

Peter Trudgill and Jean Hannah. *International English. A Guide to Varieties of Standard English*. Second edition. London: Edward Arnold, 1985. £4,95. Paperback.

Anathema though it may be to many linguists, there is a strong possibility that, in the more exotic areas of the earth, English - given the right or (according to one's attitude) the wrong conditions - will split into different languages. For this and other reasons, 'International English' is of interest to both camps.

It deals with English in most of the continents, excluding, unfortunately, countries such as Japan and China - the latter understandably, perhaps, because, until recently, it was for the West as remote as Japan once was under the Shogunate. A formidable task is tackled with impressive efficiency.

A case is made for two standards: that of the United States as well as that of England, and, after a discussion of 'the RP accent' and associated dialects, there are succinct accounts of the pronunciation, grammar and lexis of English in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Wales; North America; and Scotland and Ireland: of 'English-based Creoles' and 'non-native varieties of English' (which include West African and Indian English). There are also details of the illustrative recording that is available.

At first glance, the grouping in 'Contents' of Welsh with Australian, New Zealand and South African English may raise some eyebrows, but this is justified later on. The lion's share goes to North American English - and rightly so because, beyond England and the United States, it is the English of the second rather than the first that can have the leverage. Included is an indication of the stupefaction that can result in the United States when words such as 'biscuit', 'suspender', 'vest' and 'yard' are used with their British English meanings.

Later on, there is a very interesting discussion of deviation in India and in Africa north of the Republic, the sensible conclusion being: 'We believe, however, that, as long as the deviations from EngEng in, for example, an African's or Indian's English are not great, then there is no reason to object to that variety being used in native English-speaking areas. ... Care should probably also be taken, however, that deviations from native English varieties should not become too great; otherwise, wider communication through English might be impaired.'

But, in practice, deviation leads to deviation and ultimate unintelligibility.

In this country, the section of the book that will command most interest is that on South African English. Within its limits, there is little to quarrel with. But the examples of lexis are somewhat dated ('veld' is international and 'bioscope' is fading in the cities, although 'sjambok' has achieved a new liveliness), and oddities such as 'is it?', in "He's gone to town." "Oh, is it?", have been given undue prominence. But, most important, far more should have been made of Brown, Black, Indian and Afrikaans English. What is also surprising is that, in the section on 'SafEng' in 'Selected References and Further Reading', *English Usage in Southern Africa* (Department of English, University of South Africa) and *A Dictionary of South African English* by Jean Branford do not appear.

Nevertheless, the book as a whole is an achievement. International English being a jungle that is daily more luxuriant, Trudgill and Hannah have used their machetes with effect, giving us the cores of most of its main growths.

It is possible to cavil at minor claims in the book. It is unwise to be dogmatic about the pronunciation in 'EngEng' of 'Bogota'. Surely, in Standard English, the spelling 'j-a-i-l', is ousting 'g-a-o-l', and 'amongst' and 'whilst' are giving way to 'among' and 'while'? Our use of hyphens is admittedly chaotic, but 'notepaper' and 'bookkeeper' are considered preferable to 'note-paper' and 'book-keeper'. And is it true that, in Standard English, 'pants' can mean only 'underpants'?

Even so, this is a valuable book that fully justifies the claims made on page 3: 'This information should be of assistance in particular to teachers and students of EFL' (English as a Foreign Language). ...'This book can also be of help to native speakers of English, for, even though native speakers understand many more varieties of their language than they speak, differences in accent and subtle or unexpected differences in dialect can hamper understanding for them, too. Finally, this material should also be of interest to anyone working in English linguistics or dialectology'.

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