

# ON NORMS AND PREJUDICES: THE NOTION OF MATURATION IN NEW ENGLISHES

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**Abstract:** *Research on New Englishes in the last thirty years was grossly directed at identifying at what point and to what extent these varieties of English deviate from the native or older varieties (typically British and American). Considered and often treated as fruits of deficient or inadequate acquisition of the native, these Englishes have been conceptually interpreted as growing or advancing or maturing in a progressive manner towards the native or older Englishes. This paper refutes this notion of maturation and rather proposes that New Englishes are evolving according to the ecological realities of their present contexts.*

**Keywords:** New Englishes, language maturation, language ecology, standard, norms.

**Resumen:** *La investigación de las nuevas variedades del inglés (New Englishes) se ha centrado de forma significativa en los últimos treinta años en identificar en qué punto y en qué medida se desvían estas variedades de inglés de la forma nativa o de variedades antiguas (típicamente el inglés británico y americano). Consideradas y tratadas a menudo como fruto de una adquisición deficiente o inadecuada del inglés nativo, estas variedades del inglés se han interpretado conceptualmente como (growing) entidades “creciendo” (growing), “avanzando” (advancing), y “madurando” (maturing) de forma progresiva hacia las variedades de inglés nativo o antiguas. Este artículo rebate esta noción de “maduración” (maturation) y más bien propone que las nuevas variedades del inglés están evolucionando de acuerdo a las realidades ecológicas de sus contextos actuales.*

**Palabras clave:** Nuevas variedades del inglés (*New Englishes*), madurez del lenguaje, ecología del lenguaje, estándar, normas.

## 1. Introduction

Since the publication of BRAJ KACHRU's initial works on New Englishes<sup>1</sup> (e.g. B. KACHRU 1965, 1966) there has been a long-standing tradition of treating these varieties of the language as though they were growing towards *maturity* in the native (foreign) varieties – often considered authentic and original (typically British and American). Research on New Englishes over the years has, therefore, been grossly directed at identifying at what point and to what extent these varieties of English *deviate* from the native or older varieties. Considered and often treated as fruits of deficient or inadequate acquisition of the *native*, these Englishes have been conceptually interpreted as *growing* or *advancing* in a progressive (no matter how slow it may be) manner towards the correct, authentic, or appropriate Englishes, which in this case are the native. Predominantly conceived of as interference varieties that have no standard of their own (C. PRATOR 1968, B. HOCKING 1974, R. QUIRK 1985, A. SIMO BOBDA 1994, etc.), since they are not yet *mature*, New Englishes have been regarded as target-motivated organisms, which have no internal rules and so must depend on the native until they reach '*maturity*'.

The issue in this paper is not one of terminology but one of conception. First, these varieties are not *growing* or *advancing* towards a higher or better status. Second, they are not evolving towards the older varieties especially if we consider that historically some New Englishes (e.g. Indian English) are older than some native Englishes (e.g. Australian English).

This aside, is there any such thing as *language maturity*? Do languages actually grow in the same way as living organisms? Can language evolution be likened in any substantial way to the circle of life in living organisms of which maturity is a stage? These questions are important to buying back the place of New Englishes from the general conception that they are *infant varieties* that are growing towards the perfection preserved in the parent varieties. This conception, like the naming pattern of these Englishes, makes them look like children out of wedlock or the illegitimate offspring of the language (see S. MUFWENE 1994, 1997, 2001). As the following discussion shows, there has been much bias and prejudice in the investigation of New Englishes, resulting perhaps from their colonial origins. They have often been identified with colonial stereotypes and therefore studied from the standpoint of these colonial stereotypes. This method unfortunately limited linguistic knowledge of these varieties to levels of interference, degrees of deviation, interlingual influences, and the impact of indigenous substrate. Consequently, less was known of the internal consistency and the degree of systematicity of these Englishes except perhaps after 2000 (see E. SCHNEIDER 2000, K. BOLTON 2003, E. ANCHIMBE 2006a, etc.). This paper seeks to propose that New Englishes, though linked to the 'common core' of the language through education, like all other varieties, are evolving in patterns determined by the linguistic ecologies in which they find themselves and according to the linguistic habits of their speakers. These speakers put their preferences to bear on the language and so *nativise* it to fit their immediate environment – thereby bridging the gap created by the foreignness of the language to these new regions to which it was brought several centuries back but in which it must forever live.

## 2. New Englishes: some standing controversies?

When B. KACHRU (1982) declares that the first enemy of New Englishes is the new nations themselves, it is clear that there is a second enemy somewhere – it is also clear that New Englishes constitute a domain of controversy. Who or what therefore is this second enemy? The linguistic battle between advocates of New Englishes' linguistic human rights (B. KACHRU 1991, 1996, A. BAMGBOSE 1998, etc.) and advocates of an international standard variety of English (R. QUIRK 1990, G. ABBOTT 1991, F. CHEVILLET 1993, etc.) showed that the foreign native (purist) linguist was opposed to the acceptance of independent standards for New Englishes. The use of such expressions as 'liberation linguistics', 'deficit linguistics', 'Quirk concerns', 'Kachru catch', 'half-baked quackery' by the different combatants in this battle point to one thing: that New Englishes were not allowed to operate as independent varieties of the language. This perhaps explains why R. QUIRK (1990: 6) branded B. KACHRU's request for New Englishes to be instituted as educational media as "half-baked quackery." However, new insights into the status and evolution of New Englishes (see E. SCHNEIDER 2000, S. MUFWENE 2001, K. BOLTON 2003) seem to have set this issue to rest. A. BAMGBOSE (1998: 1) therefore concludes:

Today, few serious scholars of the English language will insist that a non-native English is used only in a narrow range of domains [as R. QUIRK 1990 claims], that it is a transitional and unstable code striving for perfection, that its continued encouragement and use will lead to linguistic fragmentation and/or deterioration of the language [à la G. ABBOTT 1991], or that only native English is a suitable model for all English language users.

At the level of description of linguistic features of New Englishes there are still many controversies. For F. BANDA (1996: 67) the use of terms like fossilisations, interlanguages, deviations, etc. for the features identified within New Englishes is contradictory to the purported autonomous status of these Englishes. He believes that "the contradiction is too apparent, [given that] NE [New Englishes] are said to have a norm or standard, at the same time they are said to be nothing but fossilised interlanguages." The contradictions in the literature are caused by controversies that stem from the fact that New Englishes have not been accepted even by those who speak them as official and national language. Researchers have therefore limited themselves to the extent of deviation from the native varieties leaving relevant questions such as

the following unanswered: Are New Englishes simply fossilisations or established varieties? Are regional standards worth encouraging? Could a native variety ever have taken root in these areas? And, are New Englishes' origins traceable to contact effects and non-native proficiency alone?

### **2.1 Fossilisations or established varieties?**

The first major controversy concerns the status of New Englishes – are they simply fossilised deviations or language varieties with identifiable norms? The study of New Englishes (just like any other new emerging variety) started with the identification of new features introduced at regional levels. It spread to processes through which these features are produced, fossilised, and normalised within the regional norms. Unfortunately, whether New Englishes are only distinct in terms of fossilisations or actually evolve through the same natural processes as other languages, have not been extensively investigated. F. BANDA (1996: 67) warns, in this regard, that "New English research runs the risk of failing to comprehensively account for innovations in New Englishes resulting from psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic needs in the new environments English finds itself." Although certain new features have been fossilised, it cannot be claimed that New Englishes are exclusively fossilised interlanguages influenced by the background indigenous languages and non-native proficiency. This is because English, being initially foreign to these contexts, had to take on the local colour to properly represent its new speakers. The transmission process has been similar to that in other linguistic contexts involving whether native or non-native languages. To insist therefore that New Englishes are not established varieties that possess norms of their own is to force social stratification into a linguistic reality, which unfortunately does not fit it.

### **2.2 Foreign or local standards?**

The second major controversy has been over norms or standards. Who should dictate the standard or what standard is best for New Englishes context? Due to colonial hangovers, New Englishes were considered as falloffs of inappropriate acquisition of standard English, which are further *deviant* due to speakers' multidialectal and multilingual backgrounds. In his refusal to grant New Englishes right to a standard of their own because English in these areas was not used for all daily activities, R. QUIRK (1985: 6) rather calls for a "single [international] monochrome standard form that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech." His position has two basic irregularities; first, English in New Englishes regions is an official language that is used for all national functions even at the detriment of national indigenous languages, which E. ANCHIMBE (2006b) believes now suffer from functional seclusion. Second, the variegation of English language tongues even in the UK annuls any attempts to achieve an international standard that would be as stable in speech as it is in writing. Even though later literature seems to recognise regional or local standards, it is more for sociological balance and not for the use of these standards as media of education or for international publication. For instance, *The Journal of Pragmatics* would accept non-native (especially New Englishes, I would say) contributions only if authors accept that "[t]he editors reserve the right to correct, or to have corrected, non-native use of English (or other languages). The *Journal* has adopted U.S. English usage as its norm (this norm does not apply to other native users of English)." (see "Instructions to Authors" column). If US English norm "does not apply to other native users of English", to whom then does it apply if not New Englishes (and perhaps EFL) users? What this indicates is that local standards of New Englishes are internationally rejected while other regional standards, the so-called transplanted native standards, are accepted although structurally some of them may just be as far removed from U.S. English as New Englishes. The common reason often advanced is that New Englishes are constantly in contact with indigenous African or Asian languages, which, it is claimed, are detrimental to the standard of the language. The question that comes up is, are the so-called native regions linguistically homogenous? The simple answer is no. Non-standard dialects in the UK are just as distant from standard British English as Nigerian or Cameroonian Englishes are. These notwithstanding, and beside the double-face in the

recognition of local norms, one thing remains clear, that "the attitudinal conflict between indigenous and external norm is slowly being resolved in favour of localised educated forms" (B. KACHRU 1982: 217).

### 2.3 Interference or normal varieties?

Up to the late 1990s research in New Englishes aimed principally to show how new features from indigenous languages, Pidgins, Creoles, other European languages, and speakers' creations are introduced into English within each New Englishes nation or region. J. SPENCER (1971), J. PLATT *et al.* (1984), J. FOLEY (1988), B. KACHRU (1992), A. BAMGBOSE *et al.* (1995), and other major works are keen on pointing out at what point the regional external ecology has made these Englishes distinct from the older ones. Interference is the main staple and is the standard factor used to account for new features entering the language. Because the indigenous languages are socially treated as primitive media of communication and the Pidgins and Creoles as uneducated and non-prestigious languages, the features they supply to English in these contexts are considered a source of deterioration of the language. I. GYASI (1990: 24), for example, laments: "English in Ghana is very ill. The cancerous tumours are countless: wrong collocation; false concord; poor spelling [...], inability to handle the third person singular; wrong omission [...]" Are these "cancerous tumours" caused by the community's desire to speak the language in a way affordable to them or by their inability to acquire and use the language correctly? New Englishes have not been treated as *normal* languages evolving in sociohistorically complete societies. Language change occurs everywhere and even without the contact of languages or speakers. Why are some of these so-called "cancerous tumours" not regarded as society-induced changes on a language that is foreign to it but which must adapt to its new habitat? The origins of American English, it should be noted, were founded on the adoption of common errors as a means of giving a new identity to the language that was to become the icon of the newly independent American nation (see N. WEBSTER 1789). Unfortunately, in the case of New Englishes, these new features are treated as speakers' interlanguages that would eventually disappear when the normal standard of the language (the native) has been adequately acquired – hence the notion of *maturation*.

### 2.4 Native or non-native standards?

Since New Englishes are still *growing* and are used by non-native speakers, they must depend on foreign native standards (A. SIMO BOBDA 1994). This statement and similar ones in the literature provoke questions such as: Will New Englishes ever adopt a standard that is determined by their own speakers? This will not be possible if the prejudices of certain conservative native linguists are taken into account. For such as B. HOCKING (1974) "the point is that what is correct in a language is just what native speakers of the language say. There is no other standard." This is a clear example of linguistic victimisation caused by reliance on labels and concepts that have ceased to be relevant to the current status of the language around the world. How suitable a native speaker of American English is in an Indian context is what adherents of this perspective fail to think of. As if this is not enough, P. TRUDGILL (1995: 315) grades speakers of English on a scale of nativeness, with some, like the new Napoleonic creed in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, being more native (or perhaps more equal) than others:

The concept of the 'native speaker' [...] is not a matter of either-or. It is a concept which admits of degrees of more or less. This does not invalidate the notion. It is simply the case that some people are more native speakers than others.

The controversy over standards takes root from two faulty presumptions: the immaturity of New Englishes and the imperfection of their grammars. These presumptions have placed speakers on a fence as to what variety of the language they speak. In a survey reported by E. ANCHIMBE (2006a), 223 (74.5%) of 300 respondents agree Cameroon English exists. But when asked subsequently if they speak Cameroon English, only 118 (39%) said yes and 179 (60%) claimed they speak British English. It shows therefore that, more than anything else, foreign native standards are preferred by New Englishes speakers as are proposed by

conservative foreign native linguists. Given that Cameroonians have no significant contact with British English; that English in Cameroon is taught predominantly by Cameroonian teachers; and that textbooks are progressively adapted to the local sociocultural environment, their preference for British or any other foreign variety could only be motivated by non-linguistic factors such as pride, the desire to travel abroad, and the search for individual esteemed identities.

### 3. Acceptability of New Englishes

The acceptability of New Englishes was a major battle in the war for the recognition of non-native varieties of English. This battle was fought on two fronts: against the foreign native linguist who was scared of "seeing *his* language disintegrate in the hands of (or shall we say, on the lips of) non-native users" (B. KACHRU 1985: 34), and against conservative speakers of New Englishes who proclaimed that "the death-knell of Nigerian English [New Englishes for that matter] should be sounded 'loud and clear' as it has never existed, does not exist now, and will never see the sun of day." (OJI qtd M. DJIBRIL 1987: 46). On the first front, the native linguist's rejection of New Englishes is founded on the desire to protect the language from disintegration. It may be considered part of the colonial notion of imperial ownership by which colonial powers owned the colonised regions together with the lands and peoples. C. PRATOR's (1968: 459) notion of 'British heresy' in English language teaching is often associated with this front. He emphatically declares,

the heretical tenet I feel I must take exception to is the idea that it is best, in a country where English is not spoken natively but is widely used as a medium of instruction, to set up the local variety of English as the ultimate model to be imitated by those learning the language.

What he termed 'heresy' could not be avoided because English in these contexts was and is taught by locally trained teachers who have little or no contact with British English or, as the case may be, native varieties. On the second front, conservatives in New Englishes regions see in the foreign varieties social pride, academic excellence and authenticity. Since English was bequeathed to them by Britain through colonialism, it therefore goes without saying that they speak nothing but British English. Any suggestion of a local or national variety is tantamount to equating the errors of the people to the standard of the language. For RAMATO (1999), for instance, "[...] people make the excuse that there is Ghanaian English. There is nothing like Ghanaian English. There is English and then the Ghanaian accent but it shouldn't stop us speaking and writing good English" (qtd K. DAKO 2001: 25). Between these two fronts are those who believe New Englishes exist but are not yet adequately established or *mature* to be used as independent varieties with their own standards and norms. It is this group that is of interest to the following sections of the paper.

### 4. On language or variety *maturation*

Does a language or variety actually grow to reach the stage of *maturity*? Is there such stage as the *mature stage* in the evolution of any language? Is there such thing as the best state of a language, which could be considered as the goal of language *growth* and *maturation*? The concept of language *growth* and *maturation* was initially proposed by traditional grammar in its analogy of language to living organisms. Since certain languages *die*, traditional linguistics found no real problem with using the metaphor of growth to describe the patterns of change, endangerment, survival, and death of human languages. This analogy overlooked certain issues as; do languages also have youth, adult and old age stages as living things do? Can languages be plotted on the growth chart according to age and maturity like living things generally are? If yes, are languages of any use to their communities in their youth and old age? To state it briefly, the issue of *maturation*, whether towards a more acceptable variety or just evolution of the language, is a misnomer because at all stages of its evolution a language is useful to the society. To clearly understand this stance, it is important to view language as a parasitic species.

#### 4.1 Is language a living organism or a species?

Traditional linguistic theories conceive of language as a living organism that grows and sometimes dies out (or some of its elements do). This metaphor separates language from its speakers and represents it as an independent entity within the community. This traditional perspective of language as living organism, S. MUFWENE (2001: 15) believes,

artificially prevented historical linguists from identifying the real causes of internally motivated change – what they consider to be ‘normal’ or ‘regular’ kinds of change, in opposition to externally motivated change, triggered by contact with another language.

To properly account for the complete nature of the interaction between speakers and language, genetic linguists view language as a parasitic species of the Lamarckian or symbiotic type “whose genetic makeup can change several times in its lifetime [...], whose life and vitality depend on (the acts and dispositions of) its hosts, i.e., its speakers, on the society they form, and on the culture in which they live” (S. MUFWENE 2001: 16). Language, from a genetic linguistic perspective, is like a species that forms part of its host organism. It is carried around by its hosts as a parasite, which lives in them and adapts to them, changes when they change, and dies away with them. This approach considers language change to be individually based. As a result, change in language is not necessarily triggered by contact but also by other factors that are dependent on the idiolectal accommodations that individual speakers make for one another. The individual, therefore, becomes very central to linguistic evolution because contact takes place primarily in the mind (U. WEINREICH 1953) and “linguistic change is speaker-based” (J. MILROY 1997: 31), thus confirming that “communal languages are abstract extrapolations from idiolects” (S. MUFWENE 2001: 14). Evidently, R. KELLER (1994: 14) also attributes change to speakers’ patterns of usage. To him therefore, “the question as to how the process of change in our language takes place is therefore not an historical one, but a systematic one. The changes of tomorrow are the consequences of our acts of today.” In this regard, therefore, language is not an independent entity but is embedded in the life and acts of its speakers (hosts) and their community (habitat).

If we have to consider language as a parasitic species, it would have to be understood that, language, as opposed to normal organisms, constantly adapts to the conditions of their hosts. Changes within the internal and external ecologies of the host, also lead to changes within the language. Language is therefore kept alive by its hosts (the speakers) through their own survival propensities; it changes when they change (through contact or their own evolution); and dies with them when they die. It is not growing towards *maturity* like the hosts but depends on them for its existence since it is part of them.

#### 5. *Maturation* and the plight of New Englishes

Several efforts have been made by people from different walks of life to guide New Englishes to *grow* in the right path that would lead them to *maturity* in the native varieties. These efforts include Radio and television language teaching and error correction programmes, newspaper columns, remedial lessons in the form of complete books, and the banning of non-native features in schools, workplaces, home, and other contexts of communication. Books like *All what I was taught and other errors* (B. HOCKING 1974), *Common errors in English* (D. JOWITT and S. NNAMONU 1985), *Better English: A handbook of common errors* (M. LEWIS and W. MASTERS 1987), and *Watch your English: A collection of remedial lessons on English usage* (A. SIMO BOBDA 1994, revised ed. 2002) all seek to tutor New Englishes in the right path of *maturation*. While treating these varieties as infants, these books rarely acknowledge the ecological differences between the original home of English and its new habitat. A. SIMO BOBDA’s (1994, 2002) book “is a highly pedagogical document designed to redeem Standard British English usage in Cameroon” (E. ANCHIMBE 2006a: 60). In its “error-correction” form this book presents variant Cameroonian features, describes their ill-formedness, and then advances ‘correct’ British English forms. Although A. SIMO BOBDA (1994) claims in the preface that he is not “putting back the clock at all” on the “legitimacy of Cameroon English,”

he, however, declares that, the process of *maturation* of New Englishes is not yet complete. He therefore advises that while waiting for this *maturation* to come through, New Englishes speakers should adopt native English models (in syntax, morphology, lexis, punctuation and spelling). To him and many others, New Englishes have not yet fully developed their own norms.

Whatever *maturation* is supposed to mean is not exactly clear. P. TRUDGILL (1995: 316) considers 'respect' as a sign of autonomy of varieties of English. To him, "Irish English still has some way to go, however, before it achieves full autonomy and respect as a variety of English in its own right." Is it a matter of respect or one of linguistic substantiation? Is bias a major denominator in this classification of varieties as infants growing towards maturity in the parents' footprint? A. NGEFAC (2005: 50) restates the belief that New Englishes are *maturing* or have *matured* in his recent paper on Cameroon English thus: "It should be noted that purists [...] think that the peculiarities of New Englishes are errors and not necessarily indications that such varieties of English have reached the matured stage of standardisation."

The overall question therefore, is, do language varieties 'grow towards maturation'? Is there any such thing as the *mature* stage of a language? This (faulty) conception, E. ANCHIMBE (2006a: 61) insists "is founded on the same line of reasoning as the prejudiced view that the so-called New Englishes [...] are interlanguages that fall short of the normal, the standard, the older, native varieties." If New Englishes (or languages as a whole) were *growing* or *maturing* they would be tied down to stages in the process of growth or maturation. The limitations of these stages are summarised into three points below:

1. If New Englishes are growing, then it means they are moving towards a stage of excellence or perfection or maturation. Does such stage exist in any language - native or non-native?
2. It would mean they could be plotted on the growth chart, which normally has three stages: youth - adult - old age.
3. Conversely, this would signify that at youth and old age these varieties are basically valueless in the society. At what stage, if one may ask, are New Englishes now?

Since these stages cannot be found in New Englishes (or other languages), it is therefore safer to view them as evolutionary entities or species that evolve according to the behavioural patterns of their users and the specificity of their new habitat. Language evolution is not goal oriented, it is not based on prestige, it may reflect changes in the society but it is not decided by social, political, economic or developmental advancement in the society. Societies grow towards sophistication but languages evolve according to users' linguistic priorities and the idiolectal accommodations they make for one another in the course of communication. The concept of *maturation*, just like the controversy over autonomous standards vis-à-vis fossilised interlanguages, is self-defeating to the purported existence of New Englishes. How can it be claimed that New Englishes exist when at the same time they are considered as being in the process of maturation? This controversy, like the ones discussed above represent the search for a paradigm for the evaluation and study of these Englishes. Before turning to this search for theoretical framework, it is relevant to have a brief overview of research approaches to New Englishes.

## 6. Research approaches to New Englishes

The varieties of English generally called, New Englishes (often used to include English-derived Creoles and Pidgins) have been investigated through differing approaches. These approaches are borrowed from other linguistic situations starkly different from the New Englishes, and applied somewhat forcefully on them. Theories of bilingualism modelled on European case studies, second language acquisition, interference, interlanguage, and so forth were propounded for societies with characteristics that differ from New Englishes societies. These foreign designed theories further perpetuated traditional and colonially rooted perceptions of New Englishes as the "illegitimate offspring" of English (S. MUFWENE 2001) and as "linguistic orphans in search of their parents" (B. KACHRU 1982: 66). Research on New

Englishes therefore comprised of panoramic listing of features recurrent in particular countries (e.g. Indian English features) or regions (e.g. West African English features). These features were used to justify the supposed independence of New Englishes. This micro-approach entailed defining the processes through which these features – New Englishisms – were formed from British English roots. The second major approach has been based on the external ecological life of New Englishes, covering issues such as bilingualism, multilingualism, language planning policies, social attitudes towards English, and so forth. This macro-approach is generally sociolinguistic in nature.

## 7. Paradigm search

Due to the above reasons, it has become difficult to clearly outline the grammars of New Englishes. Besides the bias and prejudice in the notion of *maturity*, other reasons account for this. These include especially the search for a paradigm or theoretical framework for these varieties. No generally accepted descriptive system exists; so individual scholars devise their own descriptive and analytical procedures which, for the most part, are intended to show how New Englishes differ from, or are similar to, British English or the older varieties. Again, it is not immediately clear whether grammatical alternatives are synonymous – and if they are, then the problem becomes one of context rather than one of variation (J. SCHMIED 1991). These shortcomings and researchers' return to the available but estranged foreign theories could be likened to the unfortunate adventure of the poor old lady in the following excerpt. This excerpt from an Indian folktale in A. RAMANUJAN (1991: xiv), "succinctly sums up both our problems and dilemma" in describing and theorising about New Englishes (B. KACHRU 1996: 251).

One dark night an old woman was searching intently  
for something in the street. A passer-by asked her,  
'Have you lost something?'  
She answered,  
'Yes, I've lost my keys. I've been looking for them all evening.'  
'Where did you lose them?'  
'I don't know. May be inside the house.'  
'Then why are you looking for them here?'  
'Because it is dark in there. I don't have oil in my lamps.  
I can see much better here under the street lights.'

If researchers continue to look for the *keys* to New Englishes in foreign theories because like the *street lights*, they are readily available, the true systematic and regular features and normal patterns of evolution of these Englishes would for long remain hidden from mainstream research. New and specially focused theories need to be used for investigations on the internal, typological specificities of New Englishes. Such theories should treat each variety in relation to its ecological specificities, the mix of languages and populations, and should arrive at conclusions based on profound typological analyses of features, that may be found elsewhere, but which are produced in New Englishes through other linguistic processes. Language contact outcomes like interference, borrowing, code-mixing, loan blending, and loan translations should be studied as natural elements of language transmission that are not limited to New Englishes contexts alone.

## 8. Conclusion

So many questions have been posed in this paper to which answers still have to be addressed. However, the major issue, i.e. the concept of *maturation* in New Englishes has been handled from both a historical (language contact through colonialism) and present day standpoint (language evolution and ecological dictates). The need for well-focused approaches to New Englishes is no more simply a matter of approaching them from multiple perspectives but one of real necessity. As of now very few such approaches exist, see for instance, S.



MUFWENE's (1996) 'competition-selection of features', E. SCHNEIDER's (2000) 'feature diffusion', and E. ANCHIMBE (2006a) 'filtration processes'. With such new approaches New Englishes could be properly studied as linguistic vehicles of sociohistorically complete societies whose norms reflect their speakers and their linguistic needs. These approaches are relevant to restudying the *myth* of New Englishes, which up to now has limited linguists to interference and deviations whereas these varieties display more systematicity than any interference approach can ever explain. These varieties (to say the least) had no direct or meaningful contact with Standard British English; they have all along been taught by non-native teachers; they reflect the sociophysical ecology of their regions; they constitute icons of linguistic identity for their speakers and communities. It is unthinkable that certain linguists, as shown above, expected them, in spite of the above factors, to develop or *grow* towards British standards. They are, on the contrary, evolving in a natural manner controlled by ecological (internal – cross-linguistic influences and external – functional requirements) dictates in ways similar to R. KELLER's (1994) invisible hand.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Although elsewhere (see E. ANCHIMBE 2006a) I prefer the term *Indigenised Varieties of English*, here I will use the term *New Englishes* for reasons of consistency with the literature I wish to address in this paper. The term *New Englishes* was created to lay off the negative connotation of the term *Non-native Englishes* generally used to identify varieties of English that developed in postcolonial areas. So my use of *New Englishes* here should not be interpreted as a contradiction of the issues discussed in E. ANCHIMBE (2006a).

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