MULTILINGUALISM AND STANDARDIZATION IN SOUTH ASIA

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Asia, along with Africa, represents the continent where English has mostly spread as a second language over the last centuries. The postcolonial development of English in this broad area involves countries in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka), and South-East Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Hong Kong and the Philippines resulting from recent American colonization)[1].

The main focus of Section III will be the South-Asian region since it has been considered a paradigm example of the phenomenon known as "Sprachbund" (Trubetzkoy 1928) or "linguistic area" (Emeneau 1956) or "convergence area" (Weinreich 1958). The expression "linguistic area" refers to an area which includes languages belonging to more than one family but showing traits in common which do not belong to the other members of the families (Emeneau 1956, 16). The term "convergence" is used to characterize phenomena specifically occurring in language contact situations which lead to changes in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Typically in this area, languages belonging to different genetic groups show common structural traits for two reasons: 1. Intense bi- and multilingualism resulting from a prolonged period of language contact, and 2. The fact that all these languages (except Khasi) are verb-final results in many identical structural traits (Subbarao 2008, 52).

The interest in South Asia as a "sociolinguistic area" emerges some decades later when Charles Ferguson (1992), going beyond the descriptive perspective which had characterised previous related work, published a comprehensive essay on some features of "language use" that make this area a unique matter of study. His new perspective "looks for the relationship between diachronic language change and language development, phonology and syntax, social conventionalization and cognitive processing, and language universals and individual differences" (Huebner 1996, 12). Ferguson's attention to "shared patterns of use" and not only of

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[1] See Section IV in this volume.

shared grammatical structures was an important step towards the under-
standing of general processes of language change in contact situations.

The linguistic complexity of the area derives from the co-existence of
four major language families, namely Indo-European (through its Indo-
Aryan branch represented by 110 languages including Dardic, Sindhi,
Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Gujarati, Marathi and
Sinhalese), Dravidian (with 35 languages among which Kannada, Telugu,
Tamil and Malayalam are for number of speakers the most widespread),
Sino-Tibetan (through its Tibeto-Burman branch including 150 languages
among which there are Balti, Ladakhi and the numerous group of Bodic
languages) and Austro-Asiatic (through the Munda branch) which "exhibit
an extended tradition of diffusion, mutual contact and convergence" (Ka-
chru 2008, 1).

This intricate net of typologically related and unrelated families of lan-
guages and their subvarieties reflecting distinctions of class, religion, caste
and profession has gradually overlapped with a net of languages of wider
communication that cut across linguistic and geographical boundaries to
facilitate communication across the subcontinent becoming linguae fran-
cae. As an exemplification of the functional use of superstrate languages
referring to the special status of English in India, Swann (2007, 27) clearly
depicts the remarkable linguistic complexity in India noting that:

> [t]he situation is extremely complex since English is used to communicate
> with others from the same region as well as from different parts of the
> country, whereas for some speakers it is used for international communica-
> tion, in this case, with other non-native speakers as well as with native
> speakers.

Within this multitude of typologically different languages it is possible,
however, to identify three major linguistic processes which have signifi-
cantly influenced their original nature, i.e. Sanskritization, Persianization
and Englishization. These processes of convergence have brought about
clear features of linguistic hybridization often described as "linguistic
look-alikeness" in the languages of the region that goes beyond the lexical
level and affects all levels of grammar (Kachru 2008, 2).

This section will specifically focus on the process of Englishization in
the area, even though the other two processes implicitly persist and per-
vade different aspects of the substrate language.

The issue of contact instantiating processes of pidginization and creo-
lization can be in fact differentiated according to varieties that arise
through contact with languages coming outside the area, especially
through colonialism and varieties that arise through internal contact among

languages already indigenous to the area (Shiffman 2010, 741). For the former, English has played a major role in influencing local South Asian languages, but it was not the first European language to have an impact on them since Portuguese was already attested in the area before the founding of the East India Company in the early 1600s. As for internal contact among indigenous languages, this phenomenon has received less attention despite evident influences of Persian on the development of Urdu or of Dravidian on the structure of Marathi (Shiffman 2010, 741). Therefore, in studies concerning the development of pidgins and creoles, a crucial issue is the extent to which universals of language and typological distance exert their influence on shaping their structures. As a matter of fact, in the context of historical linguistics pidgin and creole studies have served to focus attention on criteria to be used in establishing genetic relationships of languages (Thomason 1980, 27). One of these criteria was identified by Weinreich (1958) who assumed the existence of cognates in the basic morpheme set with similarities in allomorphemic alternations: "On this criterion, a typical pidgin or creole would be grouped genetically with its vocabulary-base language and grammatical features derived from other languages would be treated as borrowings and/or substratum residue" (ib.).

Two main approaches have been followed by linguists in their explanation for language universals. One is concerned with the innateness hypothesis formulated by Chomsky in his *Universal Grammar* according to which all languages share a set of common principles called *language universals*, but they differ from each other for a set of parameters referred to as *parametric variation* (Chomsky 1986). The second approach is based on typological research carried out by Greenberg (1966) who started from the observation of constraints and abstract structures in a small number of languages to formulate theoretical generalizations. One of the empirical methods adopted by typologists to identify such universals was based on word order in a sentence. Depending on the position of the verb in a sentence three major orders were found to characterize human languages: subject-verb-object (SVO), subject-object-verb (SOV), and verb-subject-object (VSO). These basic word orders generate a number of generalizations called implicational universals so that for example if a language has SOV order, it will also have adjectives, possessive-genitive phrases and relative clauses as pre-modifiers of the head noun. Interestingly, in the South Asian subcontinent, though languages belong to different genetic groups, they are all verb final and consequently exhibit common structural traits. In spite of some occurring parametric differences "the fact that many syntactic processes are shared by the languages of the subcontinent indicates that there is linguistic unity in diversity" (Subbarao 2008, 78).

The two chapters in this section address the issue of "unity in diversity" through the presentation of two case studies both dealing with the expression of modality in New Englishes.

Diaconu's contribution reports the findings from a synchronic corpus-based study on variation patterns in expressions of strong obligation/necessity in stylistically diverse spoken material from Indian English, Jamaican English and Irish English. The study aims to identify the extent of variation patterns and ongoing grammaticalization of competing variants such as *must*, *have to*, *(have) got to* and *need to* in the New Englishes as compared with British and American English.

Calabrese's study addresses the general issue/s of language change and standardization in new varieties of English by adopting two interrelated research procedures, namely the linguistic diagnostics and the related methodologies as well as the most accredited interpretative theories on the evolution of New Englishes. Early results have been obtained by sampling data from sources varied in time, genre and register.

In conclusion, the two studies presented in the following pages adopt the different perspectives of diachronic analysis and synchronically comparative analysis combined with corpus-based methodological procedures.