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REVIEW

The complex mosaic of Englishes

Urszula Clark, *Language and Identity in Englishes*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. Pp. xi + 212. $ 120,00. ISBN: 978-0-415-66988-7 (Hardback)

Reviewed by K. Rajagopalan, State University at Campinas (UNICAMP), Brazil

The English language is no longer any one nation's monopoly; practically every nation on earth has a stake in it. This is the overall thrust of the book in the spotlight. The amazing journey of the language from a none-too-conspicuous dialect once spoken on a part of a tiny island off the north-western coast of Continental Europe to a language of wider communication across the world is the topic that the book engages with. In the ten chapters that make up this book, Urszula Clark surveys the current state of the language in its worldwide spread, along with the inevitable phenomenon of the emergence of new regional varieties or 'Englishes'.

Chapter 1 is introductory and is concerned with making the reader familiar with the precise meanings of terms used in their strict technical senses in the remainder of the book, such as 'language', 'identity' and 'discourse' which form the basic vocabulary of the chapters that follow. In Chapter 2, the reader is presented with a brief history of the language, following the model of three circles (the inner, the outer and the expanding), famously put forward by Prof. Braj Kachru (1985). The author singles out three 'Englishes' which she refers to as 'Anglo American English', 'African American English', and 'Indian English', respectively.

Chapter 3 examines how an entire array of concepts such as 'nation', 'ethnicity', 'identity' and last but not least, 'language' are bound up with one another. Most of them, in the way we conceptualize them today, were forged in the crucible of what we might call the typical 19th century mindset (cf. Hutton, 1999). Having established the general thesis, the discussion in this chapter moves on to three specific cases, viz., Britain, the USA and China and how English plays a role in shaping their respective national identities. Chapter 4 turns the focus of the book to language policies and educational practices put in place in four countries - the UK, the USA, India and China - the first two representing Kachru's 'inner circle', and the third and the fourth, representing the 'outer' and the 'expanding' circles, respectively.

The focus of Chapter 5 is on the issues and some sticking points in research on varieties of English worldwide, especially as they impinge on identity and one's sense of 'self'. Chapter 6 revisits that topic, but this time armed with the twin theoretical concepts of 'indexicality' and 'enregisterment' described by the author as 'a shift towards considering the linguistic properties of not only *what* is spoken, but also the *context* within which speech occurs.' (p. 92).

There is a common thread running through chapters 7, 8 and 9 – viewing the different Englishes in their respective social contexts and trying to grapple with the question of how these help form distinct social identities. Finally, Chapter 10 wraps up the book, presenting some very useful and down-to-earth tips for those readers interested in pursuing their study of the phenomenon of the proliferation of English across the world and the emergence of new Englishes, each with its own endonormative standards. These tips include topics that range from the selection of a topic of research to designing research projects, gathering data, designing and conducting interviews and even recoding and registering data and actually writing up one's conclusions.

The book is presented as introductory in scope and 'intended for advanced undergraduate students of English Language, English, English Studies or Applied Linguistics, and Postgraduate students following a master's programme in the same subjects.' (p. ix). To quote the author's own words once again, her book 'takes a broad and inclusive approach to what has been called variously sociocultural linguistics or identity linguistics, or my preferred term, sociodiscursive linguistics.' (p.1)

The worldwide expansion of English has become a sub-field of intense scrutiny on its own and is attracting



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the attention of a growing number of scholars and young researchers. This book is sure to contribute to their demand for useful introductions to the topic that, while presenting a panoramic picture of the field as a whole, also bring them up to speed with what is trending in research in the area and occupying scholarly attention at the moment.

There are a few minor factual errors in the book that it would behove the author to edit out in a possible second edition of the book. The following passage on page 67 is a case in point:

> Within India itself, there is significant diversity in the range of languages spoken, with at least 800 different languages and around 2,000 dialects having been identified. However, English remains the primary language of education in India. This is primarily because even though India ceded from the British Commonwealth in the middle decades of the twentieth century, by that time English had penetrated virtually all public institutions in India - so much so that it has become virtually impossible not to give it official recognition.

With regard to the number of languages and dialects in India (or, for that matter, anywhere else in the world), your guess is as good as mine for the simple reason that there are no fool-proof criteria to settle the issue. While it is certainly true that English is the primary language of education in India at the tertiary level, primary and secondary education still takes place mostly in one of the Indian languages – in the case of secondary education the ratio is 3 to 1, vis-à-vis schools offering English as the medium of instruction, as the author herself recognizes (p. 69). More problematic, however, is the claim that 'India ceded from the British Commonwealth.' The word 'British' was dropped from the title of the 'Commonwealth' in 1946, a year before India's independence, when the then colony was in no position to decide whether or not it wished to be a 'voluntary' member of an association of sovereign states.

Overall, despite these inaccuracies, the book lives up to its stated objectives and as such is to be commended as a must in the reading list of any newcomer to the field, as well as many who already work in it.

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REVIEW

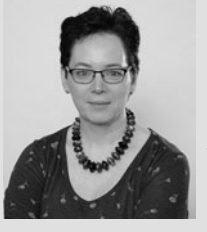
Vietnam War slang, as used by Rambo, desk jockeys and tail-end Charlies

Tom Dalzell, *Vietnam War Slang*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014. Pp. x + 173. Paperback £22.99, ISBN 9780415839419.

Reviewed by Julie Coleman, University of Leicester

In many ways, Dalzell's is an exemplary slang dictionary, as one might expect from so experienced a slang lexicographer. Slang dictionaries do not usually explain the principles underlying inclusion, the selection of headword forms, the ordering of senses and the designation of country of origin, although this information is vital to any careful user.

Dalzell offers a snapshot of 'slang learned and used in Vietnam, some of which was then later used back home' (x) rather than an account of slang first used in Vietnam. He therefore includes many terms that predate the war as well as some that were recorded only in post-war accounts and dictionaries. However, although the word-list has evidently been compiled, at least in part, from the *New Partridge* (*NP*), it is not clear how *NP* entries that were not specifically labelled as belonging to the Vietnam War were selected. It would not have been



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