GLOBALIZATION OR STANDARDIZATION: EXPLORING ENGLISH'S CENTRE OF GRAVITY

Lubna Farhan Ali[1]

ABSTRACT:

Language is one of the chief glories of the nation's now and in centuries before. A language helps people communicate and unite and if it is a lingua franca, the functions and the obligations of any language are bound to magnify. Richard Malcaster, an English grammarian, in 1582, speculated the future of English language by saying that English language was of "small reach, stretching no further than this island of ours, nay, not there over all." Today, English language has reached far corners of the world, beyond that island, into the inlands. This language is used in myriad contexts around the world, as the first, second and foreign language of billions, the official language of numerous nations and a multitude of international events. Having become the lingua franca of the modern globalized world, English is riding on the crest of globalization. It's a status that is coveted and cursed at the same time. Many like to accept its role as an ambassador of global harmony and prosperity with a big pinch of salt. Its proposed native standards are not an exception to skeptical acceptance and increasingly, the question is being asked that what should be considered as "standard" for a language which is fulfilling the communicative needs of not just one or two nations but of one third population of the world?

KEY WORDS: Globalization, Standardization, Standard English ideology, New Englishes, ELF, SELF

INTRODUCTION:

> *The spread of English is helping to transform the world and . . .*
> *English, in turn, is transformed by the world.* (Graddol, 2006 p.59)

The overwhelming reach and prominence of English as a global language is clearly dependent on the state of globalization. Mauranen (2012) says, "English as a lingua franca is both a consequence and a prerequisite of globalization." According to David Crystal, English is spoken today by almost one-third of the world's population, and the number keeps rising (2008). Non-native speakers outnumber native speakers four to one, and the ratio is continually developing. Graddol (2006) predicts that "native-speaker norms are becoming less relevant" (14). Such a situation has raised some very valid questions about standards and demands new venues to be explored: whose and what standards ELF community should look up to? Does Globalization of English imply falling apart of standards? Where is the center of gravity of the ELF and where is it shifting? OR What lies at the centre of gravity of the English language: Standard English or ELF?

GLOBALIZATION:

"Globalization may be thought of initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life" (Held et al. 1999, p. 2). Tomlinson (1999, p.4) describes the fast-changing face of the world in following words, "speeding up refers to the shrinking of the world. This does not mean the world is getting smaller in a geographical sense. The distance between Spain and Mexico City for example is still 5500 miles and the two places are still separated by a large stretch of ocean, just as they always were however, the relationship between time and space has changed so that we now experience the world as a smaller place. This is often termed time-space compression." In a way, globalization means "the annihilation of space by time: the reorganization of time in such a way as to overcome the barriers of space" (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002, p. 6).

The influences of globalization are profound, far-reaching and multidimensional. Globalization affects and is connected with almost every aspect of the lives of the modern men. A wider, deeper, accelerated interconnectedness with which today's world is characterized has unlimited ramifications regarding

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[1] *Lecturer, Institute of Business Management, Karachi. Email:* lubna.farhan@iobm.edu.pk

languages; English indeed is the one that is reaping the most benefits. English is uniquely global; panoramically international. Crystal (2008) asserts, "although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and the purposes it serves." This lingua franca is not connecting 2 or 3 communities but literally the whole world.

ENGLISH IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT:

From a tongue of the people of only a small island of Europe, English has become the most predominant language in today's world. This language has presence, in some form and role or the other in 105 countries of the world (Ethnologue, 20th Edition, 2017). According to McArthur (2002), it could be safely estimated that users of English had already crossed one billion at the beginning of the 21st century, with the native speakers being only less than a fourth of those (p. 2). Crystal (2008) had already noted that "we have moved in 25 years from a fifth to a quarter to a third of the world's population being speakers of English" (p. 5). Baker (2015), for example, adds that Crystal's (2008) estimate of two billion should have been taken as a 'conservative' figure by now.

Pennycook (2007, p .5) points out, "English is closely tied to processes of globalization: a language of threat, desire, destruction and opportunity. It cannot be usefully understood in modernist states-centric models of imperialism of world Englishes or in terms of traditional, segregationist models of language." Though he agrees that the pluralization perspective of World Englishes is practical and useful, he prefers the more complex vision of globalization over it.

Today, we are living in a world whose linguascape is thriving with multiple Englishes ranging from ENL to ESL to EFL, to the traditional SE, many emerging WEs, and the ELF. Many researchers agree that all varieties of English are linguistically equal but they are far from enjoying the same pedestal of same social prestige and honour. Milroy (2001) states, "Varieties of language do not actually have prestige in themselves: these varieties acquire prestige when their speakers have high prestige." Lick and Alsagoff (1998) note, "Generally, the variety spoken by the socially dominant group, which normally include the rich and powerful, as well as the educated elite, has the most prestige. This variety is then institutionalized as the standard: it is used for governmental administration and on all formal occasions. It is taught in schools and used in the mass media and it serves as the model for those who wish to master the language. In contrast, the varieties used by the people of lower social status, such as the poor and the uneducated, are tagged as non-standard."

ENGLISH: A LANGUAGE OF THREE EMPIRES:

Crystal (2000) maintains, "Language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail, their language fails." A quick analysis of the languages that earned the status of the linguae francae over the past centuries reveals that all these languages were in one way or the other associated to a powerful empire e.g. Latin with Roman empire and Greek with Byzantine empire and then with the expansion and victories of those empires over other territories, their languages got momentum and became the lingua franca that they were. Evolution of English manifests that it is a language of not one or two but three empires; two physical and one virtual (figure 2). Internet and technology have helped the man escape into a virtual world, transcending physical, national and cultural boundaries. Such a world requires its own borderless, uniquely virtual language and English has won this coveted position with heavy votes.

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Galloway and Rose (2015) state that "The concept of a virtual language refers to how speakers explore the theoretical possibilities for a language which has not been coded." This "virtuality" helps and allows people to modify and change the language to serve their own purposes. Widdowson (1997) points out that, "The distribution of the actual language implies adoption and conformity. The spread of the virtual language implies adaptation and non-conformity." In the current global context, English is a virtual language thriving in a virtual empire because if it clawed with the help of the historic factors of trade, empire, military and industrial might in earlier centuries and expanded due to the US politico-economic empire, technology has helped it to flourish in a multifactorial and unmatchable manner. The dominance of English and "the emergence of the internet as a global communication channel are mutually reinforcing trends" (Crystal, 2003).
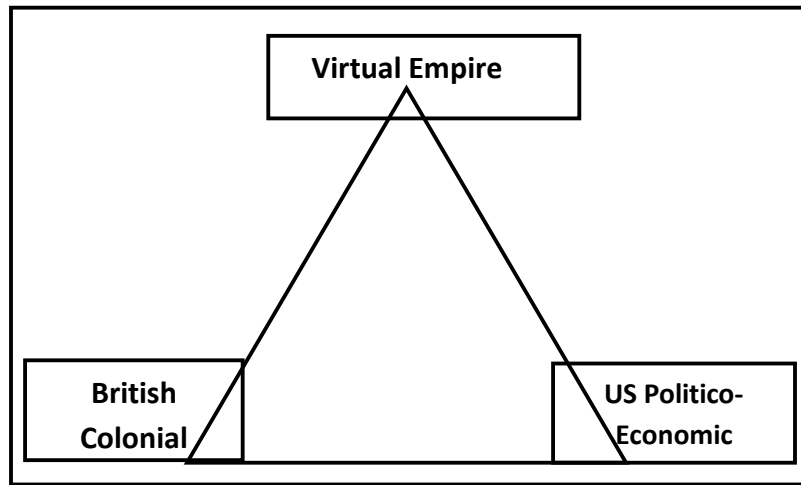

Figure 1: English: The Language of Three Empires

ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA:

Jenkins et al (2011, p. 281) describe lingua francae "as contact languages used among people who do not share a first language." Galloway and Rose (2015, p.142) write, "ELF is a contact language and the interlocutors and location can change, making the concept of national varieties of English somewhat irrelevant…. From an ELF perspective a community then has more to do with virtual, fluid and transient interactional networks then geography." ELF is defined as a "contact language" used as a means of communication between people speaking different native languages (Firth, 2009). A lot of emphasis is placed on the functions it is potentially capable of performing. Its form is agreed to be influenced by the speaker's native language (Cogo, 2008, 2012). Therefore, ELF is regarded by many researchers as a variety of English that is simplified to some degree, but not pristine, inadequate or flawed. It is different from any of the national varieties of English in its form or functions. It is culturally neutral and has its own extensively growing language community of EFL speakers. ELF speakers with their unique global identities and global cultural values represent the true picture of global citizens (Cogo, 2008; Widdowson, 2012; Jenkins, 2015; Galloway and Rose, 2015).

Graddol (2006) maintains that "the new language which is rapidly ousting the language of Shakespeare as the world's lingua franca is English itself — English in its new global form … this is not English as we have known it, and have taught it in the past as a foreign language. It is a new phenomenon" (p.11). Graddol's new variety is ELF that is riding on the wings of globalization but the honour did not come without some liabilities in its trail. English is observed by some as a steamroller that crushes and destroys whatever languages come in its way. But that's how it has been throughout the history of the languages of

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power and prestige and English is no exception. Globalization, at this stage, has become a process that cannot be reversed and so it should be accorded and strategies should be developed to become a part of the flow while fixing the damages during the process. The aims and ends of globalization are facilitated due to the unique spread of a globally diffused lingua franca. In other words, ELF is at once a "GLOBALIZED and GLOBALIZING" phenomenon (Jenkins, 2014).
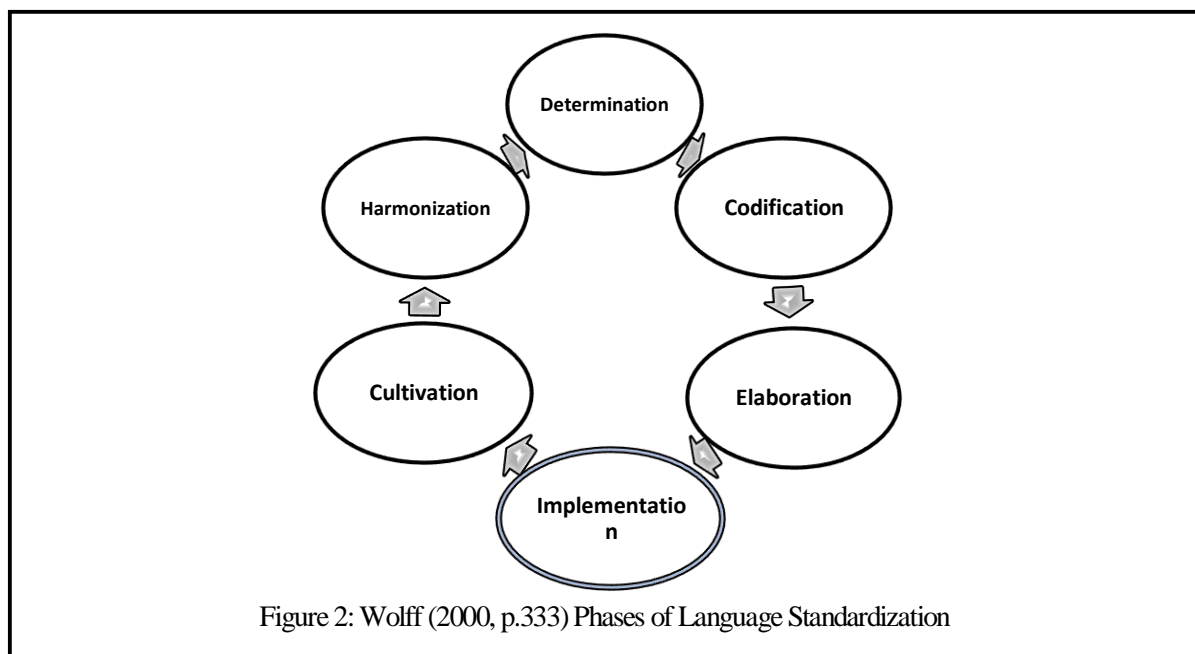
CODIFICATION OF ELF:

With ELF representing a new borderless world, linguistic atlas has become all but meaningless (Gural, & Smokotin, 2014) but the research community has still a long way to go to determine its place among different linguistic variants and varieties. ELF emerged as a strong linguistic reality but since little was available to establish it as a variety in its own right, Seidlhofer's (2001) first ELF corpus, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) paved the path for the codification of ELF, followed two years later by the launch of a second major ELF corpus, the corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings, or ELFA under the leadership of Mauranen (Mauranen 2003). More recently, Andy Kirkpatrick has initiated the compilation of another potentially major ELF corpus, the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) (Kirkpatrick 2010c). The VOICE corpus is already available online from May 2009.

LANGUAGE STANDARDIZATION:

Kamwangamalu (2001 p.194) stated, "Standardization is a natural development of a standard language in a speech community or an attempt by a community to impose one dialect as standard." Development of language related activities like grammars, spelling books, and dictionaries, and literature are performed under the standardizing process. A standard language facilitates communication, establishes an agreed orthography, and provides a uniform form of the language for academic purposes (Wolff, 2000 p.340, Kamwangamalu, 2001 p.43). Standard variety, being the correct version of a language, is generally accepted as the norm in academia and various national institutions occupying positions of power (Crystal, 1994; Jenkins, 2012). A standard variety of any language can be defined as "a regular and codified normative system of reference supported by a standard orthography, standard reference grammars and standard dictionaries." It may also be defined as a linguistic process of variation reduction. Crystal, (1994) labels it as "high variety which is used predominantly for written communication in matters of official concerns on regional, national or international level."

Language standardization describes more of a process than a product (Johnston, 2003). The different phases of language standardization (Wolff, 2000) have been captured below through a visual:

Figure 2: Wolff (2000, p.333) Phases of Language Standardization

AIMS OF LANGUAGE STANDARDIZATION:

There can be myriad reasons behind standardizing a language. Some of the aims of language standardization are discussed below:

1. A well established and standardized national language plays a vital role in the development of a nation cannot be over-stressed. Oyetade (2001) states that every developmental discourse expresses the significance of the pragmatic and expressive values a language. So standard languages serve the various political purposes of a nation as well.
2. Rampant differences between dialects hamper communication. Standardization increases the communication valency of a language.
3. A mutually comprehensible, standard language is perceived to further unity amongst a community. The concept of "One nation, one language" stemmed from this ideology.
4. Another aim of standardization is to make it available to all to use in academic settings. In multilingual communities, education from beginning to higher education may turn into a struggle without the presence of a standard language.
5. Standard language, because of its pragmatic value, becomes the vehicle for the transmission of scientific and technical education and manifestation of culture.

Often language standardization is observed as a means for maintaining the linguistic and communicative standards. It strengthens and promotes cultural integrity, but such a standard is suspected to have the potential to contribute to varying degrees of linguistic discrimination and social conflict. Selection of a standard variety is politically charged and involves power struggle. Choosing one variety over others may be beneficial for some and discriminatory for others.

DEFINING STANDARD ENGLISH:

The term *Standard English* is elusive and difficult to define. There is no internationally recognized governing body that spells out the rules of what should and should not be included in such a *standard*. However, McArthur (2003, p.442) maintains that Standard English has at "least three identifying characteristics:

1) It is easiest to recognize in print because written conventions are similar worldwide.
2) It is usually used by news presenters.
3) Its usage relates to the speaker's social class and education."

McArthur (2003, p.442) states that Standard English is "the variety most widely accepted, understood, and perhaps valued within an English-speaking country." Generally, it is the speakers who decide what is acceptable and what is not, what correct usage is and what is not. That is why a Pakistani's perception of Standard English may vary dramatically from that of Philippine.

From the dozens of definitions available in the literature on English, Crystal (1994) extracted five important features:

1. "SE is a variety of English.
2. The linguistic features of SE are chiefly matters of grammar, vocabulary and orthography (spelling and punctuation).
3. SE is the variety of English which carries most prestige within a country.
4. SE is recommended as a desirable educational target. It is the variety which is used by the community's leading institutions, such as its government, law courts, and media.
5. Although SE is widely understood, it is not widely produced. Only a minority of people within a country (e.g. radio newscasters) actually use it when they talk. More than anywhere else, SE is to be found in print."

On this basis, Crystal (1994) defined "the Standard English of an English-speaking country as a minority variety (identified chiefly by its vocabulary, grammar, and orthography) which carries most prestige and is most widely understood."

SE IDEOLOGY IN THE CURRENT GLOBAL CONTEXT:

A brief look at the history of Standard English (figure 4) reveals that it is a variety of English that evolved to serve the purposes of one nation. Nowhere the process of the standardization of English language implied that the same variety would be deemed suitable to serve the linguistic needs of the entire population of the human race. The current national turned into international Standard English ideology necessarily involves the native speaker model and a blind and irrational advocacy of the traditional Standard English can devalue other varieties of English. Anything that is different from a standard, e.g. Singlish in Singapore, is considered inferior. Secondly, being a native-speaker model, it may be unattainable for many second language learners who, by definition, can "never become native-speakers without being reborn" (Cook 1999, p.187).
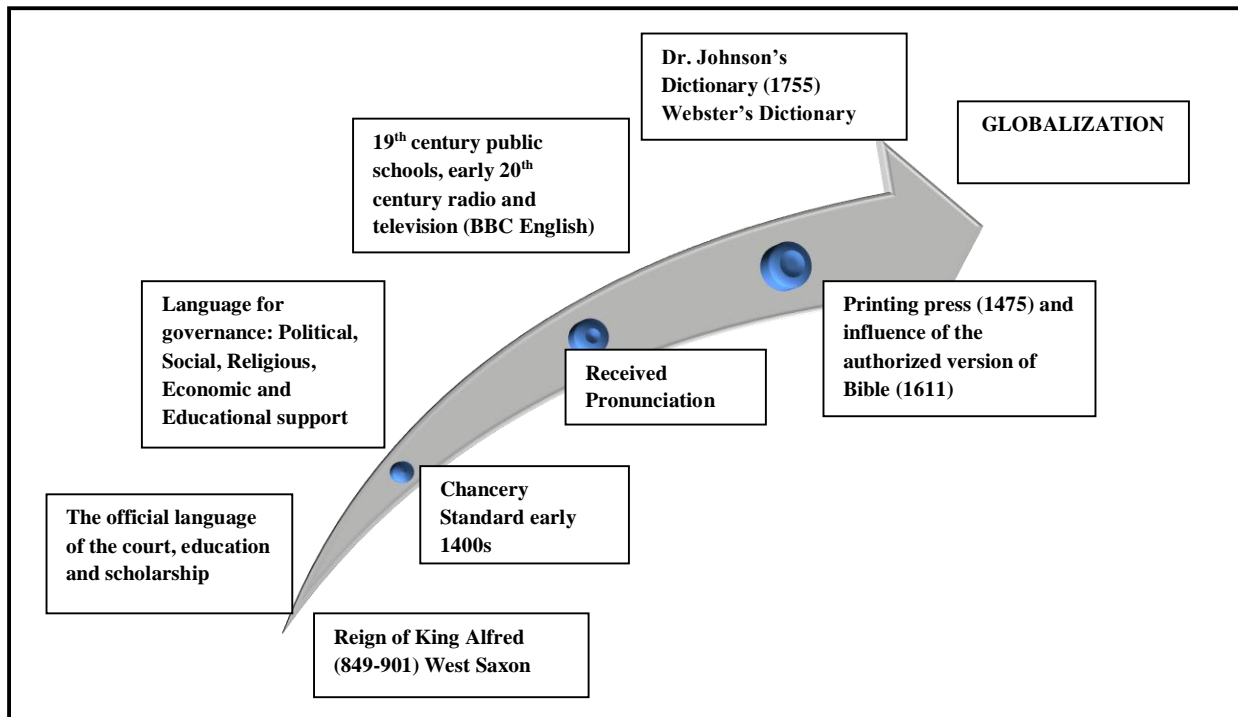
Figure 3: History of Standard English

Widdowson (1994, p.381) asserts that Standard English "is not simply a means of communication but the symbolic possession of a particular community, expressive of its identity, its conventions, and values." World Englishes are used as an expression of the identity and their cultural values of their respective speakers because language is "a major means (some would say the chief means) of showing where we belong, and of distinguishing one social group from another" (Crystal 2003, p.22).

For the following reasons Standard English Ideology does not hold grounds in the current global scenario and there is a need to redistribute the rights to decide on the linguistic norms and standards to those who are the proficient users of ELF:

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❖ It considers the language a static and fixed entity which is non-responsive to the changing needs of its users.
❖ It sacrifices communication over imitation.
❖ It sets the unattainable target of acquiring native or native like accent and ignores various others more practical and realistic ways to achieve intelligibility.
❖ SE ideology places one exclusive variety in a privileged position.
❖ It places all other varieties in a marginalized position.
❖ Native Speaker norms perpetuate monolingualism.
❖ SE ideology essentializes Native speakers of English as a reference point.
❖ The NS model sets an unrealistic and unachievable target for NNSs, thus taking a de-motivational stance to their progress.
❖ It marginalizes the NNSs who are in majority now.
❖ It fails to give value to the language spoken by non-native proficient speakers in the Outer and Expanding circles.
❖ A monocentric model of Standard English works as a gatekeeper for upward social mobility.

GLOBALIZATION VS STANDARDIZATION:

There are two main schools or camps i.e. the "traditional" school, exemplified by Sir Randolph Quirk and the "progressive" school, represented by Braj B. Kachru, which advocate either a monocentric or a pluricentric view of the language (Crystal, 2008). Adherents of the former camp want to fix and preserve the language with its traditional essence resulting in a single standard Native variety to be employed by English users worldwide. Proponents of the second camp give high importance to the diverse cultural, individual and political needs of the international users of the language and deny the natives any rights to exert their control over the language that is supposed to be globally owned by its each and every user.

We need to consider at this point whether standardization and globalization are opposing or parallel forces?
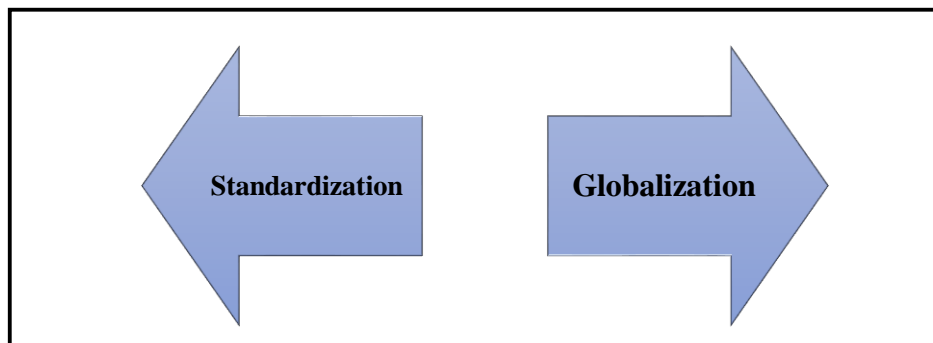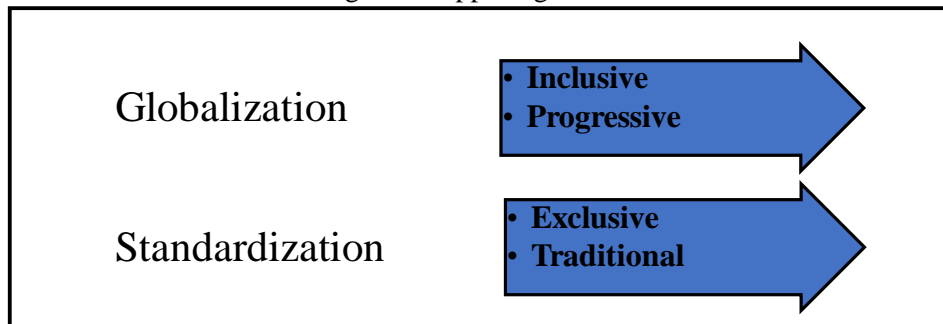

Figure 4: Opposing Forces?

Figure 5: Parallel Forces?

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Standardization happens in response to contact, spread and change; contact leads to variation or change and this change triggers the desire to standardize the language, to fix the language. Globalization is the epitome of spread, interconnection and change and so I assert that these two cannot be the opposing forces. These are parallel forces and so can co-exist.

3.2 ENGLISH TO ENGLISHES:

Canagrajah, (2000), aptly states, "English is now a heteroglossic language that has become pluralized." The term world Englishes (WE) is generally utilized now to refer to the diverse varieties of English in extensive use (McArthur, 2001, p. 44; Davies et al. 2003, p. 572; Jenkins, 2015). The "first-diaspora" varieties of Native English countries have often been accepted as branches of a "Greater British" family of English dialects (Canagrajah, 2007; Jenkins, 2014). While the "new" Englishes of various countries, belonging to "second diaspora" are still the far relatives, receiving the contemptuous welcome. Mufwene (2001) highlights the subtle prejudice that unveils itself through the naming practices of world Englishes i.e. "pidgins," "creoles," "non-native," and "indigenized" Englishes. He goes on to assert that, "The naming practice of new Englishes has to do more with the racial identity of those who speak them than with how these varieties developed and the extent of their structural deviations ..... The legitimate offspring are roughly those varieties spoken typically by descendants of Europeans around the world, whereas the illegitimate ones are those spoken primarily by populations that have not fully descended from Europeans." (Mufwene, 2001, p. 107-8)

Ownership of English is claimed by ENL countries but Widdowson (1994) states that "the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it." The non-native speakers have already outnumbered the native speakers by a ratio of 4 to 1. 74% of the communication that is happening in English around the globe does not involve a native speaker.
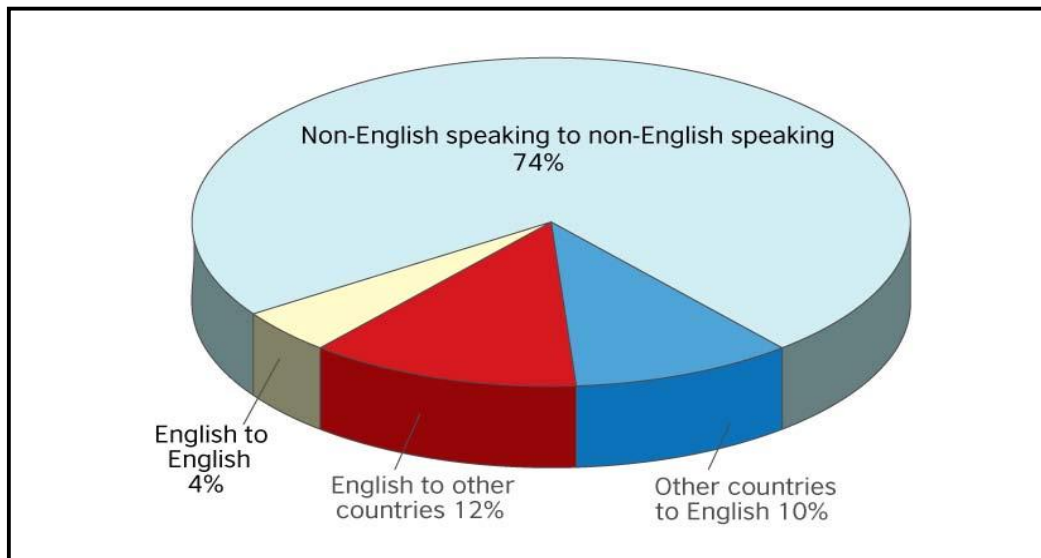

Figure 6: (source: Graddol, *English Next, 2006*)

English, since it has been adopted by millions of people of multiple cultures around the globe, is no longer the sole possession of the countries of the Inner Circle. In his article "The Ownership of English", Widdowson (1994) defined the term "ownership" as the speakers' intentional and non-intentional appropriation of the language for their own particular use and smooth communication. For him appropriation is a way of proficiency and criticizes the use of exonormative standards. He notes, "You are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your own, bend it to your will, assert

yourself through it, rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form" (Widdowson, 1994, p.384). He differentiates between spread and distribution, "distribution implies adoption and conformity. Spread implies adaptation and non-conformity," and emphasizes that "Real proficiency is when you are able to take possession of the language, turn it to your advantage and make it real for you. This is what mastery means. So in a way, proficiency only comes with non-conformity....."

3.3 WHAT STANDARDS, WHOSE STANDARDS?

Crystal, (2000) asserts, "Language is an immensely democratizing institution. To have learned a language is immediately to have rights in it. You may add to it, modify it, play with it, create in it, ignore bits of it, as you will. When a language spreads, it changes." Many celebrated writers from around the globe have written in favour of the flavours a New English carries. Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize winner for literature (1986) has argued that (quoted in Schmied, 1991 p. 126), "When we borrow an alien language . . . We must stretch it, impact it and compact it, fragment and reassemble it." The Indian author Raja Rao wrote in the foreword to his seminal and iconic piece Kanthapura, published in (1978), "We shall have English with us and amongst us and not as our guest or friend, but as one of our own, our castes, our creed, our sect and of our tradition". D'Souza stated that English has been Indianised by being "borrowed, transcreated, recreated, stretched, extended, contorted perhaps" (2001 p. 150). The Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe (2005) remarks, "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience…. But it will have to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings." Chinua Achebe (2005) further states, the African writer should therefore "aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his personal experience." His remarks apply to all new Englishes which have been created to carry the weight of diverse experiences in multiple surroundings.

4.1 ELF: A CONTINUUM OF STYLES AND FUNCTIONS:

Crystal (2000) states, "Alongside the need to reflect local situations and identities, which fosters diversity, there is the need for mutual intelligibility, which fosters standardization. People need to be able to understand each other, both within a country and internationally." The dichotomy of "language of communication" and "language of identification" is being increasingly used by the researchers for discussions on the current position of English. German applied linguist Werner Hüllen coined these terms in 1992. Through these terms he asserted that English's role as an international language qualifies it as a language of communication and not as a language of identification. He argues that, "The spread of a single language of communication does not need to affect the existence of languages of identification." Knapp (2008) asserts, "A language of communication is used for practical communicative purposes, and due to its primary functional nature, correctness or particular stylistic and cultural features associated with the speech community from which this language originates are less important. On the other hand, language of identification means a language which is learnt in order to be integrated into and identify with the respective speech community."
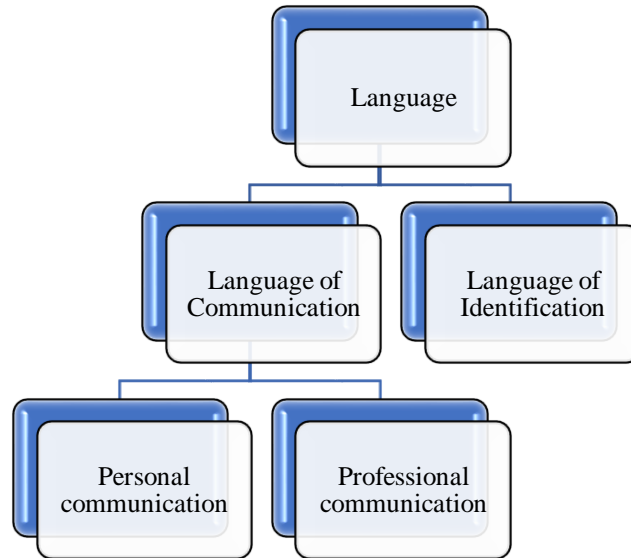
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Figure 7: ELF: Language of Communication

Language of communication can easily be divided into at least two further layers: Personal communication and Professional communication. According to Crystal (2000), "Once a new variety of English is established, internal or local variation begins to appear. Each variety of national Englishes is represented by a continuum of styles." He gives an example of the Australian English which has been classified into three styles: cultivated, general and broad. Singaporean English also flaunts three comparable styles: acrolectal, mesolectal and basilectal. The term "style" manifests that these varieties are representative and expressive of the identity of their speakers and the use of a particular style depends on a particular motivation. Crystal (2000) asserts, "I see no intrinsic problems in the gradual emergence of a tri-English world - a world, that is, in which a home dialect - often very mixed in character - a national standard dialect, and an international standard dialect comfortably coexist."
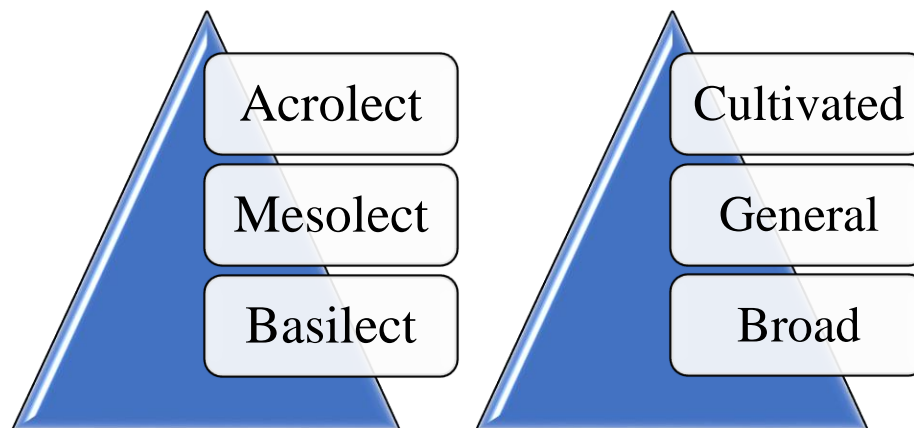

Figure 8: Glocalization of English: A continuum of styles

The concern over standardization is a legitimate one and so is the concern over resulting variations and emerging varieties but I prefer to agree with Pennycook (2007) here who asserts that, "We need to . . . focus on translocal and transcultural flows. English is a translocal language, a language of fluidity and fixity." The best way to cope up in the current linguascape of the world is to let all the varieties thrive in their own

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domains by giving each an equal status. Since these are the varieties that are either institutionalized or a medium of instruction or are treated as core subjects, a common core will emerge and that common core will work as the centre of gravity for most varieties of English language. I intend to give this common core the title of SELF (Standard English as a Lingua Franca). Below is a graphical representation of a transnational continuum of the functions of English as a lingua franca. The term "functions" manifests that these varieties are used to achieve certain communicative targets of their speakers and the choice of a particular function depends on a particular motivation. The globalization of English has caused the emergence of some transnational and transcultural variations of the language beginning with the simplistic ELF on the first tier (to be used in the normal day to day international communications), BELF on the second tier (to be used in formal business settings), ALFA on the third tier (to be used in international academic settings) and finally SELF (to work as the ultimate international standard).
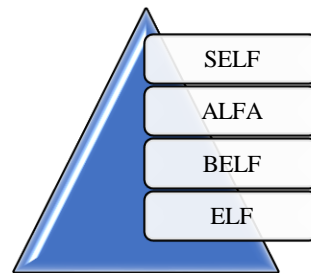

Figure 9: Globalization of English: A continuum of functions

4.2 CONCLUSION: STANDARD ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA (SELF)

In the current global scenario, standards should be more inclusive, more fluid, less fixed. There is no need to build the ELF standards from the scratch so the inner circle standard language should become one of the components of the Standard ELF but not the only one. Standard ELF will be the true vehicle to transfer the benefits of globalization to every individual.

Standard ELF in the making:
- ✓ SELF will be as hybrid and fluid as the ELF itself.
- ✓ It will not be exclusively SBE or SAE.

But
- ✓ It will be inclusive of SBE or SAE.
- ✓ It will be an educated, formal variety of English and will be found mostly in print.
- ✓ It will be context and situation dependent.
- ✓ It will be representative of the global community of English speakers.
- ✓ It will have no geographical, national, political or cultural constraints.

English has never been resistant to evolution and change– and that is its great strength. English being the global language is owned by other people, by us, by everyone and by no one. For international communication, a core of language should remain intelligible to all speakers of English. But languages are prone to a natural process of evolution; change, growth and decay. To exert control over such a natural process will be nothing but unnatural. Globalization implies intelligibility. There is a need to develop a common core with globally agreed upon standards but we should only standardize for mutual harmony and communication and not for hegemonization and discrimination.
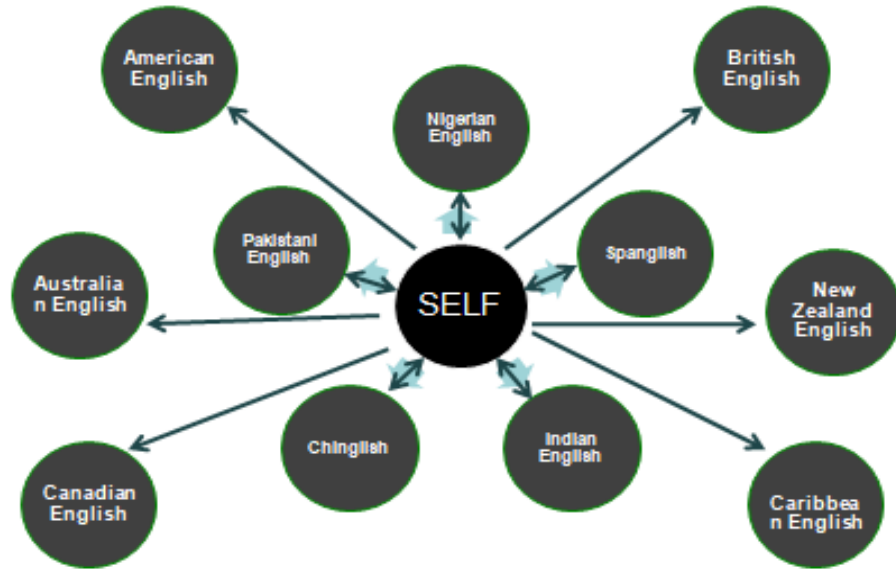
Figure 10: The Centre of Gravity: SELF

Llurda, (2004) states that, "English has reached such a level of internationalization that local changes in the heartland should not be transferred to the international use of the language, and changes caused by the international usage of the language should be learned by members of the native speaking community." Canagarajah (2006) maintains that, "in a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties and communities of English, proficiency becomes complex . . . one needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication." This should not be a very huge task for the native speakers, as they have been shuttling between different varieties and communities (AE, AUS E, BE, and 33 dialects coexisting harmoniously in Britain only) from centuries, without raising issues of intelligibility. The only difference is that the same tolerance is not extended to NNSs. Though they are the ones who are already far out of their comfort zone: moving around apologetically, risking their dignity in business meetings and risking their business with broken and misunderstood statements. They do everything from negotiating to evaluating, instructing, giving and soliciting feedback, persuading, solving problems and building relationships, questioning, motivating and managing conflict. People, across the globe, routinely fulfill their communicative needs by using a limited vocabulary and choosing uncomplicated structures__ and trying much harder. I believe it's time for the native speaker as well to move out of his cozy corner and relearn the language the world is communicating in.

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