCABULARY

The lexicon (as in WEng and in ScE) is the part of IrE where the Gaelic substratum is most evident. We have different typologies of words in IrE (Dolan, 1998):

- **borrowings from Irish:** *ACUSHLA*, term of endearment: my heart’s dear one; *GALORE* adv., enough; plentiful, in abundance from Ir. *go leor*, enough; plenty; *MUSHA* = indeed, well from Ir. *muise*;
- **retention of ME or EModE terms** (words become obsolete in England): *BELT* = n., v. blow, beating; strike, thrash < ME belt; *BOWSIE* = n. a disreputable drunkard, a quarrelsome drunkard < ME *bousen*, v., to drink to excess; *WAKE* = n., v. a vigil beside a dead body, often accompanied by drinking; to watch over a dead body < ME *waken*, v.;
- **English words presenting a different meaning than in England often influenced by Irish:** *KEEN* = v., v.n. to lament, to whail shrilly over the dead; an act of lamenting; crying (of children) < Ir *caoin* *vs.* StE *keen* = eager or enthusiastic; *BOLD* = adj. naughty, mischievous < Ir *dána*, adj., bold, forward, audacious, daring *vs.* StE *bold* = confident, courageous;
- **words borrowed from other varieties of English, generally from Scots or Northern English dialects:** *GECK* = n., v. scorn, contempt; a fool; a simpleton, probably from Scots; *WHINGE* = v., to cry in a peevish manner, to whine, from Lancashire and Yorkshire dialects;
- **hybrid forms presenting an English stem and an Irish suffix, usually the diminutive suffix -ín:** *GIRLEEN*, small girl.

Finally, typical Irish words from the most conservative areas are *LADHRÓG*, STREET, *STUICÍN*, PUCK, *BONNYCLABBER*, *PANDY*, *BROGUE*. The lexicon of IrE is changing progressively towards americanisation, especially among the younger generations, and dialect levelling towards StE or AmE but still some differences are present in rural and urban dialects and accents, such as in the Irish Midlands or in Dublin English.

### 3.11

#### Native varieties of English overseas: English in America

The history of the English language in North America is usually divided into three main periods:

- the **Colonial Period** (1607-1776), seeing the birth of distinctive AmE. It



starts in 1607 with the establishment of the first permanent English colony at present-day Jamestown (Virginia). Since then, a new variety of English starts emerging because of three factors: 1. the discovery of a new land with a different wildlife and lifestyle than England, 2. the contact with native populations and their languages, 3. the distance with English spoken in the motherland;

- the **National Period** (1776-1898), with the establishment and consolidation of AmE. It begins with the American Declaration of Independence from England in 1776. Linguistic and cultural independence naturally followed the political one with a strong desire for self-assertion. During this period, English-speaking Americans spread over the continent, coast to coast, i.e. from the Atlantic to the Pacific, coming into contact with other native populations and other settlers, speakers of other languages than English;
- the **International Period** (from 1898), when AmE influences other varieties of English and other languages. This period starts with the Spanish-American War in 1898, a war originated to satisfy the needs for new frontiers and new markets of the American settlers, whose identity was even stronger after the Civil War. The results of the war led to the independence of Cuba, the acquisition of the territory of Puerto Rico by the United States and the forced sale of the Philippines by Spain. This period marks the spread of AmE and its culture around the world, mainly thanks to the role played by the USA in the two World Wars and its economic and technological hegemony.

The dialects influencing the birth of an American variety of English, during the Colonial Period are chiefly dialects from the South of England (place of origin of the first colonisers) and Amerindian languages of the local tribes. During the National Period, AmE receives further influence from dialects of England and the British Isles and Ireland (e.g., Scotland, Ireland, Cockney etc.) because of mass migration following harsh living conditions and famines that stroke the UK during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other languages giving AmE its present features came from other European immigrant communities, speakers of rhotic languages such as Dutch (e.g., a dialect enclave is Pennsylvanian Dutch; New York's first name was New Amsterdam), German, Italian and French, Spanish and Portuguese; the last two contributing also to AmE spoken in the first 13 colonies when Spanish and Portuguese explorers had already had the first contacts with native populations and wildlife. Finally, during the International period, with further waves of mass migration, to the languages and dialects arrived in the Colonial and the National Periods we have the addition of languages such as the Spanish of Puerto Rico (eventually forming Spanglish), Chinese, Japa-

nese, Russian that gave their input to the lexicon and phraseology of AmE, with borrowings pertaining to specific fields typical of the countries and cultures of origin. In addition, during this period AmE influences other languages but takes an increasing number of terms with a different connotation thanks to the specialist use of the language in professional/occupational domains, new technologies and the social medias.

### 3.11.1. MAIN LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF AME

AmE is a rhotic variety that contains mixed features and contact elements from the languages the first English-speaking Americans met during their coast-to-coast settlement. AmE has fewer vowel distinctions before intervocalic 'r' sounds. This means that, in AmE MERRY, MARRY, and MARY often sound the same, MIRROR rhymes with NEARER, FURRY rhymes with HURRY.

As for the vocabulary of AmE, we can list a few features that are present in different parts of the USA territory, namely:

- **Southern AmE** contains: archaic expressions such as BRANCH (a brook), ALL-OVERS (feelings of uneasiness), HULL (the shell of a nut), KINFOLK (relatives), SCAT! (Bless you!); contact features, borrowings and calques from other languages such as Amerindian languages (TERRAPIN, a turtle), the French of Louisiana (ARMOIRE for wardrobe, BAYOU for a small river), Spanish influence (VAQUERO, cowboy), African languages especially on the islands of South Carolina and Georgia where Gullah is spoken;
- **Western vocabulary** contains examples of specialisation such as PARKING (a band of grass between sidewalk and curb) and specific eponyms (CHESTERFIELD, a sofa). It contains also borrowings from Mexican Spanish (ADIOS for goodbye, BRONCO for wild, HOMBRE for guy). Other languages have contributed with words (borrowings and calques) such as ALOHA (farewell, Hawaiian), KUNG FU (Chinese), NISEI (a person of Japanese descent born in the USA, from Japanese);
- **Black English** (spoken by black communities, originated as a pidgin then evolved into a dialect of AmE; some expressions are now common in AmE colourful slang). The vocabulary of Black English contains the influence of West African languages (e.g., YAM for a sweet potato, TOTE for to carry). Significant changes in the connotation of words are common: BAD is used to mean GOOD and vice versa. Many expressions which entered colloquial AmE are BOOM BOX for tape recorder, HIP for someone who is very knowledgeable