

6. Missionaries and Endangered Languages

Perhaps the most controversial topic regarding missionaries in the last several decades has been language endangerment and the role that missionaries have had in regard to the status of endangered language groups. Critics accuse Christian missionaries of fomenting language and culture loss through their introduction of a message, which is culture changing and often associated with Western values and worldview.

Many missionaries, on the other hand, see themselves as champions of the use of the vernacular languages and argue that their interventions in communities where the language and culture is already endangered because of increasing contacts with outsiders often slows the pace of language shift, promotes a sense of self-esteem, and in some few cases has even preserved the use of a dying language. They argue that the introduction of literacy equips preliterate peoples to defend themselves in the encroaching literate world. In addition, missionary linguists, working with the last few elderly speakers of a language have preserved knowledge of those now-extinct languages. That knowledge is valuable both to the academic world and to the descendants of those speakers.

See also: Nida, Eugene Albert; Endangered Languages; Religion and Language; Orthography.

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Native Speaker

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1. The Native Speaker: Myth or Fact

The native speaker, like Lewis Carroll's snark, is a useful and enduring linguistic myth; again,

like the snark, itself a product of the debate over idealism in philosophy, it must be taken with a large pinch of salt. Linguists may have

given a special place to the native speaker as 'the only true and reliable source of languages data' (Ferguson 1983: vii), but there is little detailed discussion of the concept, which is often appealed to but difficult to track down. Full-length treatments of the topic (Coulmas 1981, Davies 1991, Paikeday 1985) have yet to attract much comment. Ferguson's argument has to do with language use rather than with language knowledge:

much of world's verbal communication takes place by means of languages which are not the users' mother tongue but their second, third or nth language, acquired one way or another and used when appropriate. This kind of languages use merits the attention of linguists as much as do the more traditional objects of their research.

(Ferguson 1983: vii)

It is possible to agree with Ferguson's desire that linguistics pay more attention to language use without agreeing with his dismissal of the native speaker: 'In fact the whole mystique of native speaker and mother tongue should preferably be quietly dropped from the linguist's set of professional myths about language.'

2. Theoretical Issues

Theoretically, the 'native speaker' concept is rich in ambiguity. It raises, quite centrally, the issue of the relation between the particular and the universal. Chomsky, as a protagonist of the universalist position, conveys to Paikeday's questioning approach about the status of the native speaker (Paikeday 1985) the strongest possible sense of the genetic determinants of speech acquisition, which, as he sees it, means that to be human is to be a native speaker.

Chomsky equates language development with other normal development, finding no interest in questions about developmental states or stages, which he regards as contingent. In the same vein, Chomsky finds distinctions between synchronic states of language or languages and dialects uninteresting: 'the question of what are the "languages" or "dialects" attained and what is the difference between "native" and "non-native" is just pointless' (Chomsky quoted in Paikeday 1985: 57). Chomsky's whole argument depends on a rationalist opposition to 'incorrect metaphysical assumptions, in particular the assumption that among the things in the world there are languages or dialects, and the individuals come to acquire them' (Paikeday 1985: 49). And so Chomsky must conclude that 'everyone is a native speaker of the particular language states that the person has "grown" in his/her mind/brain. In the real world, that is all there is to say' (1985: 58). This is a major thread in the range of views on the native

speaker, and will recur later. Chomsky's view is uninfluenced by any social factor or contextual constraint. Variety and context, he seems to argue, are trivial. This is a thoroughgoing 'unitary competence' view of language in which language use is contingent and the native speaker is only a realization of that competence at linguistic and not at language level. For Chomsky, like many theoretical linguists, is not interested in languages: what he studies is language.

3. Educational Issues

Halliday (see *Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood*) appears not to use the term 'native speaker'; however, what he says about the mother tongue is very relevant. He comments:

Opinions differ regarding the uniqueness of the mother tongue ... for very many people ... no language ever completely replaces the mother tongue. Certain kinds of ability seem to be particularly difficult to acquire in a second language. Among these, the following are perhaps most important in an educational context:

- (a) saying the same thing in different ways,
- (b) hesitating, and saying nothing very much ...
- (c) predicting what the other person is going to say ...
- (d) adding new verbal skills (learning new words and new meanings) when talking and listening.

It is not being suggested that we can never learn to do these things in a second language ... Nevertheless, there are vast numbers of children being educated through the medium of a second language, and of teachers trying to teach them, who have not mastered these essential abilities.

(Halliday 1978: 199-200)

To what extent educational disadvantage can be attributed to not being a native speaker is debatable, especially since a similar argument of lacking adequate language resources is made for certain groups of native speakers who, it has been claimed (Bereiter and Engemann 1966), suffer from a language deficit (see *Code, Sociolinguistic*). The basic question here is which code (whether language or dialect) one is supposed to be a native speaker of.

A contrary view to Halliday's is given by the American linguist, Leonard Bloomfield, author of *Language* (1933) and student of Native American languages in the anthropological tradition of early twentieth-century American linguistics. Like Halliday, Bloomfield does not use the term 'native speaker' but writes instead of 'the native language':

The child growing up in the province, say, in some mountain village, learns to speak in the local dialect. In time, to be sure, this local dialect will take in more and more forms from the standard languages ... The child, then, does not speak the standard language as his native

tongue. It is only after he reaches school, long after his speech-habits are formed, that he is taught the standard language. No language is like the native language that one learned at one's mother's knee; no-one is ever perfectly sure in a language afterwards acquired. 'Mistakes' in language are simply dialect forms carried into the standard language.

(Bloomfield 1970: 151)

In another context, Bloomfield does refer to the native speaker: 'The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language' (1933: 43). Bloomfield makes the obvious point that children learn to speak as they learn to do everything else, by observation, participation, and interaction with the people around them.

4. Psycholinguistic Issues

Katz and Fodor, more concerned with the relation between language and the mind, argue that 'The goal of a theory of a particular language must be the explication of the abilities and skills involved in the linguistic performance of a fluent native speaker' (1962: 218). In this way, the native speaker becomes central to the interests and concerns of linguistics, with the native speaker being the relevant example of natural phenomena for scientific study. Chomsky refers to the native speaker as being both the arbiter of a grammar and (when idealized) the model for the grammar: 'A grammar,' he says, 'is ... descriptively adequate to the extent that it correctly describes the intrinsic competence of the idealized native speaker' (1965: 24).

Chomsky thereby neatly compounds one of the central ambiguities of the 'native speaker' idea, using it to refer to both a person and an ideal. Or, as Coulmas says, 'The native speaker leads a double life in Chomsky's work, (a) as a creature of flesh and blood, that is the linguist himself, (b) an idealization' (Coulmas 1981: 10). Richards et al. in their *Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (1985) and Crystal in his *First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (1980) emphasize the importance of intuition in defining the native speaker. Crystal helpfully pointing to the need to take account of bilinguals who are native speakers of more than one language.

5. The New Englishes

Tay's contribution to the discussion is original in that she comments on the status of the native speaker in relation to the so-called New Englishes (see *New Englishes*), that is, the English of Singapore, India, and so on. She refers to the lack of clarity of most definitions, and notes that the two factors usually appealed to are priority of learning and an unbroken oral tradition. She comments that both are unsafe

criteria; the first because of bilingualism, the second because an adult may have shifted dominance from one first language to another or because a second learned language may have had as much influence on a first learned as the other way around. Tay therefore proposes that a native speaker of English who is not from one of the traditionally native-speaking countries (e.g., the USA or the UK) is:

one who learns English in childhood and continues to use it as his dominant language and has reached a certain level of fluency. All three conditions are important. If a person learns English late in life, he is unlikely to attain native fluency in it; if he learns it as a child, but does not use it as his dominant language in adult life, his native fluency in the language is also questionable; if he is fluent in the language, he is more likely one who has learned it as a child (not necessarily before the age of formal education but soon after that) and has continued to use it as his dominant language.

(Tay 1982: 67-8)

These views indicate the accuracy of Coulmas's statement that a tension exists between the flesh and blood and the idealization definitions.

6. Practical Issues

The practical importance of the term is emphasized by Paikeday (1985), pointing to the employment discrimination against those who lack the 'ideal' native speaker attributes: 'native speakership should not be used as a criterion for excluding certain categories of people from language teaching, dictionary editing, and similar functions' (1985: 88).

Paikeday's own solution seems to be to separate the ideal and the operative meanings of native speaker, making proficiency the criterion for employment, and personal history the criterion for ideal membership. Such a rigid distinction is difficult to maintain when it comes to judgments of grammaticality which Paikeday wants to associate with the 'proficient user' meaning of 'native speaker' rather than with the 'ideal member' use: 'the people we refer to as arbiters of grammaticality are not really so because true arbiters of grammaticality are proficient users of languages, not just native speakers' (1985: 53).

The challenge which Paikeday sets is essentially which native speaker to choose, and lurking behind all such choices is undoubtedly his dilemma of whether a new model (which can be supported by acknowledged proficiency) outweighs a distant 'historically authentic' model; for example, Indian-English models or Nigerian-English models versus British or American models. However, this dilemma is just one example of the more general case. There is a dispute between the British and American models just as there is among other metropolitan models,

and just also as there is between any Standard and other dialects. The important choice of a model therefore raises issues of acceptability, of currency, and of intelligibility. It is in part for this reason, that Paikeday's distinction between the 'ideal' native speaker definition and the 'operative' one is not finally tenable.

Nevertheless, the distinction is of practical importance in the institutionalized activities of publishing and examining, in the written language, and of selecting radio and television newsreaders in the spoken. There has generally been consensus in favor of a model type being used. It is also usual for a particular type of native speaker (or native-speaker-like non-native speaker) to be chosen—the prestige model. However, the prestige model has been rejected by some influential groups. In 1991, the large, international organization, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), issued a statement (Forhan 1992) condemning any action which 'supports the exclusion of individuals who are nonnative speakers of English from employment opportunities within the profession.'

The term 'native speaker' is used in two distinct (but related) senses in relation to the prevailing consensus. The first is that in some way the native speaker is taken to represent an idealized model. The second is that an individual native speaker is him/herself used as an exemplar of such a model.

In academic settings, requests for native speakers to come forward (to take tests, to act as informants) may cause offense. First, what is not stated is that what is typically being referred to (in the UK or USA) is being a native speaker of English; second, it is ignored that everyone is a native speaker of some code; and third, it is denied that a highly proficient nonnative speaker may also have acquired both linguistic and communicative competence and be, therefore, in terms of what is required in formal higher education, indistinguishable from a native speaker.

7. Racism

What is also ignored is the racism of such remarks; what is so often meant by native speaker in the above context is the deliberate exclusion of those who are in with a chance. A Singaporean, a Nigerian, or an Indian might see him/her as a native speaker of English but feel a lack of confidence in his/her 'native speakerness.' The counterargument is that, in all such cases, it is really up to the individual to identify him/herself; no one else can do it. Where there is doubt, people define themselves as native speakers or as nonnative speakers of particular languages. As far as English is concerned, the problem is peculiarly one for those who belong to the postcolonial communities, such as Singapore, Nigeria, or India, where the

New Englishes are in use. Membership as native speakers is largely a matter of self-ascription, not of something being given; it is in this sense that members decide for themselves. However, those who claim native-speaker status do have responsibilities in terms of confidence and identity. They must be confident as native speakers and identify with other native speakers. That is precisely what is required in acquiring any new ethnicity.

8. Related Terms

To be the native speaker of a language means, in a definition cited in Sect. 3, to speak it 'from your mother's knee' (Bloomfield 1970) as your mother tongue or first language (L1). Such a definition is not straightforward and is difficult to uphold. It is not wholly clear, for example, what is meant by mother tongue and by first language. Other terms used to indicate a claim to a language by an individual are 'dominant language' and 'home language' (Stern 1983, Davies 1991).

8.1 Mother Tongue

The 'mother tongue' is literally just that, the language of the mother, and is based on the reasonable view that a child's first 'significant other' is the mother. However, it is not always straightforward: the role of 'mother' may be taken by some other adult; similarly, the mother, biological or not, may provide bilingual or multilingual input for the child, either because the 'mother' is herself bilingual or because the role of mother is shared by several adults who use more than one language in speaking to the child. To what extent the child's own developing idiolect is identified as that of the mother rather than that of the child's own peer group is a matter for empirical investigation (Ochs 1982).

8.2 First Language

'First language' refers to the language which was first learned. Again, this seems straightforward. One's first language is the language ('tongue') learned from one's mother, biological or not. However, many people live in multilingual societies, and everyone lives in multidialectal society. In such cases, the mother tongue and the first language may be different: it may be that the mother tongue is influenced by peers as well as by parents, or it is more than one language and then it is not easy to decide which one is first; it may be that what is the first language changes over time. For example, a young child for whom Welsh is the mother tongue, and the first language in the sense of time of learning, may gradually come to use English more and more and relegate Welsh to a childhood experience: it may not be completely forgotten but is in some sense no longer as useful, no longer generative or creative, and therefore no longer *first*. For the large number of

people in this category, the mother tongue is no longer the first or dominant language. Alternatively, such people may claim to have more than one first language. In the case of the bilingual or multilingual or dialectal mother, if it is accepted that one's mother tongue is the code of the individual mother and is not isomorphic with any one or more language, then it may be surmized that what mothers speak is either an interlanguage (see *Interlanguage*) (Selinker 1992) or a set of semilingual (see *Semilingualism*) codes (Martin-Jones and Romaine 1986).

8.3 Dominant Language

The term 'dominant language' is linked because of the underlying assumption that what was one's first language can change over time and another code take its place as one's first language. This must be the case of the child speaking a localized language who moves through education or some other major life-change into a situation in which they use English, French, or some other language of wider communication for most if not all purposes. In such cases, it is English or French which is dominant outside the home while the mother tongue is still dominant at home. In other words, the child has more than one dominant language, each language being dominant in certain areas of life (see Singh 1998).

8.4 Home Language

The 'home language' is the language of the home (and may, as with mother tongue, in reality be a mixed language or a set of languages/dialects) (see *Code-switching: Overview; Intertwined Languages*). Home language is defined negatively in terms of what it is not, since it is perhaps easier to define the public code, which often is a recognized (and described) standard English, French, and so on. The home language then is -for many children- what is left after the public, standard code has been removed. At the same time, for some children, the standard code is also the home language. Thus, in the case of middle-class native English speakers, the home language may well be largely identical with official Standard English, which is used as the medium in schools and is taught to foreigners (this applies equally in the UK, the USA, Australia, and other metropolitan, native English-speaking countries).

All these terms can be defined in relation to what they are not: first language in relation to a second language; dominant language in relation to the language it has superseded; home language in relation to the official code; and mother tongue in relation to what one's peers are speaking. The term native speaker tends to be used in each of these ways, for having language X as one's mother tongue, as one's first language, as one's dominant language, or as one's home language.

8.5 Linguistic Competence

Other terms invoked as being relevant to the native speaker are 'competence,' both linguistic and communicative, and 'langue,' an older term. Saussure's use of *langue* (Saussure 1966) was an attempt to define not the native speaker but what it is that is shared by a language community.

The related notion of competence was introduced by Chomsky (1965) both to specify the knowledge of an individual which enables language acquisition to take place and also to signify the goal of linguistic theory. The notion of linguistic competence moves the argument one stage onwards, in that it seeks to answer the question of whether competence needs to assume a community langue.

There are two answers to this question. The first is that competence is about idealized speakers; indeed, Chomsky's definition of linguistics as being about the idealized native speaker in a homogeneous speech community is of obvious relevance. Such an approach is not a social one; it takes no account of situation, purpose, domain, or variety. It is psycholinguistic or cognitive-scientific and linked to the computer analog for the brain. However, even so extreme and rigorous a view must take some account of limited social aspects, since any eliciting of data, and even the concept of the idealized native speaker, must mean that there is some account being taken of the speaking world. Otherwise, it would be possible for someone who does not know the language or whose speech is full of performance errors of a severe kind or who is aphasic to be used for elicitation, and clearly that is not what happens. So, even here, there is a tacit assumption that the world is made up of speech communities of more than one person. Or, to use Coulmas's image, the double life of the native speaker does come together on occasion; the idealization can put on flesh and blood (Coulmas 1981: 10).

The second answer to the question of whether competence needs to assume langue is that it does because language itself needs an explanation as to how it is that (native) speakers understand one another. In other words, what competence sets out to do is indeed to provide a description of langue.

8.6 Communicative Competence

Chomsky's insistence on examining competence without social factors has been challenged by such anthropologically minded linguists as Halliday (1978) and Hymes (1970, 1989). Hymes proposed the term 'communicative competence' (see *Hymes, Dell Hathaway; Communicative Competence*) in order to point to the learned knowledge of cultural norms which is crucial to language use. The position taken up by communicative competence is that knowing what to say is never enough; it is also necessary to

know how to say it. By 'how' here is not meant the performing of the speech, that is, getting the words out, but rather, the using of the appropriate register, variety, code, script, formula, tone, and formality. Once again, the issue for consideration is to what extent such cultural knowledge can be acquired late, and to what extent getting it right, that is, using the appropriate forms, privileges native speakers.

8.7 Second and Foreign Language

The discussion above, of defining the mother tongue and the first and dominant language in opposition to, for example, the 'second language,' suggests that one might hope to define in separate and perhaps rigorous ways the second language and the foreign language. However, a second language is in fact defined in terms of a language which is learned after the first language (Stern 1983). Thus, it remains impossible to define the first language except in terms of what is earliest acquired.

A distinction is perhaps useful between the language acquired by a bilingual (or multilingual) child in the home, or in an environment where more than one input is available, and that of the child who acquires a nonhome or nonintimate language in a more public setting (Romaine 1995, Hamers and Blanc 2000). Such a setting is often education, and the term second language is sometimes used to define a situation in which the child is being educated in a language medium which is not the home language. Not that the second language has to be the language of education—it may be the lingua franca of the public environment in which the child begins to grow up (e. g., English in Nepal). What seems to underline the use of the term second language is that it indicates a command which is less than that of the first language, but stronger than that of the foreign language.

Foreign languages, then, seem to be acquired in order to interact with foreigners, that is, groups outside one's native environment. That also seems to imply that a foreign language does not carry with it the kind of automatic grasp of its systems that are appealed to in terms of the first language and are suggested in some areas of the second language. A foreign language has not been, it can be surmised, internalized in the same way that a first (and perhaps a second) language has. A foreign-language speaker cannot be appealed to for authoritative pronouncements about the language's rules and its use. First-language speakers, of course, can be, and this is the problematic and very interesting issue about second languages: whether control of a second language can become as internalized as the first; whether being a native speaker and being a first-language speaker (or a mother-tongue speaker) are synonymous; and whether a second-language speaker can be a native speaker of that second language.

9. Defining the Native Speaker

To attempt a definition, the native speaker may be characterized in six ways. The native speaker:

- (a) acquires the L1 of which they are a native speaker in childhood;
- (b) has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about their idiolectal grammar;
- (c) has intuitions about those features of the standard language grammar which are distinct from their idiolectal grammar;
- (d) has a unique capacity to produce fluent spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries (the 'one clause at a time' facility), which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of complete lexical items (Pawley and Syder 1983); and in both production and comprehension the native speaker exhibits a wide range of communicative competence;
- (e) has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels);
- (f) has a unique capacity to interpret and translate into the L1 of which they are a native speaker. Disagreements about an individual's capacity are likely to stem from a dispute about the standard language.

In considering the extent to which the L2 learner can become a target-language native speaker, one can again consider the six criteria.

- (a) *Childhood acquisition.* The second-language learner, by this definition, does not acquire the target language in early childhood. If they do, then they are a native speaker of both L1 and the target language (TL).
- (b) *Intuitions about idiolectal grammar.* It must be possible, with sufficient contact and practice, for the second-language learner to gain access to intuitions about their own idiolectal grammar of the target language.
- (c) *Intuitions about group language grammar.* Again with sufficient contact and practice, the second-language learner can gain access to the standard grammar of the target language. Indeed, in many formal learning situations, it is exactly through exposure to a TL standard grammar that the TL idiolectal grammar emerges, the reverse of the L1 development.
- (d) *Discourse in the language classroom and pragmatic control.* This may indeed be a descriptive difference between a native speaker and a nonnative speaker, but it is not in any way explanatory—that is to say, it in no way argues that a second-language learner cannot become a native speaker.
- (e) *Creative performance.* With practice it must be possible for a second-language learner to

become an accepted creative writer in the TL. There are, of course, well-known examples of such cases, for example, Conrad, Beckett, Senghor; but there is also the interesting problem of the acceptability to the L1 community of the second-language learner's creative writing. This is an attitudinal question, but so too is the question of the acceptability to the same community of a creative writer writing in an alternative standard language (e.g., Scots).

- (f) *Interpreting and translating.* This must be possible even though international organizations generally require that interpreters should interpret into their L1.

All except (a) are contingent issues. In that way, the question of whether a second-language learner can become a native speaker of a target language reduces to whether it is necessary to acquire a code in early childhood in order to be a native speaker of that code. To answer that question is to ask a further question, about what it is that the child acquires in acquiring his/her L1. However, that question has already been answered in criteria (b)–(f) above, and so the question again becomes a contingent one.

No doubt there is a need to ensure in addition a cultural dimension, that is, (b) and (c) above, since the child L1 acquirer does have access to the resources of the culture attached to the language and particularly to those learnt and encoded or even imprinted early. Still, there are always subcultural differences, for example, between the Scots and the English; different cultures with the same standard language (e.g., the German-speaking European nations); and different cultures with different standard languages (e.g., the British and the American). There is also International English, and isolated L1s in multilingual settings, for example, Indian English. Given such interlingual differences and the lack of agreement and norms that certainly occur among such groups, it does appear that the second-language learner has a difficult but not impossible task to become a native speaker of a target language.

10. Coppieters's Results

Such a conclusion is probably more sociological than linguistic or psychological. For, in addition to the tension referred to between the ideal and the flesh-and-blood approaches to the native speaker, there is a further opposition between the sociological and the psychological views; they are not easily reconcilable. Coppieters points out the lack of fit in his account of a grammatical judgment experiment (Coppieters 1987). He took a group of 27 non-native adult speakers of French who had 'so thoroughly mastered French that it was no longer clearly possible to distinguish them from native speakers by mistakes which they made, or by the restricted nature of their

choice of words and constructions' (1987: 544). For baseline data, he took 20 native speakers of French, matched with the experimental group as far as possible. He used 107 sentences illustrating various aspects of French and asked his subjects individually for acceptability judgments. His results indicated that the two groups belonged to two different populations, with no overlap between, even at extremes. Even so, he accepted an argument in favor of identity theory (Tajfel 1981): 'A speaker of French is someone who is accepted as such by the community referred to as that of French speakers, not someone who is endowed with a specific formal underlying linguistic system.'

However, for Coppieters, such an argument is strongly sociological, and, in his view, competence must include a psychological dimension. He continues: 'it is also clear that the variation between native speakers and non-native speakers cannot simply be subsumed as a special case of the variation among native speakers: that is non-native speakers have been found to lie outside the boundaries of native speaker variation' (1987: 545). Native speakers, reports Coppieters, 'did not need the help of an explicit context. No matter how skilful non-native speakers might be at deriving the appropriate interpretation of a sentence in context, their inability to do so in the absence of an explicit context indicates a fundamental difference between their knowledge of the language and that of native speakers' (1987: 566–7).

Given the idiolectal and dialectal differences among native speakers themselves, Coppieters's claim is a strong one: his argument for cognitive rather than formal dissonance between native and non-native speakers concerns the grammar of the standard or common language learned before the critical period (Lenneberg 1967). His view is widely shared among psycholinguists and second-language researchers (Gass and Varonis 1985).

11. The Native-speaker Myth

Coppieters represents the uncompromising psychological view. According to that, the native speaker is defined by early acquired knowledge. Bartsch (1988) takes the more sociological view, allowing for the importance of attitude and identity. Although both views concern control of the standard language, they are probably not reconcilable. Nevertheless, the concept of native speaker is used entirely appropriately in these quite different ways. It is probable that what is most enduring about the concept has nothing to do with truth and reality, whether or not individuals are native speakers; what matters most is the enduring native speaker myth combining both knowledge and identity: in that myth, the two views have an equal role.

But there are those who disagree: Birdsong (1992) disputes the claim that the learner's 'ultimate attainment' can never be equal to native speaker

competence, concluding from his partial replication of Coppiters' study that 'ultimate attainment by nonnatives can coincide with that of natives' (1987: 739). Such non-natives are, of course, exceptional learners, but the fact of their success indicates that the native speaker is as much a sociolinguistic construct as a developmental one. Birdsong's conclusion is supported by Bialystok (1997) who queries the role of maturational factors in second language acquisition.

See also: New Englishes; Bilingualism, Societal.

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New Englishes

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The 'New Englishes' are the result of the global spread of English during the Colonial period. It was during this period that English gained the status of an international language and left other competing natural and artificial languages behind (e.g., French and Esperanto). There are now considerably more non-native users of English than native users, and it

is the non-natives who have become the instruments for the continued spread of the language.

1. The Diffusion of English and Its Concentric Circles

The diffusion of English is best captured in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle