

evance of its analyses to the ongoing development of language planning as a discipline and, most important, its significant contribution to the understanding of the complex sociolinguistic reality of contemporary Quebec.

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EDGAR W. SCHNEIDER, *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. New York: Cambridge Press, 2007. Pp. xvi, 367. Hb \$115.00. Pb \$39.99.

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As the title implies, this book focuses on postcolonial varieties of English around the world. In the introductory chapter, Schneider states that he is “concerned with the developmental phenomena characteristic of colonial and the early phases of postcolonial histories until the maturation and separation of these [English] dialects as newly recognized and self-contained varieties” (p. 1). Thus, by the term “Postcolonial Englishes” (PCEs), the writer refers to “all forms of English resulting and emerging from such backgrounds” (1). Despite the fact that these PCEs have developed dissimilar features across space and time, Schneider highlights their common origin in multilingual, multicultural contact settings and argues that a uniform developmental process in fact underlies their spread and diversification. His objective is therefore to present “the first unified, coherent theory to account specifically for the evolution of PCEs around the globe” (1).

In the second chapter, Schneider contextualizes his study. He goes over some of the linguistic or sociolinguistic paradigms, models, and concerns that relate to his approach. He also critically discusses some of the merits and limitations of these paradigms and concerns. While researchers have employed or created many scholarly models to explain linguistic or sociolinguistic phenomena, and while most of these models arguably do to a certain extent enhance certain areas of our human understanding, it is hard to disagree with Schneider’s statement that “all” of them invariably ignore “certain facets of complex realities” (12). In chapter 3,

Schneider introduces his “Dynamic Model.” This model defines the common core underlying the developmental process of all PCEs, which is to be understood as “a sequence of characteristic stages of identity rewritings and associated linguistic changes affecting the parties involved” (29). This model is nicely summarized in a paragraph (29–30) and also in a table (56). The model is marked by five stages and two complementary communicative perspectives (30). The five stages are (i) foundation, (ii) exonormative stabilization, (iii) nativization (iv) endonormative stabilization, and (v) differentiation. The communicative perspectives refer to those of the settlers and the indigenous people. The good thing is that this model is applicable not only to PCEs, for according to Schneider, it “appears to operate whenever a language is transplanted” (29).

The following chapter focuses on the linguistic or formal (phonological, lexical, and grammatical) aspects of nativization and the linguistic processes involved. Some of the common, formal features of PCEs are looked at. Chapter 5 is an interesting collection of case studies, which Schneider claims is “the first-ever global history of PCEs” (6). He uses these case studies to demonstrate the uniformity of the developmental process of PCEs and the consistency of the model. The case studies come from Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, The Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, India, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Cameroon, Barbados, Jamaica, and Canada. Chapter 6 is also a case study; it focuses on the history and evolution of American English. American English is considered to be a PCE that has completed the evolutionary cycle described by the model. This chapter therefore looks at the entire process in hindsight. The final chapter evaluates the Dynamic Model and reaffirms its descriptive and perhaps even predictive power across space and time.

The book does an admirable job in explaining the Dynamic Model. Varieties of English that have emerged from societies in which the descendants of British settlers form the dominant culture, such as American English, Australian English, or New Zealand English, do appear to be classic examples of this model. Moreover, Schneider illustrates the helpfulness of core sociolinguistic concepts and principles in our understanding of the emergence of contact varieties of English, concepts and principles that are also relevant in our understanding of pidgins and creoles. Schneider’s approach may thus be considered holistic. The collection of brief development histories of a number of English varieties is an added strength.

However, despite the indisputable usefulness of this model, I cannot help but wonder if Schneider has rather overrated its descriptive power. Schneider himself repeatedly reminds us that a model is not meant to represent the complexities and details of reality, and, while his model can indeed explain the evolution of PCEs of the kind mentioned, I am rather skeptical of its claim to universality. In other words, I do not think that the claim that the model operates “whenever a language is transplanted” (29) has been sufficiently substantiated.

As someone who speaks a PCE (Singapore English) and has lived through part of its evolutionary process, I am not convinced that the five stages of devel-

opment accurately depict the Singaporean situation. Schneider considers the period 1867–1942 as phase 2 or “exonormative stabilization” among the elites (56). However, given that many or most of the “locals” (e.g., migrants from China) during this time did not speak English, I wonder if we could fruitfully talk about stabilization. Linguistically this could not be the most “important and interesting” (39) phase in the development of Singapore English as the model claims. The period 1945–1970 is considered to be phase 3 or “nativization.” This obviously did not coincide with the British occupation, and therefore it probably was not marked by “widespread and regular contacts, accommodation” (56) in accordance to the model. The fact seems to be that the British administration that brought English to Singapore left in the 1940s, shortly after the Japanese occupation. However, it was not until the 1970s and 1980s that some form of English began to rise in importance and be nativized, in the sense that a significant number of Singaporeans began to speak some form of English as their first language or one of their first languages. (In the 1980s, the government converted all public schools into English-medium schools.) The British settlers and the first speakers of “stabilized” Singapore English did not meet. The British settlers and the majority of Singaporeans therefore did not “share a common language experience” and “communication ethnography” (32). They have remained up to this day to a large extent linguistically and culturally distinct. Many characteristic Singapore English features developed long after the British settlers left Singapore. In the first place, the majority of Singaporeans learned or acquired their form of English from Singaporean teachers and fellow students in public schools, not from British settlers. Evidence therefore calls into question the existence of the implied continuity between the “localized” version of English spoken by the British settlers who left in the 1940s and contemporary Singapore English, which is spoken mainly by people who were born in the 1960s or later (and who underwent formal education in the 1970s, 1980s, or later). I would therefore say that the spread of English in Singapore is a direct consequence of the Singapore government’s language policy.

“Endonormative stabilization” is also another questionable phase when it comes to Singapore. One of the hallmarks of this stage is the “positive attitude” (56) to the PCE. However, as Schneider himself notes (160), the ongoing “Speak Good English Campaign,” initiated by the government in 2000 to discourage the use of Singapore English and encourage the use of “grammatically correct” English, indisputably reflects a concerted effort on the part of the government, affiliated organizations, and some members of the public to destabilize the endonormative variety. Unlike Australian English and New Zealand English, for example, Singapore English is still not accepted, much less embraced, by the government and a significant number of locals.

Another point I would like to highlight is that the model seems to be marked by an emphasis on the “lexis, pronunciation, and grammar” (33) or, in other words, the form of language. In my opinion, more emphasis could be given to

the cultural aspects of the model, assuming that it can accommodate culture. When Schneider talks about convergence (e.g., 55), for example, he seems to refer mainly to formal components. He does not subsequently address the possibility that a convergence in form need not be accompanied by a convergence in cultural values, or not to the same extent. As studies of Singapore English have suggested, Singapore English makes use of mainly English forms but not uncommonly in ways that express Chinese rather than “Anglo” values (e.g., Wong, 2004, 2008). In other words, there can be observable convergence in form without any convergence in cultural values. When Schneider says that “the histories of PCEs can be viewed as processes of convergence between these two groups” (31), I can only assume that he refers mainly to formal convergence, not cultural convergence. For the case of Singapore, his discussion therefore represents a rather myopic view of the real situation.

Notwithstanding these reservations, this book reopens a number of important and interesting topics for further discussion or debate: accommodation theory (in terms of both formal and cultural components of a language), exonormative stabilization, and nativization, with respect to language contact situations. Given that the model undeniably has some explanatory power, the book also blazes a trail for further research into sociolinguistic universals of language contact situations. I would highly recommend this book to scholars and students of sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, language change, language policy, and even related areas in psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

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## INVITED RESPONSE TO JOCK WONG

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First, I would like to thank Dr. Wong for his insightful and supportive review of my book. At the same time, I am grateful to the editor for being given an opportunity to clarify a few minor points of disagreement.

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