

"Glocalisation" of the English Language: A Cultural Linguistics Perspective

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Abstract. In line with other aspects of globalisation, the unprecedented global spread of English has led to an increase in the degree to which the language has become localised, serving to encode the communicate needs of various speech communities. This dual process of globalisation and localisation of English may be referred to as the "glocalisation" of the language. Glocalisation of English involves various processes at the level of "cultural conceptualisations". These include: (1) the use of English to encode cultural conceptualisations that were not originally associated with the language, (2) spread of Anglo-English cultural conceptualisations to non-Anglo speech communities and (3) blending of cultural conceptualisations. This article elaborates on these processes and discusses the implications of the glocalisation of English for the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

Keywords and phrases: cultural linguistics, TESOL, world Englishes, glocalisation of English, cultural conceptualisations

Introduction

The role of the English language in globalisation and the impact of globalisation on English are complex issues which require close scrutiny. Graddol (1997) argues that economic globalisation has encouraged the global spread of English, while the global spread of English has also encouraged globalisation. In a more recent publication, he observes that English is a phenomenon which lies at the heart of globalisation: English is now redefining national and individual identities worldwide; shifting political fault lines; creating new global patterns of wealth

and social exclusion; and suggesting new notions of human rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Graddol 2006, 12).

As a result of the very close association between globalisation and the English language, many now refer to English as "the language of globalisation". Globalisation of English has been viewed differently in different contexts and by different scholars, for example as a "killer language" to "language of power and mobility" (see Mufwene 2005; Pennycook 1994). "English-as-a-killer-language" (e.g., Skutnab-Kangas 2000) view engages with the negative impact of English on local languages, in the form of the force behind language endangerment and language death. The alternative view emphasises the "power" that comes with learning English as a global language and highlights the "opportunities" that learning English opens up for its learners in various fields, including economic gains.

One of the impacts of the continued global spread of English is the development of more and more varieties of English (or World Englishes) by speech communities that were originally considered as "non-native speakers" of the language, such as the development of Chinese English by communities of Chinese speakers. These speech communities develop their own varieties by "localising" English to express their "cultural conceptualisations" (Sharifian 2011; 2015; see also Xu 2014), a term that collectively refers to the analytical tools of Cultural Linguistics, and which is explained later in this article. I refer to this dual, parallel process of globalisation and localisation of English as the "glocalisation" of English (Sharifian 2010). This process, or at least part of it, may also be captured by the expression "localisation due to globalisation". Within the studies of globalisation, "glocalisation" is a term used to refer to the modification of a global product to meet local needs and norms, making it more marketable there (Robertson 1994). This article provides examples of this process by focusing on how speakers of various speech communities have used features of English to express their cultural conceptualisations.

Globalisation, the English Language and Cultural Conceptualisations

Xu (2013, 4–8) reviews the current literature on the conceptualisation of "globalisation" and notes that globalisation has been conceptualised in various ways including the following:

1. globalisation as mobility,
2. globalisation as cultural blending,
3. globalisation as local functionality,
4. globalisation as super-diversity,
5. and globalisation as heterogeneity.

These conceptualisations of globalisation have some relevance to the ways in which globalisation has interacted with the English language. Globalisation of English has led to all kinds of problems and possibilities. For one thing, it has provided a meeting space for "cultural conceptualisations". In this meeting place, several conceptual processes have been at work, such as: (1) adoption of English to express cultural conceptualisations that were not originally associated with English, known as "nativisation" of English (e.g., Annamalai 2004), which has led to the development of new varieties of English, (2) the spread of Anglo-English conceptualisations to other languages and cultures, known as "Englishisation" (Dor 2004) and (3) the blending of cultural conceptualisations. Nativisation of English appears to be associated with the conceptualisation of "Globalisation as local functionality". This is due to the fact that the development of new¹ (or newer) Englishes as a result of the localisation of the language is often based on some local functionality of the variety, for example as a lingua franca used by various ethnic groups in a society or in a particular region. Also, this localisation of English and the resulting growth in the number of varieties of English could also be viewed as relevant to the conceptualisation of "Globalisation as heterogeneity", in the sense that globalisation has brought about heterogeneity to the structure and content of English.

The blending of cultural of conceptualisations, on the other hand, aligns closely with the conceptualisation of "Globalisation as cultural blending". Globalisation has brought many languages and cultures into close contact with each other. Such contacts have often provided a ground for conceptualisations associated with different languages to form blends that rely on elements that did not originally belong to the same language/culture.

This article elaborates on the above-mentioned themes by providing examples from several varieties of English and other languages. The article begins with a discussion of the notion of "cultural conceptualisations", which is of key importance in the process of glocalisation of English, and then presents separate sections on discussing each conceptual process.

Cultural Conceptualisations

People do not form cultural groups on the basis of mere proximity of residence, that is, living close to each other, but they do so as they negotiate the ways in which they "conceptualise" various aspects of their lives. These negotiated conceptualisations often constitute "templates" for people's thought and behaviour, and are used to make sense and structure new experiences. These templates are embodied in cognitive units such as "schemas", "categories", "conceptual metaphors" and "blends" that are "emergent" at the level of cultural

groups (Sharifian 2011). In other words, their existence is beyond the level of individual's mind, as they form aggregate units of conceptualisation that result from the interactions between members of a cultural group. I have collectively referred to conceptualisations that are negotiated and renegotiated across time and space as "cultural conceptualisations" (Sharifian 2011).

Cultural conceptualisations are a form of "distributed cognition" (Hutchins 1995), in the sense that they are distributed across the members in a cultural group. However, they are not equally imprinted in the minds of the members but are "heterogeneously distributed" across the cultural group. Cultural conceptualisations are largely instantiated in and communicated through human languages. Human communication is the locus for the negotiation and renegotiation of cultural conceptualisations, although they often materialise in human artefacts and in non-verbal aspects of our behaviour.

The question now is "What happens when different languages that are associated with different systems of cultural conceptualisations come to contact with each other?". At least the emergence of three processes can be envisaged: (1) spread of cultural conceptualisations across the two languages and (2) blending from the two systems of conceptualisations and the development of totally new conceptualisations.

In what follows I present examples from the case of contact between English and other languages and cultures that have come to contact with English as a result of its global spread. As mentioned earlier, these processes are as follows:

...the use of English to encode cultural conceptualisations that were not originally associated with English, the spread of Anglo-English cultural conceptualisations to other languages and blends have been developed out of the two systems of cultural conceptualisations that meet in a contact situation.

The first following three sections focus on the use of English to encode cultural conceptualisations (schemas, categories and metaphors) that have originally been associated with other languages.

Nativisation of English

New cultural schemas in new Englishes

Cultural schemas are units of cultural knowledge that are collectively possessed by a cultural group. A good example of the adoption of English to express

schemas that were not originally associated with English is the case of new Englishes. For example, Aboriginal people have adopted English to express a set of Aboriginal cultural conceptualisations (e.g., Malcolm and Sharifian 2002; Sharifian 2005). In Aboriginal English, the word "smoking", for instance, may be used, as in (1) below, to refer to an Aboriginal cultural schema capturing events in which smokes from plants may be rubbed on people's body to spiritually protect them and also to cleanse the area.²

1. *They wanted to **smoke** me when I went up north, that way.*

Here the Aboriginal English speaker refers to her trip to another Aboriginal "country" where members of the local Aboriginal community wanted to "smoke" her to give her protection against evil spirits, as a sign of hospitality and welcoming her to their country.

Also the word "sing" may be used, as in (2) below, to refer to an Aboriginal cultural schema that captures ritual incantations "over an object or a person, usually for malevolent intent, but also for reasons of 'love magic'" (Arthur 1996, 57).

2. *e's sick [she is sick], someone must be **singing** er.*

According to the Aboriginal schema of "singing", a person may fall in love with a girl and as a result would try to obtain a belonging of hers, such as her hair, or even a photo, in order to cast a charm on her. This would make the girl turn her way to the person who is casting the charm, and failure to do so may bring her serious illness and even death.

The use of the word "sing" to capture the Aboriginal cultural schema reveals how conceptualisations of the link between body and ailment can be culturally constructed. That is, here the speaker is attributing bodily ailment to non-bodily causes, whereas in Anglo-English cultures, they are mainly explained in physical terms, for example as a result of a bacteria entering one's digestive system.

Another example of the use of English words to express non-Anglo-English cultural conceptualisations comes from some African Englishes, such as Sierra Leon English (Bamgbose 1998, 6) and Ghanaian English³, where the word "outdooring" is used to refer to a child naming ceremony. Dzansi (2004, online) describes such ceremonies as follows:

During naming ceremonies, the newborn baby is given water and any local brewed gin to taste, symbolizing the facts of life, and to

bless the child that he or she may be a truthful member in the community, and be able to differentiate good from evil when he or she grows up.

An example from Ghanaian English is the use of the word "divine" to capture a Ghanaian cultural schema that involves contact with the "unseen world" to discover reasons behind a mishap, misfortune, etc.⁴ It should be noted that in these cases, the English words are not simply associated with new meanings but new cultural schemas, which are impossible to fully explicate in a sentence or two. For example, a full understanding of the definition of a "divine" in Ghanaian English by outsiders to the culture would require an understanding of what words such as "unseen world" and "contact" evoke for the native speakers of the variety.

New Cultural Categories in New Englishes

Categorisation of experience is one of the most fundamental human cognitive tendencies. Language and culture play important roles in the ways in which we categorise our experiences. As Glushko et al. (2008, 129) put it:

Categorization research focuses on the acquisition and use of categories shared by a culture and associated with language – what we will call "cultural categorization". Cultural categories exist for objects, events, settings, mental states, properties, relations and other components of experience (e.g. birds, weddings, parks, serenity, blue and above). Typically, these categories are acquired through normal exposure to caregivers and culture with little explicit instruction.

The categorisation of many objects, events and experiences, and their prototype instances, are largely culturally constructed. An important class of cultural categories is that of family and kinship. That is, patterns of kinship categorisation do not seem to lend themselves to a universal system but largely reveal cultural differences. A good example of cultural categorisations of kinship comes from Aboriginal Australians, well studied by anthropologists and linguists (e.g., Berndt and Berndt 1996; O'Grady and Mooney 1973). The spread of English to various parts of the world has among other things led to the encoding of cultural categories of kinship in new Englishes. For example, in Aboriginal English the word "mum" may be used to refer to one's biological mother's sister (Sharifian 2007). This basis for this cultural category is not necessarily biological but mainly socio-cultural relationship in the sense that the role that a person plays in one's upbringing, their status in the family, their age relative to one's biological parents, etc. determine who may be called "mum".

Also "cousin" is a cultural category in Aboriginal English that may be used to refer to any relative of a person's own generation and is associated with certain cultural considerations. Eades (1988, 102), for example, notes that "[t]he use of the term of address 'cuz' [short form for cousin] in a meeting or a tutorial in a tertiary institution, for instance, both maintains and reminds Aboriginal participants of a speaker's relationship to another participant and the accompanying rights and responsibilities". Similar cases of cultural categories of kinship have been noted in African varieties of English (Polzenhagen and Wolf 2007).

Another noteworthy cultural category in Aboriginal English is "language". Aboriginal English speakers often use the word "language" to refer to Aboriginal languages, particularly their local language or language varieties. They usually contrast this category with English, as in the following sentence:

Them fallas don't speak the language no more, they only speak English.

The cultural category of "Language" in Aboriginal English has a special symbolic significance as it "is a direct link to land and country. It holds traditional songs and stories" (*New South Wales Aboriginal Languages Policy* 2004). According to the Aboriginal worldview, Ancestor Beings created the land and the people during the Dreamtime and "planted" the Aboriginal languages in different Aboriginal "countries". Thus, "language" links Aboriginal people to their land (see more in Rumsey 1993). It is clear that even the word "country" in Aboriginal English captures geographic boundaries that are culturally constructed and as such the word instantiates a cultural category.

An example of cultural categories in other Englishes comes from Singaporean English where the word "aunty" is associated with a category that refers to any female person who is middle-aged or older and who is "not very well-informed, probably because she has undergone very little formal education (Wong 2006, 457–458). Wong maintains that "people do not seem to think that 'aunties' know much about social etiquette, presumably because they mostly come from a traditional, humble background" (Wong 2006, 458). He observes that this cultural category is a by-product of a tension between two distinct generations in Singapore: (1) the new generation who has gone through English-medium education and who is westernised and (2) the older generation "many of whom have not undergone much formal education, cannot read or write any form of English, are not computer-literate, and are generally perceived to be conservative, old-fashioned, and set in their ways of thinking" (Wong 2006, 461). Wong observes that "aunties" generally belong to the latter group and maintains that this

cultural category reflects "the mixed feelings — deference and distaste — that the younger community collectively harbours towards this dwindling breed of women and men in an increasingly modernized society and their preference for what is perceived to be more modern, Western ways of living and thinking" (Wong 2006, 462).

As an example of cultural categories outside the domain of kinship, in Ghanaian English the word "linguist" is used to refer to "interpreter, spokesperson, especially attached to chiefs in southern tradition. Visitors must speak through the linguist even when the chief is familiar with their language"(Blench 2006).⁴ In varieties of English such as American English and Australian English, the term "linguist" refers to someone who is accomplished in more than one language, or someone whose specialty is linguistics, the systematic study of language.

Cultural Metaphors in New Englishes

The use of the term "cultural metaphors" in this article refers to those conceptual linkages across different domains that are culturally constructed. For example, Aboriginal English reflects a conceptual linkage from the domain of "kinship" to the domain of "land", as reflected in the following excerpt:

For us, the Aboriginal people, the land has a spiritual connection; it's our mother. The human spirit is born from our land and returns to it upon death. The land supplied us with everything that we needed for living.²

The above excerpt clearly reflects the conceptualisation of "Land is kin" in Aboriginal English. It should be noted that cultural metaphors such as the above-mentioned often reflect how people really "conceptualise" the source domain in terms of the target domain, rather than just a creative figure of speech, which is usually associated with the use of metaphor in literature.

A good example of cultural metaphors comes from the African context where leadership is conceptualised as "eating". This is now encoded in what is generally termed African English by Polzenhagen and Wolf (2007), reflected in the following examples:

1. *They have given him plenty to eat.* (Said in Cameroon English when a new government official is appointed)
2. *I eat and let others eat also. / I chop you chop* [*chop in African English means eat*]. (Popular Nigerian adage in reference to political power) (Examples cited in Polzenhagen and Wolf 2007).

The above examples clearly instantiate conceptualisation of "Leadership as eating", which is a case of mapping from the domain of "eating" to the domain of "politics and leadership".

Englishisation of Other Languages/Cultures Conceptualisations to Other Languages

In general the spread of English around the globe has also resulted in the Englishisation of other languages/cultures, which is the spread of Anglo-English cultural conceptualisations to other languages. In this section I will provide a few examples of such processes.

Anglo-English Schemas and Categories in Other Languages

An example of an Anglo-English cultural schema that has spread to other languages is that of "Privacy". Although the concept of "privacy" is wide spread across many cultures, the exact nature of the range of concepts associated with the words "private" and "privacy", as well as what is viewed to be the "intrusion of privacy", as they are associated with Anglo varieties of English have traditionally not existed in some languages and cultures. For example, the Japanese language did not have a word that would cover the exact conceptualisations associated with that of the English word "privacy", and therefore has relied on a borrowed form of this word, which is pronounced as *piraibashī* (Rebuck 2002). This is clearly an example of "Englishisation" of other languages.

In terms of categories, one can refer to processes such as "MacDonaldisation" (Ritzer 1993) and "Cocacolonization" (Wagnleitner 1994), not in terms of their economic implications but in terms of how some other cultures have now expanded or modified their categories such as "food" as influenced by exposure to English and the Anglo-Western cultures. In Persian, for example, the category of "food" now includes *esnak* which is a "persianised" form of "snack". Many shops sell *esnak*, which is mainly sandwiches and pizza. The category of clothes now includes *lee* which is used to refer to jeans wear. It is easy to find hundreds of examples of these expanded/modified categories in many languages (see also Xu 2014).

Anglo-English Cultural Metaphors in Other Languages

An important class of cultural conceptualisations are those that reflect the use of the human body in conceptualising various aspects of our experiences including those that are cognitive and emotional. For example, a number of expressions in

Anglo varieties of English reflect the conceptualisation of "Heart as the seat of emotions", reflected in expression such as "she has broken my heart" (Niemeier 2008). Often these conceptualisations originated from certain cultural belief systems such as ethno-medical theories and religious systems (see more in Sharifian et al., 2008; Yu 2009). Among other things, the spread of English around the world has led to the spread of Anglo-English conceptualisations of body into other languages and cultures. For example, contemporary Japanese uses the word *haato* from the English word "heart" to refer to romantic love (Occhi 2008). This is likely to have been motivated by the fact that the Japanese word *kokoro*, which is closest to the "heart" in English, is conceptualised as the seat for soul, mind, emotions, psyche, etc. That is, the scope of *kokoro* seems to be much broader than just the seat of emotions and that may be why the concept of heart has been borrowed into Japanese to exclusively express romantic love.

An example of the spread of Anglo-English conceptualisations in the domain of disease is where speakers of Persian are increasingly attributing certain ailments to *esteress* (stress), as a non-bodily phenomenon, where they used to attribute them to bodily phenomenon, such as turbulence in the belly.

Blending of Cultural Conceptualisations

Conceptual blending, or "conceptual integration", refers to the process of mapping from two cognitive spaces into a third one to create a novel concept (Coulson 2001; Coulson and Fauconnier 1999; Fauconnier 1997; Fauconnier and Turner 1996; 1998; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Turner 1996; Turner and Fauconnier 1995). It is a powerful meaning construction process which usually leads to the coinage of words, phrases, and even grammatical structures. Through entrenchment, blending can have an impact on the conventional aspects of a language and the blends themselves can become conventionalised.

Although mainstream studies of conceptual blending focus on intra-linguistic blending, the process can be observed to be operational in cross-linguistic contexts such as contact situations. As an example of blending resulting from the contact between English and other languages and cultures, we can observe a few cases in Aboriginal English. There appear to be a large number of constructions in Aboriginal English which reveal the integration of conceptual elements from a spiritual space and a "mundane" space. For example, "doctorman" in Aboriginal English can be used to refer to "a spiritually powerful person whose powers include healing" (Arthur 1996, 25). This appears to be the result of blending from the domains of "spiritual healing" in Aboriginal cultures and "medical treatment" associated with Anglo-English culture in this contact situation. The process by which these two input spaces are interlinked is that of analogy.

Similar conceptualisations can be found in African varieties of English. For example, in Kenyan English (Skandera 2003) "medicine men" refers to people who are "concerned with sickness, disease and misfortune, normally through the agency of witchcraft and magic".⁵

The case of blends of course extends beyond that of spiritual space. For example some may reflect cultural practices. In Aboriginal English, the phrase "foot-Falcon" means "travelling long distance by foot". This blend arises from the abstract processes of conceptual projection from the domains of "body parts" and "vehicle" – Falcon here refers to a make of car. Foot-walking is a traditional Aboriginal way of travelling, especially long distances and the blend "Foot-Falcon" captures both the method of travelling and the long distances usually covered in such travel.

Blending related to the domain of "disease" may be observed in Aboriginal speaker's use of the word "medicine" to refer not to the Aboriginal notion of "healing" but to some liquid form of medicine, such as "syrup", given to the ill person by the Ancestors. Consider the following example from a conversation between the author and an Aboriginal speaker.

1. *mum but they there...*
2. *an then she*
3. *I woke up an it was still in my mouth...*
4. *the taste of all the medicine*
5. *cause **they** come an give me some **medicine** last night*
6. *an she always tells us that*
7. *you can't move.. an you wanna sing out an say just ..*
8. *sort of try an relax*
9. *that happened to me lot of times*
10. *I was about 12*

The Aboriginal speaker commented that by "they", she meant "old fallas", which refers to Ancestors who have passed away. This case appears to be a blending from the Western cultural schema of "Medical treatment", where a doctor provides a patient with some form of "medicine", such as tablet or syrup, with the Aboriginal cultural schema of "healing", where the provider of "healing" is an Ancestor.

Another interesting case of blending was found on a TV documentary where the Aboriginal speaker made the following remark:

We all beat as part of the same 'eart (heart) and this 'eart is part of our mother earth.

This appears to be a blend of the Anglo-English conceptualisations of "the heart", in which solidarity is often conceptualised as beating as part of one heart, and the Aboriginal conceptualisations of the land.

Glocalisation of English and TESOL

Glocalisation of English, and its associated conceptual processes discussed in this article, including the development of an increasing number of new Englishes, require a paradigm shift in TESOL, which is referred to as Teaching English as International Language (TEIL) (e.g., Alsagoff et al., 2012; Marlina and Giri 2014; Matsuda 2012; Sharifian 2009). English language teaching (ELT) curricula now need to provide learners with exposure to the true complexity of the English language in the world, including exposure to the conceptual variation that marks English in today's world, rather than exposure to just one or two Anglo-based Englishes. It is estimated that more than 80 percent of communication in English is now taking place among so-called non-native speakers (Crystal 1997). Many of these speakers speak their own localised variety of English (and of course should be considered as native speakers of those localised varieties, e.g., Chinese English). Thus, many learners of English who attend ELT classes are very likely to develop proficiency in their own localised varieties and would often be communicating with speakers of other varieties. An example would be the case of a Chinese learner who will be using English to communicate with Malaysian-English speakers, Japanese English speakers, Korean English speakers, etc. Such communicative interactions call for ELT curricula to aim for the development of what Canagarajah (2006, 233), calls "multidialectal competence" in learners. Canagarajah also notes the significant diversification of English, particularly the development of more and more varieties of English in recent decades, and reminds us that the notion of "proficiency" and its assessment are much more complex in the postmodern era of communication. He maintains that "[i]n a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties [of English] and communities, proficiency becomes complex. ...One needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication", which to some extent involves multidialectal competence, part of which is "passive competence to understand new varieties [of English]".

ELT classes need to be a place where learners discuss the various systems of cultural conceptualisations that are associated with English today. This would enable them to develop what I have called *metacultural competence* (see the article on Metacultural Competence in ELT). This competence is tied to speakers'/learners' familiarity with a variety of systems of cultural conceptualisations, ideally achieved through exposure to a range of different Englishes. The pivotal component of this competence is the understanding that a language and its components such as its lexicon can be used to communicate different systems of cultural conceptualisations.

Concluding Remarks

The spread of English to all corners of the world and its associated process of the localisation of the language may collectively be termed "the glocalisation of English", in the sense that English has not only carried with it and spread the Anglo-English conceptualisations but has also become associated with cultural conceptualisations that are new to English, a process which has led to the nativisation and development of new Englishes. Some of these conceptualisations have traditionally been associated with other languages and cultures and some are the result of blending from the two languages and cultures. The glocalisation of English and the increasing development of Englishes have significant implication for the field of TESOL, such as the need to expose learners to a variety of Englishes and their associated cultural conceptualisations. The increasing glocalisation of English has blurred traditional dichotomies and distinctions that were once dominant in the field of TESOL, such as "native/non-native speaker" and the distinctions between EFL and ESL. As mentioned earlier, although many users of English may be classified as "non-native" speakers of Anglo-based varieties of English, they are native speakers of their own local variety, which among other things is a marker of their identity.

Notes

1. I use the expression "new Englishes" in this article to refer to Englishes that are categorised as "outer circle", and "expanding circle" in the paradigm of World Englishes (e.g, Kachru 1992). Kachru described the role and use of English around the world using a model that has three concentric circles: Inner-Circle, Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle countries. In Inner-Circle countries, English is used as the primary language, such as in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and Canada. Countries located in the Outer Circle are multilingual and use English as a second language, such as India and Singapore. In Expanding-Circle countries, the largest circle, English is learned as a foreign language, such as in China, Japan, Korea and Egypt.

2. <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:I98ZVBlxvTkJ:museumvictoria.com.au/Bunjilaka/About-Us/Smoking-Ceremony/+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au>
3. <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercycourses/6362-debruijn.htm>.
4. <http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/English/Ghana%20English%20dictionary.pdf>
5. http://www.hassconsult.co.ke/abokenya_info_2.html.

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