New English(es) in Saudi Arabia: Implications for language policy

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Abstract

Informed by Schneider's (2003) "dynamic model of the evolution of new Englishes," this study, using concrete examples and illustrations taken from archival documents, TV news, and previous studies examines the developmental phases that contribute to the formation of what I term *New Englishes in Saudi Arabia*. Specifically, it explores two main questions: i) what does the phenomenon of new Englishes say about language and Saudi society today? and ii) what are the implications of new Englishes for language policy in Saudi Arabia? It argues that the concept of Saudi English (as an umbrella term), as recently described by several Saudi scholars, does not help us understand the emerging varieties of English and its fluidity across the country. The concept of *New Englishes in Saudi Arabia* should be employed as an analytical model to better understand the diverse varieties and ever-expanding users of English in the country. This study concludes with some implications for language policy and a call for further studies on this line of inquiry.

Keywords: New Englishes; Saudi Arabia; model; evolution; phases; policy; English

1. Introduction

On the agenda of both linguistics and applied linguistics research, the scholarship of new varieties of English emerged in the early 1980s, with the groundbreaking works of scholars such as Bailey and Görlach (1982), Kachru (1985), and Moag (1982). These scholars have offered different conceptual models of varieties of English, whether "it is used as a native, second or foreign language" across the world (see in particular Schneider, 2003, p. 234 for a comprehensive review of this account). Since then, researchers have given different labels to the phrase new varieties of English, including new Englishes; a term that I shall engage with in this paper (e.g., Deshors & Gilquin, 2018; Mukherjee, 2007; Pillai & Ong, 2018). I am convinced by Schneider's (2003) contention that the label 'new Englishes' is more appropriate in investigating issues of new varieties of English "because their being 'new' grasps an essential detail" of their emerging and developmental processes in a given geographical context (p. 234). Crucially, the plural form Englishes connotes 'varieties of' and varieties resulting and emerging from developmental phases (Deshors & Gilquin, 2018).

Although there is no universally agreed definition of the term new Englishes—as an aspect of the spread of English worldwide—in the research literature, it is generally understood as the diversity of multiple (i.e., local, regional, national, broken, etc.) varieties of English across the world (e.g., Mair,

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2016; Mukherjee, 2007; Schneider, 2003, 2007, 2014). The absence of a universally agreed definition could be due to "the ongoing expansion and diversification of English" (Schneider, 2014, p. 9) in different geographical locations, including the 'expanding circle' countries (Kachru, 1985). 'Expanding circle' countries, as Kachru (1985) describes, are those countries that use English as a foreign language—EFL (Saudi Arabia in the case of this paper). Nonetheless, the emergence of new Englishes, I argue, have particular history, functions, and characters in each expanding circle country. Therefore, an investigation of such a phenomenon needs to be contextualized to better understand its dynamism and implications for language policy in a given educational context.

In this paper, I argue that although English and the English medium instruction (EMI) system in Saudi Arabia are witnessing dynamic and ongoing expansion, under different contact phases and conditions (see in particular Barnawi, 2018) and consequently leading to the emergence of new Englishes, we still do not know the developmental phases that account for the formation of such a phenomenon and its characteristics.

This paper considers two main questions: i) what does the phenomenon of new Englishes say about language and Saudi society today? and ii) what are the implications of new Englishes for language policy in Saudi Arabia? To address these questions, I use Schneider's (2003) 'dynamic model of evolutions of new Englishes', which has never been applied to and discussed in the Saudi context (a country that has no colonial past). This model consists of five phases: "(1) foundation; (2) exonormative stabilization; (3) nativization; (4) endonormative stabilization; and (5) differentiation" (Schneider, 2003, p. 255). I will unpack these five phases in a later section. I employ this model because, as Schneider (2003) claims, "in principle, it should be possible to apply the model to most, ideally all of the Englishes around the globe" (p. 256), including Saudi Arabia. This paper, therefore, represents an attempt to grapple with Schneider's claim and thus (hopefully) contributes to the existing scholarship of new Englishes by presenting a new perspective from an under-examined research site (i.e., Saudi Arabia).

To that end, I first outline Schneider's (2003) 'dynamic model of the evolutions of new Englishes'. I then, using a wide range of concrete examples/illustrations taken from archival sources, TV news, and previous studies, apply this model to the Saudi context to explore the developmental phases of the phenomenon of new Englishes and its evolutionary status in the country. The implications of this phenomenon for language policy are also dealt with.

2. Literature Review: Schneider's (2003) dynamic model of evolutions

In his efforts to develop a macro-sociolinguistic model for the phenomenon of new Englishes, Schneider (2003) postulates "a dynamic model of the evolutions of new varieties". He deploys constructs such as social identity constructions, socio-political accounts, linguistic consequences, and sociolinguistic conditions to craft his model. The underlying goal of this model is that "there is a shared underlying process which drives the formation of New Englishes, accounts for many similarities between them, and appears to operate whenever a language is transplanted" (Schneider 2003, p. 241). Hence, he devises five dynamic phases for the model: (1) foundation; (2) exonormative stabilization; (3) nativization; (4) endonormative stabilization; and (5) differentiation (Schneider 2003). In the following paragraphs, I summarize each phase in turn.

The foundation phase refers to the stage at which English has initially begun to be constantly used in "a country that was not English-speaking before, because a significant group of English speakers settles in a new country for an extended period" (Schneider, 2003, p. 244). This phase typically manifests through colonization, trade, economic motivations, immigration, military or political purposes. In effect, various regional, social dialects, and lexical usages may occur. One of the key

characteristics of this early phase is that "contact with speakers of indigenous languages normally remains restricted … impeded by the inability to understand each other and by different concerns and needs" (Schneider, 2003, p. 244).

The second phase, exonormative stabilization, connotes the period after the political (and also economic) stabilization of colonies or settlers' communities in a given country. It also refers to the period after the education or contact processes between the settlers and local people increase. In the process, as Schneider (2014) describes:

While the linguistic norm orientation fully accepts the external [mostly native speaker] norm, in second language usage of local people lexical loans, especially in the domains of … local culture, and also early phonological and syntactic transfer phenomena are increasingly found. (p. 11)

In this phase, local people gradually begin to invest more and more in learning English because it increases their employment opportunities and upward social mobility within their own community.

The third phase, nativization, which is construed as crucial and the most vibrant phase, refers to the period during which cultural and linguistic transformation occurs. That is, as the interactions between the settlers and local people increase, the social gap between both parties gradually begins to shrink, leading to new identity construction as well as "the emergence of structures distinctive to the newly evolving variety (on the levels of lexis, sounds, and grammar; a 'structural nativization') via Second Language Acquisition, L1 transfer and innovation" (Schneider, 2014, p. 11).

The fourth phase, endonormative stabilization, often occurs after attaining independence from the settlers. It is associated with nation (or local capacity) building. In this phase, gradual endorsement of the local linguistic norm occurs, "supported by a new, locally rooted linguistic self-confidence" (Schneider, 2003, p. 249). This also leads to the creation of local norms and language standards as well as codifications of new varieties of English. It is crucial to acknowledge that the transition between exonormative stabilizations and endonormative stabilizations may be smooth and gradual. It might also be "marked or speeded up by a 'catastrophic' 'Event X,' an incident which clarifies the imbalanced mutual importance and hence ultimately the identity separation from the erstwhile 'mother country'" (Schneider, 2014, p. 12).

Differentiation, which is the final phase, is summarized by Schneider (2014) as follows: "As a consequence of external stability and internal cohesiveness having been reached, there is increasing room for internal differentiation, namely, for the gradual emergence of new [English] dialects and sociolects within the new variety" (p. 12). These developments are not for the purpose of constructing a new national identity. Instead, the purpose is to build "new subnational group identities within the [broader] stable nation". In this phase, "it is possible for varieties of English to coexist with other, mostly indigenous languages, with all of these fulfilling identity-marking functions" (Schneider, 2014, p. 254).

Overall, the above model of five phases should be conceptualized as a diachronic account that underpins the formation of new Englishes across the world. At the same time, there are no clear-cut borders between the phases; and thus, they should be read as shading into each other. It is also possible that "features of subsequent phases overlap or coexist", as Mukherjee (2007 states. Nonetheless, the pattern of these five phases exemplifies the "root of the formation of all new Englishes" (Mukherjee, 2007, p. 163). It also implies that all countries in which new Englishes emerge eventually reach phase five (Mukherjee, 2007; Schneider, 2003). In this paper, I aim to apply this model to the Saudi context, an under-examined research site in which there is a fast-growing number of users of English with different varieties, in order to test its viability and implications for language policy.

3. Developmental phases of English language in Saudi Arabia

3.1. The foundation phase: English in Saudi Arabia in the early days—1933 onwards

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country with vast areas of empty desert and mountains, has no colonial history. Instead, the introduction of English (which is the beginning of the foundation phase in Schneider's model) dated back to 1933 when some Saudi officials and Standard Oil California (which is now called Saudi Aramco) signed the Concession Agreement at Khuzam Palace that authorized the American company to explore oil in Saudi Arabia. So, finding oil and natural resources to bring them to the global market, an endeavor started in the Eastern Province back in 1933 by American geologists, had transplanted the seed of English and the English medium instruction (EMI) system in the country's landscape, as I elaborate below.

In those early days (i.e., 1933), Saudi Arabia had no oil industry, nor did it have the language or knowledge of such a technology. Consequently, "the early exploration-drilling crews developed a special language of understood and misunderstood words from English and Arabic to provide a common ground for American engineers and Saudi drilling crews to work together. No two crews used the same language" (Dialdin & Tahlawi, 1998, p. vii). In this context, language-related communication issues between Saudis and Americans were inevitable for two primary reasons. First, different equipment and tools used in the workplace had names in English, not Arabic. Second, operational manuals, as well as safety and maintenance instructions, were all written in English. Hence, as documented in *Saudi Aramco and Its People: A History of Training* (Dialdin & Tahlawi, 1998):

The American (and usually Texan) crew boss for each rig developed his own way of communicating with the Saudis on his crew. He typically used a mixture of English and pidgin Arabic punctuated by grunts, shouts, gestures and a few indispensable words. (p. 8)

By way of illustration, a Saudi driller might know the Arabic 'فوق' (foq) which means 'up' in English, but not know or remember 'down'. As such, he would shout 'foq no' while communicating with the crew. In this context, the crew understood this as meaning 'down.' It was also found that irrespective of their actual meanings in the dictionary, Saudis used a mixture of Texas-English and pidgin Arabic at their workplace to communicate with their American counterparts. Both Americans and Saudis taught each other through "buddy tutoring," which means "you teach me Arabic, I will teach you English" (Dialdin & Tahlawi, 1998, p. 8). This resulted in the easing of communication between them, regardless of how fragmentary and ungrammatical the sentences used were. Common examples of sounds of English spoken during that time include 'abwak' (for books); 'akwat' (for coats); 'asyat' (for seats); and 'panacil' (for pencils) (see Dialdin & Tahlawi, 1998 for more details on these accounts). It could be argued that the exploration of oil, in collaboration with the American company, led to a steadily growing influx of English (through trade) in Saudi Arabia.

Importantly, the above examples illustrate what Schenider (2003) calls an operation of contact "on two levels, independent of each other at first, involving dialect contact and language contact, respectively: it concerns both the group-internal communication among the English-speaking settlers and the interaction between" the local people and the settlers (p. 244). One of the distinctive features of this period is that contact among Americans and Saudis who resided outside the Eastern Province usually remained restricted. This is because the oil and petrochemical industries were first explored in the eastern region of the country. Saudis who live in the eastern region always have high exposure to English and English-speaking culture and communities. An additional distinctive feature of this period is that trans-languaging practices among both groups—Saudis and Americans—were common in achieving intelligibility, as shown above. Furthermore, issues of new word coinages, code-mixing and code-switching were common among both Americans and Saudis in the foundation phase.

3.2. Exonormative stabilization of English in Saudi Arabia

The years 1937 to 1947 seemed to witness the beginning of the second phase in Schneider's model in the country. In 1937, with the foundation of the Directorate of Knowledge, English was first introduced across Saudi public schools as a foreign language besides French. During that time, based on the old education system, "it was taught four times a week in grades 4, 5 and 6 (of elementary school)" (Al-Hajailan, 1999, p. 45). In 1942, the Directorate of Knowledge was renamed the Ministry of Education. Since then, "English as a subject has been removed from the old education system (i.e., elementary school), and reintroduced at both intermediate and secondary school levels, with Royal Decree No. 2802 dated 11/07/1942 (corresponding to 1361/06/26 H)" (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017, pp. 203–204).

At the same time, in 1945, Aramco hired its first two Arabists: George Rentz and B. H. Barney Smeaton. Both were linguists and studied classical Arabic at the University of California, US. B. H. Barney Smeaton produced a series of booklets dubbed *Arabic Work Vocabulary for Americans in Saudi Arabia*. These booklets are aimed at teaching Americans how to say job related phrases such as "where is the hammer?", and "it is under the automobile" in Arabic as well as phonetic and phonemes as shown in Image 1 and Image 2 respectively. "The company offered a fifty-dollar bonus to American employees who could pass a course based on lessons in Smeaton's booklet" (Dialdin & Tahlawi, 1998, p. 34). Besides, in 1947, Aramco built the first EMI-oriented vocational school, Arab Trade School, to train Saudis such skills as carpentry, welding and sheet metal fabrication in English so that they could assume more leading positions in the company.

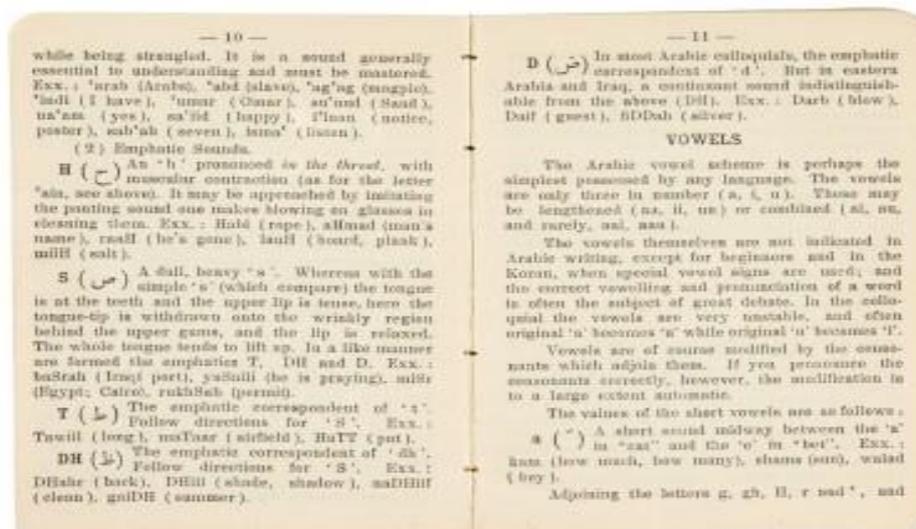**Figure 1.** Arabic translation of essential English safety terms

Figure 2. Illustrations of Arabic sounds and vowels

At the same time, in 1953, a government-sponsored two-year program was established as part of a campaign against illiteracy in English and to encourage vocational/industrial skills. The Saudi government supplied the textbooks for the program, specified the curriculum, and offered cash awards to those who successfully completed portions of the courses and passed exams. Aramco, on the other hand, provided the facilities and teachers. It could be assumed that bilingualism begins to spread among Saudis and a positive attitude toward English is also stimulated in phase 2. During this period of time, Saudi employees in Aramco were in constant contact with western expatriates in the company. While this is happening, for Saudis, a good command of English connotes economic, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1991).

The fast growth of Aramco, with branches in cities such as Jeddah and Yanbu, led to more western expatriates (predominantly Americans) coming to Saudi Arabia and spreading the English language among the Saudi community. Because there were different local varieties of Arabic spoken by Saudis, the second edition of *Arabic Work Vocabulary for Americans in Saudi Arabia* was produced just eight months after the first one. This was because the first edition was

"Rather Hijazi in flavor, and to that extent of less value in the area concerned. In the revision, emphasis has been shifted to geography. Qatif is treated as the focal point of the speech region represented. The Qatifi dialect is by no means presented intact, however, but modified to embrace usages in Hofuf … and Jubail, with some accommodation to those of the Bedu as well" (ARAMCO, 1946, p. iv).

It could be assumed that in this phase structural features pertaining to local language usage and dialects emerge (Schenieder, 2003). These include negotiation (e.g., you teach me Arabic, I teach you English); passive familiarity (e.g., no foq); proper pronunciations of local/Arabic names of people and objects; new coinage with English morphemes (e.g., abwak for books) (Thomason, 2001). Indeed, these are all results of the language contact in the country. Although the influx of Saudisms in the English language seems to be evident in this phase as well as in phase 1, the standards, as well as the norms of English taught to Saudis at schools and in HE institutions, continue to be western standard English (i.e., American or British), as I elaborate below.

3.3. Nativization of English in Saudi Arabia: 2004 onwards

The year 2004 onwards is the most vibrant one in terms of 'cultural and linguistic transformation' (to borrow Schneider's 2003 expression), in the country. During this period, both Saudi Arabia and the west (predominantly the US) realized that something crucial has been changing in the world. That is, several global events, including the 9/11 attacks and other related terrorist attacks across the world together with the 'Arab Spring' and 'the birth of ISIS' had an enormous impact on the Saudi HE system. Specifically, the government of Saudi Arabia faced an enormous amount of international pressure, especially from the American government, demanding substantial changes to its education (including language education) policy (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). The underlying assumption behind this western-driven pressure is "to foster more liberalism, and counterbalance the extremist ideology allegedly encouraged by some components within the Saudi curriculum, especially religious education" (Habbash, 2011, p. 34). In this context, as I argue elsewhere (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017).

More English education across the country is seen as a strategic response towards realizing healthy educational reforms. This asserts that English is not used to develop Saudi students' linguistic and communicative competencies but also to pass on a foreign culture to Saudi learners. (p. 204)

This is evident in the Saudi government's response to international allegations that the local school curriculum embraces extremist ideologies and fosters hatred towards the west. That is, by Royal Decree, the English language was introduced in the Education Development'. In it, English was introduced in the 4th grade of primary school as a core subject. The Ministry of Education has formed different committees to craft a curriculum responsive sixth grade of primary school. In 2011, the Saudi Ministry of Education launched a project titled 'English to the immediate needs of the country. For instance, "it contracted a variety of international publishers (e.g., Macmillan, McGraw Hill, Oxford, Pearson Education, to name a few) to design English syllabi/curricula that are based on the communicative approach for public education" (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 204).

In the Saudi higher education domain, in 2005, by Royal Decree, the Ministry of HE (now called the Ministry of Education) endorsed a new policy that demands teaching programs such as medicine, information technologies, business and management, engineering and health sciences in English across all education systems of the country. It is worth noting that prior to this language policy King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) and Jubail Industrial College and Yanbu Industrial College (now called the Royal Commission Colleges and Institutes at Jubail and Yanbu-Education Sector) were already using the EMI system since their inception (i.e., in 1963 in the case of KFUPM and the 1980s in the cases of the Industrial Colleges in Jubail and Yanbu). After 2005, however, Saudi Arabia saw the widespread adoption of EMI policy. In particular, several local and global forces, such as the 2008 global financial crisis, the fall in oil prices of 2014, and the rapid socio-economic transformation of Saudi Arabia, have remarkably altered the status of English. The government started investing more and more in English and English education, on the premise that English could provide access to sciences, knowledge and technology. Additionally, it could also help Saudi citizens to compete locally and globally (e.g., Barnawi, 2021). In 2005, the government introduced the King Abdullah Overseas Scholarship Program, which allowed Saudis to pursue their degrees in western countries (e.g., the USA, the UK, etc.). This scholarship program has not only allowed thousands of Saudis and their families to pursue their degrees overseas, but has also rendered English as important economic, cultural, and social capital in the country (Phillipson, 2009). English is now playing an essential role in different areas in the country, including education, business, economy and politics.

In this context, it could be assumed that the aforementioned cultural and linguistic transformations have altered "traditional realities, identities, and socio-political" conditions across the country

(Schneider, 2003, p. 247). This phase has also resulted in the emergence of different linguistic idiosyncrasies, creativities and adjustments, especially on such levels as lexical, grammar and dialects. This is what has led many Saudi scholars to pronounce that phase 3 marks the emergence of 'Saudi English' and to describe some of its characteristics (see in particular Alwznah, 2020; Bukhari, 2019; Elyas et al., 2020; Fallatah, 2017). One case in point is Fallata's (2017) study titled *Bilingual creativity in Saudi stand-up comedy*. In it, she reported that Saudi bilingual comedians are tacitly relating English to the local need by means of code-switching (e.g., خطابةxatˤtˤabahand for matchmaker), using some syntactical variations and making pronunciation shifts (e.g., عسكريم ʔaskariim for ice cream and رياضrɪˈjɑːd for Riyadh).

Similarly, Bukhari's (2019) study titled *Complexity theory approaches to the interrelationships between Saudis' perceptions of English and their reported practices of English* found that Saudis use different linguistic idiosyncrasies while using English. These include using Islamic expressions while conversing in English; direct translation of Islamic prayers and words; and direct usage of Arabic words in the absence of English equivalents. Elyas et al., (2020) further argue that it might be "difficult to distinguish between 'Saudi English' features and 'Arabicized English' ones. Not to mention, both Saudi English and Arabicized English are not as well documented as other varieties" (p. 6). Being mindful about the concept of 'Saudi English', Bukhari (2019) refers to the emerging variety of English in the country as 'Saudi English as lingua franca.' This is because, as Bukhari (2019) argues, Saudis often use English in different sociolinguistic, cultural, religious and socio-cultural contexts and settings. Whatever line of arguments posited by the above researchers, what is evident from the year 2004 onwards is the emergence of varieties of English in Saudi Arabia and the increasing number of English users due to "cultural and linguistic transformations" (Schneider, 2003, p. 24) taking place in the country.

3.4. Endonormative stabilization

The year 2016 is considered the beginning of phase 4 in the record of new Englishes in Saudi Arabia. This period has witnessed the introduction of Saudi Vision 2030, which in turn has encouraged noticeable adoption and acceptance of English as well as the ongoing creation of local standards and norms, "supported by a new locally rooted linguistic self-confidence" (Schneider, 2003, p. 250), as I elaborate below. This indicates that the transition between phase 3 (exonormative stabilization) and phase 4 (endonormative stabilization) are smooth and graduate in the case of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Vision 2030 and its National Transformation Plan (NTP) were introduced, by Royal Decree, in 2016, with the aim of positioning the country in the global market. As Barnawi (2018) succinctly captures:

Vision 2030 and the NTP have emphasized, in various ways, the ideology of learning English as an investment for the future among teachers, students, schools, HE institutions and the society at large. Notably, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman – the Chairman of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs – introduced Vision 2030 to the global market economy through a series of meetings with international business and academic leaders worldwide in order to attract direct foreign investment. (p. 58)

At the same time, several Saudi officials shared Vision 2030 with international business leaders and academics. They also invited those international leaders to invest in the Saudi market. These efforts motivated top international companies in the world to open up headquarter offices and invest in Riyadh. Examples include Amazon, Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, Huawei Technologies, and Apple, to name a few. In effect, the increasing presence of blue-chip international companies endorses the idea of English as the language of economic advancement as well as job opportunities in the country. These public discourses about English have resulted in the emergence and acceptance of new varieties

of English across the country (e.g., with features of local vocabularies, code-switching, linguistic idiosyncrasies, and syntactical patterns). One case in point is that it is now common to experience immediate English translations and/or excessive usage of English phrases in the Saudi public sphere. In McDonald's restaurants, for instance, it is common to hear such a conversation among Saudis:

A Saudi waiter/waitress: اتفضل إيش الاوردر تبعك What is your order please?

A Saudi customer: دبل تشيز برجر Double cheese burger

ماك مافن صوصج تشيكن Chicken sausage McMuffin

In the field of sport (e.g., soccer) it is normal to hear phrases such as بنلتي(penalty) فاول (foul) from a Saudi commentator on national TV. In different entertainment activities organized by the Saudi General Entertainment Authority, it is becoming more common to read الرياض بوليفارد سيتي (which means Boulevard Riyadh city) and الرياض ونتر وندر لاند (Riyadh winter wonderland) in different promotional materials, flyers and official websites.[1]

1: https://tickets.riyadhseason.sa/en/d/756/riyadh-blvd-city-riyadh-season-2021

In higher education settings, it is now ubiquitous to hear Arabic pronunciations of some English words or phrase. For instance, a student could lodge an oral complaint as follows:

انا ليش اتدسمست في المادة هذه (which means why I have been dismissed from this course

أنا أتندبلفت في المادة (which means I got Withdraw Fail from this course)

Indeed, these examples are indicative of Hock and Joseph's (1996) model of convergence between two languages interacting and approximating each other (e.g., Arabic and English):

Let the interaction begin with two languages, A and B, producing the interlanguages AB, based on native knowledge of language A and acquired knowledge of B, and its counterpart BA … These interlanguages, in turn, will interact with each other, as well as with relatively unchanged A and B. The result will be a build-up of increasingly complex and mixed interlanguages, with increasingly longer—and more complex—series of 'superscripts' [like ABA, ABB, BAB, etc.]. (p. 395)

One of the characteristics of this phase is that the Saudi society seems to decide on its own language affairs without external interference. At the same time, English seems to gain public recognition and become "a new rival to Arabic in many fields of Saudi life" (Fallatah, 2017). At the same time, the variety of English in Saudi Arabia seems to be 'endonormatively stabilized'. It is, as well, comparatively homogeneous in the country, especially in the domains of pronunciation, word coinages, and lexis. This suggests that different varieties of English in Saudi Arabia did not enter phase 5, differentiation, in Schneider's (2003) model. This is not surprising if we read the five phases in Schneider's model as shading into each other.

In university textbooks, for instance, we often observe several instances of what Kachru (1983) has consistently described as "linguistic schizophrenia". That is, Saudis often accept and practice code-switching, linguistic idiosyncrasies, and innovation and local adjustment of English in such domains as entertainment, sports, national TV, and public discourses (especially among young generations), but reject such variety of English in classroom settings or textbooks. In fact, there are still excessive usages of Common European Framework of Reference-oriented textbooks and their associated goods, services, and products in local universities (see Barnawi, 2018). This suggests that there is apparent misalignment between the broader acceptance of the variety of English in Saudi Arabia and what Mukherjee (2007) describes as a "self-critical attitude toward one's deviances from" native speaker forms of English (particularly in academic settings). Hence, it could be argued that some features of nativization (phase 2) are still alive and kicking even in phase 4 in Saudi Arabia. At the same time, there are some signs of the beginning of differentiation (especially dialectal differentiation), which is phase 5 in Schneider's model. A case in point is Fallatah's (2017) study which found that some of her

focal participants (i.e., Saudi comedians) use Arabic pronunciation of some English words with the intensions of impersonating a stereotype about how people in Riyadh pronounce them: "'How is Riyadh doing? rɪˈjɑːd . . . riyad⁻ ʕ ... rɪˈjɑːð..'" (p.14). This renders present-day Saudi English more fluid in itself. That is, it is oscillating between progressive and conservative forces, as I elaborate below.

4. Saudi English or New Englishes in Saudi Arabia: Oscillation between Progressive and Conservative Forces

The analysis of the status of English in Saudi Arabia above indicates that different progressive forces account for the emergence of the concept of 'Saudi English' (e.g., Bukhari, 2019; Elyas et al., 2020; Fallatah, 2017). Besides, some conservative forces tentatively hold the new variety of English back in Saudi Arabia, before the eruption of what I termed New Englishes in Saudi Arabia. I unpack this argument below.

I am convinced by Mukherjee's (2007) observation that "the forces of progression and conservativism [in the status of English in a given sociocultural context] operate at three levels: the structural level, the functional level, and the attitudinal level" (p. 170). In the case of Saudi Arabia, progressive forces at the structural level account for bilingual creativity and constant divergences from different varieties of English. These include pronunciation shifts, code-switching, cultural reference and syntactic variations in Saudi English (Al-Rawi, 2012; Bukhari, 2019; Fallatah, 2017). In contrast, progressive forces at the functional level account for the different functions that English exhibits in Saudi Arabia today. English has been widely used in such areas as sport, entertainment, restaurants and hotels. From an attitudinal point of view, progressive forces account for the increasing endorsement of local variety of English or Saudi English in the words of researchers such as Al-Rawi (2012), Bukhari (2019), Elyas et al., (2020), and Fallatah (2017). One case in point is the different linguistic devices employed by Saudi comedians "to express their Saudi identity and cultural conceptualizations through evoking Saudi cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors" (Fallatah, 2017, p. 16). Collectively, it could be argued that progressive forces entail all the forces that render the idea of Saudi English moves forward, as a concept.

In contrast to the above, conservative forces hold Saudi English back by adhering to and emphasizing "traditional and established forms at the structural level" (Mukherjee, 2007, p. 170), especially in academic settings (e.g., American or British English). Conservative forces at the functional level always work to restrict the use of English within Saudi society. Examples include the official ban, by Royal Decree, on using English in official communications between faculty members at a public university; among government employees; at banks; and law firms. Finally, conservative forces at the attitudinal level solidify the resistance to excessive usage of English in the public sphere. This is realized by emphasizing the importance of Arabic as not only the national language but also the language of Islam. A case in point is the recent (2021) thought-provoking show broadcast on the national TV channel, Al Ekhbariya, titled:

''أطفال سعوديون يتحدثون الإنجليزية بطلاقة ويفتقدون التحدث بالكلمات العربية''[2]

(Saudi children speak fluent English, but cannot speak proper Arabic)

In this show, several cases of Saudi children who can read and speak well in English, but were weak in reading and speaking in Arabic, were presented to emphasize the negative impacts of the excessive usage of English and the strong influence of Westernization on Saudi society.

Taken together, it could be argued that progressive forces and conservative forces are in incessant tension in the present-day (assumed) Saudi English. Nevertheless, Saudi Vision 2030 and its NTP, introduced in 2016, seems to exponentially overshadow conservative forces across the country. Under

Saudi Vision 2030, the country is replete with transnational companies, restaurants, investors, schools, workers, and communities, with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. English has been widely used in such areas as business, industries, universities, entertainment, private schools, and the public sphere.

To illustrate, in 2021, the government, by Royal Decree, introduced English in the first grade of elementary schools in the country. EMI systems are now widely used in all education system across the country.

Furthermore, under Saudi Vision 2030, employees, for example, of the Ministry of Justice and the General Presidency for the Affairs of the Holy Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque are compelled to take different English courses to be able to communicate with visitors from different parts of the world (see in particular Barnawi, 2018, for more details).

Under the above conditions, it is evident that English and EMI policy are witnessing dynamic and ongoing expansion, under different contact phases and conditions (see in particular Barnawi, 2018, 2021), consequently leading to the emergence of new Englishes. Specifically, under Saudi Vision 2030, the country has witnessed a heavy presence of transnational/international expatriates, with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This would inevitably bring about variation and constant changes (e.g., dialects, accents, etc.) in the forms of English used in Saudi Arabia. Under the current 'transnational turn' (to borrow Schneider's 2014 expression) in Saudi Arabia, new varieties of English are more likely to emerge beside the existing ones in the country.

In this context, it is not appropriate to use the concept of *Saudi English* to describe the ever-expanding variety of English and different users of English in the country. The concept of Saudi English (as an umbrella or a static term) does not fully describe today's emerging varieties of English used in the country. Speakers of English across the country keep constantly creating new varieties as a result of their everyday language contact. This entails newly localized cultural expressions, code-mixing, lexical shifts, especially in workplace oral communication and informal settings. We, therefore, should understand the emerging variety of English in the country as *New Englishes* in Saudi Arabia. This very phenomenon of *New Englishes* has implications for national language policy as I elaborate below.

2: https://mz-mz.net/1590682/

5. Implications for Language Policy and Pedagogy

The Saudi education policy still strictly implements a national curriculum with Arabic as a national language, especially in the public education sector. In EFL, it accepts standard English, which is generally equated with Standard American or British English. Paradoxically, currently, English is taught from the first grade of elementary schools, and transnational EMI policy is widely implemented across private and public universities. Under Saudi Vision 2030, there is now a heavy presence of transnational/international companies, industries, businesses, investors and people with different linguistic backgrounds. Hence, English has become widely construed as a language of business transaction and communication, economic opportunities and upward social mobility across Saudi Arabia (Barnawi, 2021; Phan & Barnawi, 2015). In everyday reality, Saudis use different linguistic devices to express their Saudi identities, including code-switching, translanguaging, pronunciation shifts and cultural references, to name a few. The implication of this is that more varieties of English are emerging within the Saudi society, and there is a growing group of English-speaking Saudis, with varying degrees of fluency, who will have more opportunities in the job market. This suggests that the Ministry of Education, through its national curriculum, should accommodate the variety of *New Englishes in Saudi Arabia* at the structural, functional and attitudinal levels (Mukherjee, 2007).

Besides, the classroom cannot be separated from everyday realities. Instead, they are "reflections of the societies in which they are located, so they are infused with the same injustice and restrictions afflicting the societies at large" (Khatib & Miri, 2016, p. 98). Therefore, language teachers should accept multiple varieties of English and their features brought to classrooms by their students. This could enable students to claim "ownership of the language they are using by injecting their own identity into" it (Pillai & Ong, 2018, p. 4). Several studies have shown that the localized variety of English is considered as "viable for effective communication and not as a distortion of the English language" (Pillai & Ong, 2018, p. 4).

Overall, in this paper, I argue that the term Saudi English as conceptualized by scholars such as Bukhari (2019), Elyas et al., (2020), and Fallatah (2017) does not help us understand emerging varieties of English under the current transnational turn in Saudi Arabia. I, thus, contend that the concept of *New Englishes in Saudi Arabia* should be employed as an analytical model to better understand diverse varieties and ever-expanding users of English in the country. Further studies on what I called New Englishes in Saudi Arabia are required to conceptualize the status of English across the country, and hopefully contribute to the scholarship of the evolutionary dynamics of world Englishes.

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