

Book Reviews

Robert J. BAUMGARDNER, (ed.). *South Asian English: Structure, Use, Users*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996. xiii-xvii + 286 pages.

Robert Baumgardner's *South Asian English* is the third volume in the University of Illinois series *English in the Global Context* and results from the first International Conference on English in South Asia held in January, 1989, in Islamabad, Pakistan. Like the other volumes in the series, this volume is tightly edited and introduces readers to perspectives on the diaspora of English not readily available from what Kachru terms «outer circle» sources, i.e. English-using nations which for the most part are former colonies of the U.S. or Great Britain. The volume contains sixteen papers along with prefatory comments by general series editor Braj Kachru, introductory comments from Baumgardner, and an afterword from the late Sidney Greenbaum.

Both the conference itself and this resulting volume are an important reflection of the internationalization of English. Contained within the text are original contributions to theory-building within the World Englishes paradigm, one which has evolved over the past two decades and is centered on three principles: polymodels of English best account for the use of English around the world; local contexts shape the growth of particular varieties of English; and, ownership

of the English language is not a privilege belonging solely to those in Great Britain, Canada, the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand (Kachru, 1988).

In addition to the theory-building pieces, there is a fine compendium of both descriptive and empirical work from the sub-continent. Twelve of the sixteen contributing authors are South Asian. Two others, Robert Baumgardner and Beverly Hartford, have conducted extensive research over the past two decades in South Asia, Baumgardner in Iran, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, and Hartford in Nepal. The other two contributors, Charles Ferguson and Richard Bailey, have long been involved in theory-building and descriptive work in both general linguistics and World Englishes in particular.

The authors provide consistent and compelling calls for readers to investigate a range of explanations for various phenomena in South Asian varieties of English. Baumgardner divides the volume into five parts: Contexts and Issues; Structure and Contact; Functions and Innovations; Curriculum; and English and the Multilingual's Creativity.

Part One [Contexts and Issues] contains three papers by Braj Kachru, Charles Ferguson, and Richard Bailey.

Kachru's, «South Asian English: toward an identity in diaspora» focuses on historical issues tied to identity, acculturation, descriptions and analysis of linguistic innovations, and finally what he terms «current controversies and linguistic schizophrenia» (1996: 11) along with current research initiatives in South Asian English. Ferguson compares English to other imperialist languages as he examines the role of such languages in national development and international collaboration. Bailey uses poetry and the reactions of a series of scholars he corresponded with to examine attitudes toward English, posing an initial question as to the usefulness of English in South Asia and examining how many individuals would respond to the question. Of these three focus articles, Kachru's best frames a range of issues, although Bailey's introduction of South Asian poems dealing with peoples' relationships to English provides a healthy genre respite from typical academic prose. Ferguson's comparative perspective provides an important way to view the spread of English as contrasted with the spread of Sanskrit, Persian, and Portuguese.

The second section [Part Two: Structure and Contact] contains five articles, two dealing with Indian English, two dealing with Nepali English, and one dealing with Lankan English. S.N. Sridhar's paper explores the lectal range of South Asian English. It contains very tight descriptive information and a clear methodology section. A research agenda for others is provided as well as a suggestion for how to begin compiling features that characterize «the common core of South Asian English» (1996: 69). What is particularly important about this suggestion is that it jumps directly into a long-standing challenge from Randolph Quirk to World Englishes scholars to develop standards and stable descriptions of nativized Englishes (cf. Quirk, 1987). The other syntax paper in this section by

Thiru Kandiah continues a theory-building motif. He creates a strong argument in favor of indigenization of linguistic theory as he examines syntactic deletion in Lankan English. He calls for a reversal of the flow of intellectual knowledge «within a re-framing world where erstwhile passive receivers are now claiming participant status» (1996: 105). He also introduces the term «Kachruvian paradigm» (1996,112). While Braj Kachru would likely discourage scholars from use of such terminology and promote the phrase «World Englishes paradigm», it is a most fitting tribute to the field's architect. Yugeswar Verma's very succinct paper on features of Nepali newspaper English complements Beverly Hartford's «The relationship of New Englishes and linguistic theory: a cognitive-based grammar of Nepali English». Hartford advocates the use of semantically-based approaches to how New Englishes are studied. As with several other papers in the volume, she provides an articulate rationale for using our knowledge of nativized Englishes or what she terms «New Englishes» to refine current linguistic theory. In her strongly-worded conclusion, she states «[New Englishes] can and should play a central role in the development of [semantic-based] frameworks... [T]hey must be accommodated in any linguistic theory that purports to explain the phenomena of language acquisition and language change» (1996:102). Contrasting the theory-framing and theory-building pieces of the rest of this section, S.V. Shastri's paper demonstrates the use of computer corpora to examine complementation in Indian English. He provides not only excellent descriptive data on complementation but contrasts it with work by Baumgardner on Pakistani English, questioning why characteristics evident in Pakistani English are not evident in Indian English. He also provides helpful references for others seeking to use various computer corpora

including the Kolhapur Corpus of Indian English.

The third section [Part Three: Functions and Innovations] of South Asian English contains four papers. Yamuna Kachru also uses a large corpus of data (25,000 words) to examine expository writing by Indian college students. Of particular interest is her second research hypothesis, which was supported, that «The writing conventions followed by the bilingual student population will show effects of first-language socialization regardless of the medium of high school education (English versus Hindi)» (1996: 130). Kamal Sridhar's article explores the speech act of requesting, drawing upon Indian college students in an English medium institution. Sridhar found that the subjects in her study were less able to handle certain types of requests in English than their American counterparts. Sridhar's data confirm the critical principle in the World Englishes paradigm that 'outer circle' varieties frequently have more limited functional ranges than 'inner circle' varieties, i.e. American, Australian, British, Canadian, and New Zealand English.

Bhatia continues to explore contrastive pragmatics within the genre of job applications in the third paper in this section. The only microethnographic study in the collection, Bhatia looks at four South Asian contexts: Indian, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The primary job application strategies explored are self-glorification, adversary glorification, and self-degradation. His data support prior work on this genre.

The final paper in this section is authored by volume editor Robert Baumgardner. This paper again underscores a critical dimension of World Englishes: local context determines usage, in this case political lexis in Pakistani English. With careful attention to supporting details, via prose examples as well as political cartoons, Baumgardner follows five primary lexical items throughout the

Pakistani political press. In the final section of the article, he charts a contrastive analysis of the terms in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. With his usual dry wit and sense of what may capture readers' attention, he introduces a term which may find its way into American English, competing with «lobbying». The term is to «Marriott», explained as «the local word for locking politicians up in the Marriott Hotel, Islamabad, and making them irresistible offers».

The application of World Englishes theory and practice to the real world of curriculum development is critically important. Yet it merits only two papers in Part Four [The Curriculum]: Hamidur Rahman's «Acceptability and English Curriculum Change in Bangladesh», and Chitra Fernando's «The Ideational Function of English in Sri Lanka». Rahman's paper is a critically important case study illustrating the conflict that occurs when nativized varieties move from being «norm-developing» to «norm-producing» (Kachru, 1996: 138). He provides powerful support for why Bangladeshi English should serve as a prescriptive norm for Bangladeshi students. Chitra Fernando presents data examining the ideational function of English (cf. Halliday's (1975:3) *mathetic function* — «language as reflection») (Fernando, 1996:206). At the same time, she structures a key argument for the substantive and structural indigenization (cf. Hamnett, Porter, Singh, and Kumar, 1983) of English for Specific Purposes instruction in Sri Lanka. She states:

[...] the higher forms of creativity —the generation of theoretically significant knowledge— can arise only when the foreign knowledge paradigm has taken deep root in native soil and become part and parcel of the country's heritage as a result of being equally accessible to the school-going population [...] (1996: 217).

Both of these papers are solid pieces. This section would have been strengthened by either a few more case studies or another theory-building piece, for it is in curricular applications that the power and appeal of the World Englishes paradigm become most apparent.

The last section of the volume [Part Five: English and the Multilingual's Creativity] presents authors Anita Desai and Bapsi Sidhwa sharing portions of their creative writing and reflections upon it. Desai finishes her paper calling upon readers to «remain aware and open to all possibilities» (1996: 230), a fitting reminder to all those interested in developing greater familiarity with English as spoken by all its users. Sidhwa goes a step further, cautioning readers to keep local context in focus at all times. She contrasts writers of South Asian origin, schooled in England and residing therein with Indian and Pakistani authors who do not leave these countries. She accuses the former of picking «exotic, amusing, bizarre, and salable» (1996: 240) elements from 'outer circle' cultures. She characterizes the latter authors as having to «stretch the language to adapt it to alien thoughts and values which have no precedent of expression in English, subject the language to a pressure that distorts... enlarges its scope and changes its

shape without recourse to self-conscious stylistic gymnastics» (1996: 249).

In his afterword, Sidney Greenbaum addresses the issue of codification and standardization in South Asian Englishes, calling for greater research to establish features within what Kachru terms the «cline of bilingualism» and «lectal range» (Kachru, 1992). His closing remark reaffirms the role of indigenization of such research: «It remains the task of local scholars to investigate their own languages and to lead the way to its local acceptance» (1996: 245).

Baumgardner has supported just such endeavors in his seven-year post-conference labor of love to pull these papers together. This volume provides a map for those scholars and students alike who wish to step into this territory. The citations in the articles reflect work through 1992; 115 non-Anglo authors are represented. As Braj Kachru states in the text preface, this volume is a «trailblazer». It belongs in the homes of students of language and linguistics and in the libraries of those who wish to acquaint themselves with innovations in theory, research, and practice in New Englishes.

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