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## THE EXPANDING CIRCLE UNDER A MAGNIFYING GLASS: WORLD ENGLISHES IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

**Abstract:** The concept of ‘World Englishes/WEs’, which can be traced back to the Kachruvian Three-Circle Theory, has arisen out of the claim on the ‘shared ownership’ of English throughout the world and the need to adopt an alternative approach to the role of native speakers. There has been exhaustive research into the characteristics of Outer (OC), and Expanding Circle (EC) varieties, but outside Europe. Since the context in which English is learnt/used in Europe is quite specific, our main aim was to determine the distribution and frequency of different ‘European Englishes/EEs’ in scholarly papers published in *World Englishes* in the last decade. We employed a multi-layered content analysis, focusing on the key words (e.g. EC, European *n*-variety etc), and then analysing the singled-out papers more thoroughly by the set criteria. The results indicate that the number of EC papers exploring contexts outside Europe almost doubles ‘EEs’ papers. The great majority of ‘EEs’ papers fall under the descriptive perspective, followed by hybridisationist, with no papers adopting the critical perspective. The most frequently employed approach is sociolinguistic. The results pertaining to *n*-varieties are inconclusive. To conclude, further research is needed to provide more valuable insights into the study of ‘EEs’.

**Key words:** English in the European context, *h*-variety, language variation, *n*-variety, the Expanding Circle, World Englishes

### 1. The World Englishes paradigm: *nunc et situ*

Globalisation, as “an accelerated process of multidimensional changes” encompassing a range of fields (Gacel-Avila, 2005, p.121), and to it the closely related term internationalisation, can be seen from different aspects: political (political control), economic (trade and economy), socio-cultural (an emerging ‘world society’) (Lee, & Stensaker, 2021), and ideological (cultural imperialism). Accordingly, the modern world may well be viewed as a “melting pot”, resulting in a special blend of cultural elements (language inclusive), or “the salad-bowl where each culture can keep its distinctive character” (Palit, 2017, p. 49).

Regardless of the roots and/or reasons underlying consequent changes in language use, newly constructed language forms can naturally be considered from a linguistic angle. These changes may be regarded as posing a threat to the language under change, which is typically the case on the dominant-heritage-language plane. In a different context, it may also serve as a complementary means of expressing modernity, different dimensions of identity, progressiveness, in which case there are assimilated, blended or hybrid forms. Within the study of language, changes resulting from globalisation and internationalisation may thus be broadly studied from the linguistic purism and multilingual/plurilingual viewpoints. These changes can be seen as deviating from a 'native standard' or else as examples of language diversity.

From a more practical view, English has long been enjoying a special status throughout the planet (a 'world language'). More specifically, English is the language typically used for international communication in different spheres of life (politics, sports, science, tertiary education, entertainment, economics etc), which is therefore the main requirement for almost every profession in modern times (Grubor, 2021a). Consequently, the number of English language speakers appears to be constantly rising. Recently, it has been reported that approximately two billion people across the continents speak English today (Seoane, 2016), as the native or nativised language (Kirkpatrick, 2007), (co-)official language, hybrid variety (Seoane, 2016), *lingua franca* (Jenkins, 2007), global language (Crystal, 2003), international (auxiliary) language (Smith 1976, 1983), or in the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies, mother tongue (L1), second and foreign language (L2). Similarly, there is a wide array of settings where English can be used: at home (e.g. as an L1, 2L1, L2), at work (e.g. in business communication), abroad (e.g. for travelling), as well as the purposes of: everyday communication, socialising, advertising, entertainment, education, politics. This globally induced use of English has resulted in many changes in the English language, which is why many authors emphasise that "the more English spreads globally, the more heterogeneous it becomes internally" (Mair, 2013, p. 255).

This global influence of English and the emergence of resultant language variation have been extensively studied, which can be corroborated by scholarly journals,<sup>1</sup> book series and/or monographs.<sup>2</sup> As a result, many theories assert the claim on the 'shared ownership' of English, whereby English does not only belong to its native speakers, but also all people using it, "with all culturally-induced meanings attached to their utterances" (Grubor, 2021b, *in press*). The main tenets of the theories embracing the concept of World Englishes (WEs) pertain to the fact that English "has diversified into different varieties of English or multiple Englishes as the result of its spread and its acculturation in different communities of the world" (Li, 2019, p. 520). Linguistically speaking, WEs are code-mixed varieties that develop in contexts where language users have other code choices available (McLellan, 2010, pp. 425, 427).

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *English World-Wide*, *World Englishes*, *English Today*.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes*; *The Variability of Current World Englishes*; *World Englishes: New Theoretical And Methodological Considerations*.

The idea of the ‘shared ownership’ may be said to have originated from the Kachruvian Three-Circle Theory, subsuming the Inner (IC), Outer (OC) and Expanding Circle (EC). Briefly put, IC refers to native varieties (e.g. British English), OC to former colonies, with English as the official language (e.g. ‘Indian English’), and EC to nation-states where English is taught as a foreign language in formal education (e.g. ‘French English’). Since the concept of WEs has been thoroughly researched in the context of the OC, but far from sufficiently researched in the context of the EC (especially in Europe), we have set up the goal to determine the state of affairs within the European context for at least two reasons. Broadly speaking, the concept of WEs and its standing in linguistics is still indeterminate, its status unresolved. More specifically, the context of learning English in Europe is distinctly different from that of learning English in China, for example. Here, English is taught/learnt as an L2, and native varieties’ rules are typically adhered to.

Regarding the layout of the paper, first we will briefly introduce the theoretical frameworks predominantly used in the WEs literature; then we will present the methodology, the most important results and our findings, and finally, based on the results, provide some possible directions of further research in this area.

## **2. The theoretical grounding of English(es): What are the alternatives?**

Within the field of theoretical linguistics, the notion of standard varieties has always been taken as an *a priori* argument, even though these ‘idealised varieties’ have frequently been questioned in the field of sociolinguistics (cf. the theory of *standard language cultures*, Milroy, 2002). In accordance with the subject matter of our paper, the authors adopting the WEs paradigm find the ‘imposition’ of a ‘standard’, and/or a native (‘role model’) speaker on language learners contentious, because native speakers themselves deviate from the set norms, which has been demonstrated by a plethora of sociolinguistic research. Accordingly, this view can be considered in simplified terms as the *language purism perspective*.<sup>3</sup>

Against this backdrop, speakers of a language may be classified under the categories of native and non-native speakers (NSs, NNSs, respectively). Consequently, there is English as a native language (ENL), whose speakers acquire English as their L1, English as a second and a foreign language (ESL, EFL), whose speakers are learning/acquiring English as their L2. ESL is typically deemed the official, societally dominant language, fulfilling many important functions in the lives of minority groups and/or immigrants, while EFL is regarded as the language learnt in instructional settings (Grubor, 2021b; Saville-Troike, 2012; VanPatten, & Benati, 2015). With respect to language forms discordant from the set ‘standards’ and/or ‘norms’ (cf. *nativelikeness*), they are considered errors (cf. *interlanguage*) in the SLA field of linguistic enquiry.

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<sup>3</sup> We should note here that contesting a standard within the WEs research nowadays refers only to native varieties, while ‘standards’ of ‘new Englishes’ have been proposed instead.

Based on the argument that, in reality, the majority of NNSs do not converse with NSs often, or at all, but with other NNSs, claims that ‘standard’ varieties and ENL decline in importance have been put forward. As maintained by the advocates of this idea, the issue of teaching/learning a NSs’ variety becomes questionable. Hence, another approach to the study of language and the role of a native speaker was proposed. Braj Kachru, to whom the term ‘World Englishes’ is typically attributed, developed the Three-Circle Theory. According to Kachru (1985), this model represents “the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages” (p. 12). The *Inner Circle* refers to the regions where English is spoken as an L1 (e.g. the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand). The *Outer (Extended) Circle* includes colonial-imposed English-speaking countries (e.g. India, Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zambia). This circle thus constitutes a larger and much more heterogeneous speech community, including bilingual (or multilingual) speakers, with English as an additional language. Another principal feature of the OC is the prestige that English obtained, being the state language (e.g. Nigeria, Zambia), the language of government, legal system and education (e.g. Singapore), the associate official language (e.g. India), and so on (Kachru, 1985, pp. 12–13). Finally, the *Expanding Circle* covers the regions where English has no colonial history (e.g. China, Japan, Greece, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Germany etc). Within this circle, English is learnt as a foreign, and used as an international language, being the most useful vehicle for global communication. In a word, English in the OC is deemed norm-developing (*endonormativity*) and in the EC norm-dependent (*exonormativity*).

Although the Kachrurian model was proposed as an alternative to the traditional ENL-ESL-EFL framework, these models are in essence concordant. The only difference is the explicit acknowledgement of independent, equal varieties, as opposed to erroneous language forms. English was not seen as a single entity, but “embrace[d] a number of *Englishes*” (Seoane, 2016, p. 3). Nowadays, different phenomena cannot be fitted into or described by this model (such as globalisation and the entertainment industry), and the boundaries between ESL and EFL or nation-states are not clearly demarcated from each other (e.g. Blommaert, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2014; Meriläinen, 2017; Mair, 2016; Pennycook, 2010); thus, a re-positioning of WEs research has been called upon. For this reason, some new alternative theoretical frameworks/theories have been formulated.

According to Seoane (2016), a model that “fundamentally changed the way we approach World Englishes” (p. 4) is Schneider’s *Dynamic Model* (Schneider, 2003, 2007). Being one of many cyclic models, this model holds that the social dynamics between speakers of different cultural roots and linguistic backgrounds are being established through contact. In the beginning, the boundaries between the cultural groups were clearly distinct, but in the end, due to their co-existence, they are becoming increasingly fuzzier (both socially and linguistically). Language contact evolves through five stages (the foundation phase, exonormative stabilisation, nativisation, endonormative stabilisation, and differentiation). Since postcolonialism

is not relevant to the subject matter of this paper, this or similar models will not be further elaborated on.

A model capturing the idea of English varieties emerging from global mobility (people, culture, language), within the sociolinguistics of globalisation (Blommaert, 2010), is Mair's *World System of Englishes* (Mair, 2013). Drawing on de Swaan's model of global multilingualism, the *World Language System* (de Swaan, 2002), he contends that there is a stable "hierarchical constellation of [English] varieties" and proposes four layers (Mair, 2016, p. 23). At the top, there is the 'hyper-central/hub variety' ('Standard American English'), below it, there are 'super-central varieties', 'standard' (e.g. British English, 'Indian English'), and 'non-standard' (e.g. 'African American Vernacular English'), 'central', 'standard' (e.g. Irish English) and 'non-standard' (e.g. 'North-of-England'), and 'peripheral', including "all traditional rurally based non-standard dialects, plus [...] pidgins and creoles" (*ibid.*). Simply put, the 'hub' of the world language system has a pervasive, 'super-central' transnational, but not global, 'central' (fully standardised official languages of nation-states) limited, and 'peripheral' local influence. This model entails the mobility of people and cultures, which other models lacked, as well as different facets of language contact and change. It can also be regarded as taking a *multilingual/plurilingual perspective*.

The list of models operative within the WE paradigm is far from exhaustive, so we have provided only a brief overview. More importantly, since WEs papers include a wide range of linguistic disciplines and approaches, and thus point to a lack of a unifying theory or consensus about the status of WEs, our main objective was to determine the 'diversity' of WEs research in Europe, in terms of the distribution of the content, perspective and approach that the researchers took in the analysed papers.

Finally, the alternatives pertaining to our analysis in particular may be summarised in the following way. Conceptually and theoretically:

- A1: the study of WEs is not recognised as part of *linguistics proper*;
- A2: the WEs concept questions the role of NS (as a role model), contrary to the mainstream standpoint and SLA theories;
- A3: within the WEs studies, ECs together with OCs are typically examined within Asia and Africa, not Europe.

For the sake of methodological convenience (rather than ideology), in our study:

- A4: the Kachruvian circles have been taken as a general framework for paper collection;
- A5: the concept of 'EEs' has been used as an umbrella term for all non-native varieties of English in any of the European countries, and therefore differs from Modiano's standing (2006, 2017).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. The database

The database has been generated from the scholarly journal *World Englishes*. In order to obtain current and relevant data, and determine whether there has been a change in the research agenda, we have focused on the papers published in the last decade (2010–2019, volumes 29–38), with the total number of papers  $n=363$ .<sup>4</sup> After content analysis had been performed, the final sample comprised  $N=37$  papers (29 empirical, 5 theoretical, 3 state-of-the-art), with approximately three papers published per year. Regarding the number of authors, whereby each name was counted once, it was  $N=50$ .<sup>5</sup>

#### 3.2 The taxonomy of perspectives, and predominant linguistic approaches to the study of WEs

Linguistic scholarly research can take different perspectives in terms of the study of language change and/or variation within the WEs paradigm. According to Wolf and Polzenhagen (2009), there are three broad perspectives. Language use and variation/change can be documented and described as examples of different styles and/or variations (descriptive or perspective). They can be criticised for having a negative influence (popular ideas on Anglicisms) or even a ‘fatal’ impact (‘English as a killer language’) on the language under change (critical perspective), or else they can generate new language forms deriving from language contact (hybridisation perspective).

Research into WEs may also be classified according to the linguistic approach that authors predominantly take. The taxonomy we propose herein is meant to be concise but at the same time comprehensive. It has been derived from the previous taxonomies proposed by Bolton (2018), and Wolf & Polzenhagen (2009), since the authors underlined overlaps between the categories.

Our taxonomy comprises five *linguistic* approaches to the study of WEs in the European context. Simply put, there are (1) *the traditional linguistics approach*;<sup>6</sup> (2) *the applied linguistics approach*, diverging into (a) *the SLA approach* and (b) *the educational linguistics approach*; (3) *the sociolinguistic approach*, further divided into (a) *the linguistic features approach* and (b) *the sociology of language approach*; (4) *the cognitive linguistics approach*; and finally (5) *the critical linguistics approach*.<sup>7</sup>

In short, some of the approaches proposed by the abovementioned authors are excluded, while some differ. First, the linguistic features approach differs from Bolton’s, and Wolf and Polzenhagen’s taxonomies in the role of a native variety. Second, the Kachruvian (‘socially realistic’ study) approach was excluded, as it represented

<sup>4</sup> Book reviews, research reports, interviews, bibliographies and response papers were excluded.

<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of reference, there were  $N=6$  authors who had more than one article published (Russia – A1: 2, A2: 2; the Netherlands – A3: 3, A4: 2, A5: 2; Italy – A6: 2 papers).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Traditional’ primarily relates to the structuralist language view.

<sup>7</sup> Descriptors of each of the (sub-)categories are given in Appendix.

geographical division rather than a specific linguistic approach *per se*. Third, the corpus linguistics approach was excluded, since it has been typically treated as a methodological instrument, relevant to the sampling (like datasets, databases and participants are), rather than a specific linguistic approach. Fourth, the ELF & EIL approaches were also excluded, as they depict an overall language view, i.e. the role of English.

### 3.3. Procedure and data analysis

Content analysis has been conducted in several steps and involves different stages.

In Stage 1, the focus was on the key words in the titles and abstracts (e.g. the EC, corresponding European nationality adjectives/nouns and geographical areas within the EC). At this stage, we included two thematic volumes dealing with English in the post-Brexit EU and World Englishes and SLA, thus initially extracting N=60 papers.

In Stage 2, we studied the papers carefully to double-check their suitability for inclusion in the study, again focusing on the key points, thereby reducing the number of papers to N=37. The thematic issue dealing with Brexit and the future of English in that political union included 10 response papers and one response-to-response, so we excluded these 11 papers for obvious reasons. In addition, the majority of papers in the context of ELT dealt with some general ideas about the rationale behind introducing WEs into EFL classrooms, but with no explicit mention of the European context. Therefore, these papers were also excluded from further analyses, since they did not fully fall into the tested category.

In Stage 3, a multilayered content analysis was performed. More specifically, each paper was thoroughly analysed in terms of:

- (1) a comprehensive annotated bibliography (topic, aims, methodology, main results, limitations, conclusion(s), the effect/role of an English variety), and
- (2) a checklist containing pre-defined evaluation criteria:
  - (a) the existence of a specific local variety (*n-variety*), whether explicitly or implicitly (e.g. Dutch English, English in Poland), either on its own or as a sub-variety of a more generic type (*N-variety*) (e.g. Euro-Englishes, Slavic Englishes etc);<sup>8</sup>
  - (b) the *perspective* the authors adopted, according to the tripartite taxonomy (Wolf, & Polzenhagen, 2009);
  - (c) the *linguistic approach* the authors predominantly employed (cf. Appendix);
  - (d) generalisability of the results, based on the nature of the sample/corpus/database (e.g. sample of convenience, representative).

In Stage 4, the results were compiled and the papers further divided into more general categories according to their content (e.g. language variability in NNSs).

In stage 5, the inter-rater reliability was checked by comparing the results on one-third of the randomly chosen papers.

Accordingly, we formulated the research questions (RQs) as follows:

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<sup>8</sup> We decided on the *n-variety* in analogy with mathematical variables, where *n* implies a sequence of varieties (variety 1, 2, ..., *n*), and a specific variety (*n* may be replaced with or be a representative of a concrete variety).

RQ1: How can the papers be classified according to the predominant focus of their content?

RQ2: How are the papers distributed according to the tripartite taxonomy?

RQ3: What linguistic approaches are predominantly used?

RQ4: What is the distribution of varieties across the studies?

## 4. Results

In order to present the most relevant data briefly, the research questions are answered below.

RQ1 was to determine the predominant content of the papers. Broadly put, the largest number dealt with *language variability*, followed by *the ELT context*, and finally an insignificant number pursued *English as an official language of a (multilingual) political union* (the EU). Upon second analysis, the results show that the subcategories of *English as an independent n-variety* and *a hybrid variety as a product of language contact* were evenly distributed within the language variability category, while one-sixth dealt with *language attitudes*.

**Table 1** Predominant content of the ‘EEs’ studies

Category	Subcategory			Total
<b><i>Language variability in NNSs</i></b>	<i>an n-variety</i> N=12	<i>a hybrid variety</i> N=12	<i>language attitudes</i> N=2	<b>26</b>
<b><i>ELT context</i></b>	<i>an n-variety or *ELF/EIL</i> N=4	<i>‘interlanguage’ (learner English)</i> N=5		<b>9</b>
<b><i>Official language of a political union</i></b>	/	/	/	<b>2</b>

\*English seen as a lingua franca or international language in the ELT context

RQ2 was to determine the distribution of papers according to the perspective. Within the paper types, the largest number of empirical papers adopted the descriptive perspective, which doubled the next most common perspective, hybridisationist. The critical perspective was not present in any of the papers.

**Table 2** Predominant perspectives

<i>Perspectives</i>	<i>Overall (N)</i>	<i>Types of papers</i>			<i>Overall (N)</i>		
descriptive	24	E	T	SA	17	3	4
hybridisationist	12				12	/	/
both	1				/	1	/
critical	/				/	/	/
<b>total</b>	<b>37</b>				<b>29</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

E: empirical, T: theoretical, SA: state-of-the-art papers



RQ3 was to determine the distribution of papers according to the predominant approach (excluding the state-of-the-art papers). All the papers were successfully categorised under the assumed categories except one, which fell under the *linguistic landscape studies* (Parkin, & Arnaut, 2014).<sup>9</sup> This approach has not been included in our taxonomy for not being closely representative of linguistic enquiry. Overall, the largest number of papers took the *sociology of language approach*, while the *educational linguistics approach*, and the *SLA approach* were also present.

**Table 3** Predominant linguistic approaches

<i>Approaches</i>		<i>Overall (N)</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>T</i>
<i>sociolinguistic</i>	sociology of language	18	16	2
	linguistic features	6	6	/
<i>applied</i>	educational linguistics	4	2	2
	SLA	2	2	/
cognitive linguistics		1	1	/
'traditional' linguistics		1	1	/
<b>total</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4</b>

E: empirical, T: theoretical

RQ4 was to determine the distribution of varieties across the studies. The results show that Dutch, Russian and German were most frequently analysed, with two authors publishing two, and one author publishing three papers on 'Dutch English' (*n*-varieties), and two authors publishing two papers on 'Russian English' (*n*-variety and learner variety) each. The only *N*-varieties were 'Eastern European' or 'Eastern Slavic', 'European'. As for *h*-varieties (hybrids), the most frequent combination of English was with French, Italian (with one author with two papers), Russian and German.

**Table 4** Distribution of learner, *n*-, *N*- and *h*-varieties

		Dutch		Russian		German		Polish/ Turkish		other <i>n</i> -varieties <sup>1</sup>
		7	/	2	2	1	2	/	2	1
<i>n</i> -variety	learner variety							1	1	
<i>N</i> -variety		East European		Slavic		European		/		
N		2		2		2				
<i>h</i> -variety		+ Italian/ + French		+ German/ + Russian		+ Dutch		other <i>h</i> -varieties <sup>2</sup>		
N		4		3		2				1

<sup>1</sup> *n*-varieties: Norwegian, Italian, Bosnia & Herzegovina; learner varieties: Finnish, Swedish, Greek, Austrian; <sup>2</sup> + Hungarian, Polish, Spanish, Serbian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Croatian

<sup>9</sup> These studies are "concerned with displayed public languages, commercial signage, street signs, posters, and shop names" (Bolton, 2018, p. 9).

#### 4. Discussion

As regards the predominant content, within the language variability category, the distribution of *n*-varieties and hybrids is equal, which prevents us from making reliable predictions about the potential direction of future research. We may, however, anticipate that hybrids may grow in importance due to the impact of “super-diversity studies”, which focus on “multilingualism in a globalizing world, where individuals engage in ‘polylinguaging’ and ‘translinguaging’” (Bolton, 2018, p. 9), and “the increasing cultural hybridity of today’s world and the way language is used” (Kirkpatrick, 2014, p. 37). With respect to the third subcategory, language attitudes seem to be far from being investigated in Europe, although sociolinguistic research shows that language use and the acceptance of certain variants *are* reliant upon language attitudes. This finding gives room for further investigation in the field. Concerning the ELT category, the distribution between learner English and an independent variety is quite even. Judging from the papers belonging to the thematic issue on SLA, these two linguistic disciplines have different foci, which does not imply that they cannot find common ground. WEs focus on population, normativity, ownership and an over-reaching societal impact (Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Ortega, 2018), whereas SLA aims at “how [L2] learning takes place” (Gass, 2018, p. 122), or else discovering general mechanisms underlying language acquisition. Finally, regarding the last category, definite conclusions cannot be drawn due to the small number of papers. Although this thematic issue included only one author advocating the idea of introducing ‘Euro-Englishes’ as the official language of the EU, based on other authors’ responses to Modiano’s article (2017), we may assume that the mere idea of ‘EEs’ would not sprout in linguistic research.

With respect to the perspectives, the descriptive doubled the hybridisationist, while the critical was absent. One line of interpretation would be that the authors are still attempting to describe language variation, while hybrid products lagged behind in the last decade. As for the critical perspective, the results are expected either because English is not seen as a killer language any longer, or because of the scope of the journal, which embraces newly formed language forms and/or ‘varieties’. The first statement can be corroborated by the fact that the vast majority of papers are empirical, meaning that authors are still exploring and/or trying to describe potential commonalities. A small number of theoretical and review papers may indicate the need for a clearer conceptualisation of the WEs concept, as well as a more systematic overview of the obtained empirical data. As some authors from the field explicitly state, one of the major “concerns [...] has been to determine general features that distinguish the varieties” (Green, & Meyer, 2014, p. 3).

In terms of predominant approaches, the highest number of papers pursued the sociolinguistic approach, which is expected since the study of varieties and variation falls under this linguistic discipline. By far, the sociology of language approach was the most frequently employed, although the number of linguistic features approach was also significant. The results therefore suggest that in the last decade, these authors were interested in the interplay of language use and variation, and social variables (such as identity), but also providing the legitimacy of varieties by setting out commonalities. Furthermore, the presence of papers within the applied linguistics approach (i.e. the educational linguistics and SLA approaches) may be

indicative of the need to tackle both the macro- and micro-level of language learning (educational and language policies, and mechanisms underlying L2 acquisition). Finally, regarding the ELF and EIL categories previously employed in earlier taxonomies, the vast majority of authors explicitly elaborated on the global status of English (86%), and as regards the Kachruvian approach, approximately half of the papers embraced his ideas either conceptually, theoretically or methodologically.

The most frequently investigated *n*-variety was ‘Dutch English’, as an example of an in-between category between ESL and EFL, and French and Italian *h*-varieties. The insufficient number of papers, however, speaks of the need for further research to substantiate the claim of the existence and legitimacy of an *n*-variety within the European context.

Lastly, when it comes to the *limitations* of our study, the first refers to the database. Although we included the journal whose founder was the initiator of the concept, other journals also foster the shared-ownership idea. Broadening the scope of papers by including other journals could provide additional insights into the topic. Second, the nature of qualitative analysis, which does not assume standardised instruments and analytical procedures (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 38), places another limitation. Although the pre-determined criteria were consistently applied, the inter-rater reliability checked, there is always danger of rater bias. Third, as regards the approaches, the differentiation between the traditional linguistics and linguistic features approach could be open to possible subjective interpretations since there is a thin line between taking a native variety as a norm or else just as a source of comparison.

## 5. WEs in the last ten years and further ahead: *suma summarum*

Overall, the direction of future WEs research within the European context is somewhat unclear. Judging from general trends in linguistics, we may suppose that the dominant idea of multilingualism will assert its dominance, thereby leaving the idea of an independent *n*-variety behind. This is in line with modern sociolinguistic viewpoints that treat such constructs as changeable, adaptable, and fluid, rather than monolithic and/or static, as well as the fact that language is a living entity. Nevertheless, as Gass (2018) put it for the SLA context, “the current emphasis on multilingualism is not sufficiently fine-grained to help us further the goal of either discipline (monolingualism)” (p. 123).

In the ELT context, before considering the idea of introducing WEs to formal English classes, it is vital to answer some crucial questions regarding the main features of an *n*-variety, elaboration on a ‘standard’, the eligibility criteria for being a ‘role model’ speaker, and so on.

Our analysis has also indicated a lack of studies investigating attitudes towards ‘emerging’ varieties. With this respect, researchers might also ask themselves whether in the European context, it is the question of an independent *n*-variety or a ‘mix’ of native varieties, as some previous studies showed (e.g. Grubor, Bjelogrić, & Hinić, 2008; Grubor, & Hinić, 2011). Another area of study that further research can help us shed more light on is learners’ and teachers’ attitudes to *n*-variety vis-à-vis native varieties, as well as the idea of introducing the former to formal education. Finally, can it be the question of the formal-informal-contexts plane (cf. ‘learner’ v.

‘user varieties’), rather than ‘stable’ features of an *n*-, *N*- or *h*-variety?

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**Appendix: The taxonomy of predominant linguistic approaches to the study of WEs in the European context**

the 'traditional' linguistics approach	the applied linguistics approach	the sociolinguistic approach	the critical linguistics approach	the cognitive linguistics approach
language use and variation are treated from the theoretical linguistics angle; a native variety serves as a frame of reference, therefore, 'deviations' from the standard are deemed errors; the main objective is to describe language variability, with no necessary implications on language pedagogy	language use and variation are treated from the applied linguistics angle; the main objective is to apply the findings in practice (e.g. ELT, SLA, language planning and development, language policy etc)	language use and variation are treated within sociolinguistics; the main objective is to describe variation vis-à-vis society and/or social variables	language use and variation are treated from the critical linguistics angle; typically focuses on language change and development in terms of different ideological implications; the main objective is to underline detrimental effects that English has may have on L1, individuals' identity, their cultural heritage etc	language use and variation are treated from the cognitive linguistics angle; the main objective is to describe and explain the systematicity, structure and functions of language and how these functions are realised by language systems; the focus is on the processes of abstraction, schematisation and conceptual structuring
	<i>the SLA approach</i> language use and variation are typically explicitly treated as errors (interlanguage), with a native variety as a frame of reference; the main objective is to discern the mechanisms underlying L2 acquisition; a special emphasis is given to L2 teaching and learning, with direct implications for English classrooms	<i>the linguistic features approach</i> language use and variation are treated within the variationist paradigm; the main objective is to describe variants as features of a variety, typically in their own right, with no native variety as the standard		
	<i>the educational linguistics approach</i> language use and variation are from a more general perspective, typically in a top-down direction (from the educational authorities) or bottom-up (to the authorities); the main objective is to work on or towards language policy, language planning and development, language as a medium of instruction, curriculum design, and teacher education	<i>the sociology of language approach</i> language use and variation are treated within multilingualism as the interplay between language(s) and society; the main objective is to delineate its effects in terms of ethnicity, identity, language attitudes, the patterns and functions of specific variants, language creativity, which results from language contact		

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## **ŠIREĆI KRUG POD LUPOM: SVETSKI VARIJETETI ENGLSKOG JEZIKA U EVROPSKOM KONTEKSTU**

### Rezime

Koncept „svetskih varijeteta engleskog jezika/SVE”, koji potiče od Kašruove teorije koncentričnih krugova, proistekao je iz uverenja da engleski jezik pripada govornicima širom sveta i potrebe da se uloži izvornog govornika pristupi iz drugačijeg ugla. Veliki broj istraživanja bavio se ispitivanjem odlika varijeteta spoljašnjeg (SK), i širećeg kruga (ŠK), ali izvan Evrope. S obzirom na to da je kontekst u kome se engleski uči/upotrebljava u Evropi karakterističan, osnovni cilj istraživanja je utvrditi distribuciju i učestalost pojave različitih „evropskih varijeteta engleskog jezika/EVE“ u naučnim radovima objavljenim u poslednjoj deceniji u časopisu *World Englishes*. Analiza sadržaja sastojala se iz više faza. U prvom koraku radovi su birani na osnovu ključnih reči (npr. ŠK, evropski *n*-varijeteti i sl), a potom su izdvojeni radovi detaljnije analizirani prema unapred utvrđenim kriterijumima. Rezultati pokazuju da je broj radova koji ispituju ŠK u kontekstima izvan Evrope duplo veći od radova koji se bave „EVE“. Najveći broj radova koji je ispitivao „EVE“ preuzima deskriptivnu, a zatim i hibridizacijsku perspektivu, dok nijedan rad ne preuzima kritičku. Najčešće korišćeni pristup lingvističkoj analizi je sociolingvistički. Rezultati koji se tiču postojanja *n*-varijeteta nisu jasni. Da zaključimo, neophodna su dodatna istraživanja kako bi se pružili značajniji uvidi u ispitivanje „EVE“-a.

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