

INTRODUCTION

Target Question:

What version of English can we realistically predict will become an accepted lingua franca in Europe over the next 10-20 years? For speech? for writing?

Background:

1. Given its linguistic diversity, Europe needs a common language for communicating, including between NNS of English who don't share same native language.
2. For reasons of both Europe-internal politics (reasons for rejecting French and German), need some non-continental language.
3. English is a natural candidate (given its status as a lingua franca internationally)
4. Yet politically, also hesitate to privilege English (thereby privileging the UK)
5. Emerging trend:

In speech at least (and in educated circles), a "Euro-English" is emerging, which doesn't fully follow the norms of "standard" either British or American English.

NOTE: Continuing debate over whether

- a. there is an actual dialect/variety that has stable features across native speakers of diverse languages
 - b. the real issue is "inadequate control" over English as second language, rather than this being an actual new variety
6. Sample features of Euro-English
 - a. some distinctive vocabulary (e.g., *euro*, *Schengen [countries]*, *internal market Berlaymont* ['bureaucratization', named after EU building renovated in 1992 because of asbestos]
additionality [=Extent to which a new input (action or item) adds to the existing inputs (instead of replacing any of them) and results in a greater aggregate.]
possibility [meaning 'opportunity', not 'option']
actual [meaning 'current' not 'real']
 - b. phonological features (e.g., replacing thorn and eth with [t] and [d])
 - c. omitting 3rd singular present -s on verbs (e.g., He walk home)
 7. Debate: who needs to adjust to whom?

Do Euro-English speakers need to learn more standard English or do native speakers of British or American English need to adjust their language in communicating with speakers of Euro-English?

Themes:

1. Language standards
2. Speech vs. writing as linguistic modalities
3. Political and economic power
4. Growth of language informality

LANGUAGE STANDARDS

1. growth of language standards with growth of European nationalism (17th, 18th c)
 - a. language academies (Italy, France)
 - b. “national” dictionaries (Samuel Johnson, 1755)
2. in English-speaking world: growth of prescriptivism (esp. 18th, 19th c) (rise of lower classes)
3. association of “standard” dialect with education and class

SPEECH VS. WRITING AS LINGUISTIC MODALITIES

1. Historically, writing has generally been more conservative than speech
 - a. usages acceptable in speech not acceptable in writing (e.g., contractions)
 - b. partial explanation: Writing is durable, while speech generally is not
2. Baron (*Alphabet to Email*): evolution of relationship between speech and writing

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER

1. British empire: spread of British standard (early 20th c: BBC, British Council)
 - a. aided by Cambridge UP and Oxford UP, issuing textbooks worldwide
2. With political and economic rise of US (especially after WWII), American English rose
3. English as global lingua franca replaces French – but what version of English?
 - a. growth of “World Englishes” movement (NOTE: ultimate goal is intelligibility)

GROWTH OF LANGUAGE INFORMALITY

1. multiple sources:
 - a. rise of journalism in 20th century
 - b. democratization
 - c. reduction of economic factors as basis for class (e.g., rock stars, sports stars)
 - d. attempt to identify with youth
2. clearest in speech, but also evident in writing (e.g., decline of proofreading standards, rise of informal language – and page layout -- on front page of *NY Times*)
3. CMC, texting support these trends (including in writing), but the moves predate these technologies

AS SO?

Possible scenarios

1. Europeans will toe the line on English language standards
2. If EU succeeds in surpassing US as economic force, its speakers will have increased leverage in deciding how to speak. (NOTE: additional support for linguistic “independence” from countries such as China, where own varieties of English are gaining in stature)
3. What is acceptable in speech isn’t acceptable in writing
4. What is acceptable in speech becomes acceptable in writing, since goal in both media is ultimately intelligibility – AND written ‘standards’ aren’t always being upheld by educated native language-users of English