
Is it *world* or *international* or *global* English, and does it matter?

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A discussion of the three key names for English in a 'globalizing world'

[Developed from both a talk at the Department of English in the City University of Hong Kong (22 Sep 03) and thoughts on completing *The Oxford Guide to World English*, 2002. I am indebted to Loreto Todd for insights during the development of this text. Further comment is welcome, especially where it might fill in any gaps in the story of the three terms.]

THIS REVIEW explores the histories and meanings of, and similarities and contrasts among, three labels for English at large: *world English*, *international English*, and *global English*, first as phrases containing the words *world*, *international*, and *global*, then in terms of their history and use, and how a range of dictionaries has dealt (or failed to deal) with them. Although all three phrases relate to the same vast language or family of languages, each has a history and perspective of its own: *World English* since the 1920s, *international English* since the 1930s, both emerging strongly in the 1980s, and *global English* since the mid-1990s. The first has been used to mean both standard English and all English; the second refers to the multinational use of English (notably in language teaching); and the third both implies vast use and links the language (often negatively) with socio-economic globalization. Since all three are likely to go on being used, they may need to be handled with care.

World, international, and global: are they synonyms?

In recent times, the three words *world*, *international*, and *global* have had a strong presence

(often close together) in newspapers, magazines, books, broadcasting, and websites, notably in terms of politics, economics, and communication (see Panel 1). They are also commonly used attributively, as in *world news*, *international relations*, and *global warming*, but their mutual relations are by no means simple. Consider for example the five following sets:

- 1 *world shipping*, *international shipping*, *global shipping*
- 2 *world opinion*, *international opinion*, *global opinion*

Here, set 1 relates to everyday life and work and set 2 deals in abstractions. In each, how-

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ever, the words are synonymous and therefore freely interchangeable. But consider:

3 *world peace, international peace, global peace*

World peace and *global peace* both mean freedom from war on earth. Currently, *world peace* is commoner, contrasting with *world war*. *Global peace* is not however so straightforward, because its implication of non-violence goes beyond formal warfare, to include for example an end to terrorism and violent organized crime worldwide. Both are closer than either is to *international peace*, which is less comprehensive: it can, for example, be broken if only two nations engage in hostilities. The three kinds of peace are close, but not identical, and the phrases are therefore synonymic (similar in meaning) rather than synonymous.

4 *world law, international law, global law*

Here, the second phrase is in wide use, suggesting treaties and processes of law among nations, and the first and third are dubious. Although they have similar meanings, they do not directly relate to countries and institution(s): there is no body of world or global law, but international law is codified and there is an *International Court of Justice* at the Hague.

5 **world warming, *international warming, global warming*

In Set 5, the asterisked items make little sense. **World warming* might be *global warming* without the doomsday element, but **international warming* doesn't work either in socio-political or geophysical terms. *Global warming* has however a vast apocalyptic quality whose only near match (if one needed such a thing) would be *planetary warming*. On the other hand, *greenhouse effect*, though related, singularly fails to be ominous.

The examples indicate that relationships among the three words are not simple, which suggests that, when each is combined with *English*, the effect could be just as complex: that is, from synonymy on occasion to a range of contrasts within a shared area. Sometimes there may be little or no difference between *world English*, *international English*, and *global English*, but we should nonetheless be prepared for differences. We can now look at their respective 'stories', noting that I have felt the need to give *world English* four times the space needed for either of its 'rivals'.

World English 1: 1927–1979

In the *Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition* (OED2 1989), there is under *world* a sub-entry *world English*, and in that sub-entry there are two citations of use, the first from 1927 (a year before OED1 came out), the second from 1980 (the same decade as OED2). Both are from journals concerned with English, and are over half a century apart. The first is:

1927 K Malone, *American Speech* II. 323/2 'He.. warns against a slavish conformity to the dictionary, i.e. to the prescriptions of standard English, or *world-English as some people call it.' [Asterisk, hyphenation, and lower-case *w* as in the original.]

This brief citation is tantalizing. Malone describes someone's warning, and equates three things: 'the dictionary', 'standard English', and 'world-English', but we do not know whether the unknown 'He' was only warning against too much dependency on dictionaries, Malone adding the rest. However, although we are also left wondering who 'some people' were, we learn that *world-English* (hyphenated, a usage I have not met elsewhere) was in use in 1927 in at least one publication. This suggests the possibility that the phrase was born in the USA, perhaps serving the same ends as *international* in the names of American dictionaries (used to contrast them with British counterparts). But that is as far as things go for the 1920s in the OED. Its second and final citation is dated 1980, from a journal published by Julius Gross in Heidelberg, Germany, and edited until recently by Manfred Görlach. It runs:

1980 *English World-Wide* (EWW) Ii.80 The categories or types of AVE. can be seen as existing across a scale having 'World English' ('book English', 'standard English', 'teacher's preferred English', &c.) at one end, and a national variety most distinct from it at the other. [Name of author not provided]

Importantly, the 1980 citation reinforces the 1927 sense of standardness. Alas, however, the only other evidence I have for the use of the phrase *world English* between 1927 and 1980 is my own, in 1967: *World English* as the title of an article in *Opinion* magazine in Bombay (28 Feb 67). I had no precedent in mind when I used it, but didn't assume I'd coined it. Although the article had the wide world as its context, I was influenced at the time by my work in the English Department of the

Cathedral and John Connon School, Bombay. Our pupils came from a range of local, national, and international backgrounds. Most were local and multilingual, with English as a second or third language, while the rest were small minorities: local native speakers of English (mainly Anglo-Indian), native speakers from outside India, and non-native speakers from outside India. We prepared all alike for the Indian School Certificate, a UK-descended national qualification, and most did well. The English of such students seemed to me a microcosm of what one might call ‘world English’, which might or might not be standard (however such a matter is judged).

In the article itself, I quoted Anthony Burgess suggesting that what writers in English ‘should try to create is a sort of ecumenical English’ (a generous term that never took off). I then mused: ‘A world English. And Linda Hess, Nayantara Sahgal and NJN [fellow writers in *Opinion*] might ask: Who will standardise it, if it is to be standardised? Who, with the genius of [the classical Sanskrit grammarian] Panini would create *Anglo-International Grammar* and with the lexical skill of Johnson amass a *Dictionary of World English for All Occasions*? UNESCO? A Commonwealth-American consortium?’

It was possible in the 1960s to imagine UNESCO undertaking such a task, but fanciful to think of it now. However, my Commonwealth-American option seems to be taking shape (except that, as Loreto Todd noted when previewing this piece, it is ‘American/Commonwealth, and would tend to be the so-called “Old Commonwealth”’). Here we have the US, the UK, Australia, and other Anglophone territories engaged in various (often co-operative) lexicographical, grammatical, and corpus-based projects, centred either on a world publisher (such as Oxford or Pearson/Longman) or a federated project like the *International Corpus of English (ICE)*, initiated by University College London, or two or more national alliances, as with the *Encarta World English Dictionary* (below), which involved the UK, the US, and Australia.

After writing the Bombay article I did not expect to use the term again, but some years later, when studying linguistics at Edinburgh, it cropped up, although at present I have nothing to cite from the 1970s. For me, since 1967, *world English* has meant all English: standard and non-standard, mother-tongue and other-

tongue, dialect, pidgin, creole, lingua franca, and, importantly, such ‘Anglo-hybrids’ as *Hindlish* and *Spanglish*, especially where the *Anglo* element is strong, use is communal, and significant social ends are being served. For me, *world English* is both shorthand for *English as a world language* and a superordinate term for *Australian English*, *British English*, *Irish English*, *Nigerian English*, and the like. It embraces all aspects of the language: dialect, pidgin, creole, variety, standard, speech, writing, paper-based, electronic. And, within such a spread, the term *World Standard English* for me fits well for the print-linked ‘educated’ variety or varieties.

World English 2: 1980 to the present day

In the 1980s, *world English* came into its own, although it was not alone for long. If the compilers of *OED2* had felt the need for more citations, they could have found many, such as:

1982 ‘We may definitely recognize Australian English and New Zealand English as making their own special contribution to world English’
– from Robert D. Eagleton’s Antipodean chapter in Richard W. Bailey & Manfred Görlach, editors, *English as a World Language* (EWL 1982)

1985a ‘The traditional spelling system... despite its notorious vagaries, is a unifying force in world English’
– from *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (CGEL 1985), by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik

1985b
1 ‘The Idea of World English: a historical and geographical look at the spread of English’, by Richard W. Bailey
2 ‘An ABC of World English: Part 1’, by Tom McArthur
– titles of articles in the 1st issue of *English Today (ET)*, Cambridge University Press

Such uses indicate that the phrase was well established by the first half of the decade. In the July 1987 issue of *ET*, an article entitled ‘The New *OED* and World English’ appeared, dealing with the move towards greater global coverage than was possible in the first edition. It was written by Edmund Weiner, co-editor with John Simpson of *OED2*. His topic was the dictionary’s world citation programme, in which the scantness of its sub-entry on *world English* is the mildest of peccadillos.

The 1980s were a fertile time. Among the many developments in English studies was Pergamon's launch in 1981 of a UK-based international journal called *World Language English*, edited by William R. Lee. In 1984, however, Lee gave up the editorship, prompting a complete re-development in 1985. Although the journal continued to be published in Britain, it was re-named and moved editorially to the US. There, the Indian-born scholar Braj B. Kachru, at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and the American intercultural specialist Larry E. Smith, at the East-West Center in Hawaii (of whom more below in relation to *international English*), became co-editors.

In keeping with Kachru's inclusive and counter-imperialist approach, and Smith's liberal humanism, the journal was re-launched as *World Englishes: Journal of English as an International and Intranational Language*, the initials *WE* being foregrounded as an inclusive second-person plural pronoun. The journal has since been a reservoir of description and opinion on English(es) wherever it is or they are to be found. As a result, many scholars now routinely use the forms *Englishes* and occasionally *an English*. Such innovations, however (even more than the phrase *world English* itself), have a way to go before they become social reality for the mass of users of any English.

World English 3: Some Oxford references in the 1990s

In 1992, a short entry entitled *World English* appeared under my initials in the *Oxford Companion to the English Language* (*OCELang*). It began: 'An increasingly common term for English as a world language.' The citations of use were: the title of my Bombay article (the earliest I knew of, because [gravissima culpa] I did not think of checking in the *OED2* 1989), then Eagleton 1982 and Quirk *et al* 1985 (both as above). I closed with the note: 'Some scholars use the term cautiously or avoid it, because for them it suggests global dominance by English and English-speaking countries, with an attendant down-grading of other languages.' I did not refer to the term being used to mean 'standard English' because at that time I had never come across such a use. In addition, since the arrival of the phrase *global English*, I have felt less concerned about any brooding implica-

tions in *world English* as an overall label, but we can note the reference to 'global dominance', pre-echoing *globalization*.

A year later, the first post-*OED2* Oxford dictionary entry for *world English* appeared in the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (*NSOED* 1993). Nested under *world*, it runs:

World English a variety of, or the fundamental features of, English regarded as standard or acceptable wherever English is spoken.

In this definition, the 'standard English' sense is sustained. A nearby sub-entry, *world language*, runs: 'A language used throughout the world, such as late 20c English', making explicit the easy link between *English* and *world language* (standard or otherwise).

Manifestly, the *NSOED* and *OCELang* took very different lines, but no one at OUP has drawn my attention to this fact (or apparently noticed it), and I haven't until now raised the matter. But five years later, the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (*NODE* 1998) followed with a remarkable entry in its own right, with two senses:

world English > *noun* [mass noun] the English language including all of its regional varieties, such as North American, Australian, New Zealand, and South African English.
~ a basic form of English, consisting of features common to all regional varieties.

This is a radical change, which however is for me both pleasing (sense 1) and puzzling (sense 2). *NODE*'s first sense fits well with *OCELang* but ill with both the *OED2* and *NSOED*, and says nothing about standardness at the same time as it names varieties routinely associated with national kinds of standard English (where once their usage might have been considered 'colonial' or 'provincial'). But the second sense baffles me. In the 1970s, I researched Ogden's Basic English and other restricted kinds of English. Ogden's 'Basic' was an acronym, for *British American Scientific International Commercial*, whereas the 'basic form of English' in *NODE* draws its elements from 'regional varieties' (not from two varieties and a range of registers): indeed, it appears to be what has sometimes been called 'common-core English'.

NODE's list of defined *world*-related compounds and phrases runs from *World Bank*, *world-beater*, *World Council of Churches*, *World Cup*, *world English*, and *world fair* on down to *World Wide Web*. Its *international* phrases

include *International Atomic Energy Agency*, *International Baccalaureate*, *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, *International Brigade*, *International Date Line*, on down to *International Telecommunication Union* – but there is no *international English*. In contrast, only three phrases are subtended under *global*: *Global Surveyor* (a vehicle for use on Mars, not Earth), McLuhan's *global village*, and *global warming*. There is no *global English*, which in 1998 would have been on the borderline for inclusion.

In sum, the evidence suggests that, as recently as 1998, only *world English* has had prominence enough to attract the attention of the most powerful and widely based dictionary publisher in the English-using world. At the end of the '90s, however, the world of large-scale English-language lexicography was changing, and in ways that could not have been predicted when the decade began.

World English 4: *Encarta* versus *NODE*

In 1999, the publishers Bloomsbury in London, in co-operation with, and on behalf of, Microsoft Corporation, brought out the *Encarta World English Dictionary* (*Encarta* 1999) [all underlines in this section mine]. In a serious sense, and whatever its fate as both an electronic and a paper dictionary, *Encarta* changed the rules of the game.

In its prelims, *Encarta*'s editors and publicists refer not only to its *International Publishing Partners* but also to 'essays covering word histories, World English, regional English, usage, and cultural links', list a 'World English Database Advisory Board', and talk about 'World English and Language Consultants'; Bloomsbury chairman Nigel Newton talks in a foreword about 'the need for a world English dictionary'; editor-in-chief Kathy Rooney discusses the dictionary's 'Corpus of World English'; executive editor Faye Carney lists 'Labels for Varieties of Regional and World English'; and I provide a general essay entitled 'World English', in a section on the history and lexicography of the language. That essay includes the phrases *World Englishes*, *the Englishes*, *the world's lingua franca*, *the New Englishes*, *International English*, and *Global English*. I was also responsible for paragraphs on key varieties of English in the A–Z list, while under *w* there is an entry (which I did not write

but with which I concur): '*World English* the English language in all its varieties as it is spoken and written over the world.'

Perhaps, however, the stop-press news is that the jacket and prelims of *NODE* (1998: Editor, Judy Pearsall), which came out only a few months earlier than *Encarta*, are so similar. The jacket refers to Oxford as 'the world leader in authenticating new words and authenticating language', describes 'the Oxford World Reading programme', with its '60-strong international network of readers', then claims a '150 strong international consultative body in some of the world's greatest institutions'. In the prelims are listed 29 'World English Consultants', English is described as a 'world language', the 'English-speaking world' is invoked, and 'excellent coverage of world English' is asserted, while in a section headed 'World English', English is called 'the language of international communication in trade, diplomacy, sport, science, technology, and countless other fields'.

With the emergence of these parallel volumes, and after decades of relative obscurity, the phrase *world English* has taken centre stage as both a descriptive and promotional term, but not in the sense of standard English worldwide. The phrase *world English* is not however alone on that stage, and has in fact not been alone for many years.

International English: from the 1930s to the present

The term *international English* appears to be almost as old as *world English* and in its earlier decades certainly as rare. The *OED* does not provide an entry, but when Loreto Todd searched its text online (in the course of checking an earlier version of this text) she found two occurrences of the phrase in quoted texts used to cite other words: J. B. Priestley (unspecified) in 1930, and C. Logue in *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1958. Like *world English*, however, it appears to have been rare until the 1980s, and I certainly did not encounter it as a technical term or in print before the 1980s, when it began to appear in many places.

In 1982, for example, Peter Trudgill and Jean Hannah brought out their trend-setting and long-running *International English: A Guide to Varieties of Standard English* (Edward Arnold), published in the same year as Bailey

From 'World English: A Study of its Development', by Janina Brutt-Griffler, in *Multilingual Matters*, 2002

■ Since colonialism coincides chronologically with the development of World English, it is certainly justifiable to inquire whether causal significance attaches to the role of imperialism in the international spread of English. It is worth posing this question whether Phillipson himself does so. He remarks rather ambiguously that 'English' is now entrenched world-wide, as a result of British colonialism, international interdependence, 'revolutions' in technology, transport, communications and commerce, and because English is the language of the USA, a major economic, political and military force in the contemporary world' (pp. 23–4). Of these factors, apparently only the first, however, is intended to refer to the pre-World War II period.... Taken as a coherent explanatory framework for World English, the central premise of linguistic imperialism is that the spread of English represents a culturally imperialistic project, which necessarily imparts English language culture to its second language learners.

■ Almost a decade after his seminal paper on

English as an International Language, Smith (1987) addressed what he considered to be a possible misinterpretation of the notion of EIL: Referring to professionally and technologically based limited domains of English usage, he insisted 'EIL is not English for special purposes with a restricted linguistic corpus for use in international settings' (p. xi). In direct contrast, in Widdowson's (1997) understanding of World English, the international language comprises varieties of English for specific purposes, 'autonomous registers which guarantee communication within global expert communities' (p. 144). Davies (1989), relating the question of World English to current theories of SLA, posits the question: 'Is International English an Interlanguage?' – alluding to a dominant paradigm for explaining the second language learner's progress. He rejects the notion of defining World English as an interlanguage (IL) on the ground that the latter properly accounts for individual language development and variation, while World English 'deals with societal varieties' (p. 447).

and Görlach's *English as a World Language*. The two books in effect, and unintentionally, set up an alternation between, on the one hand, the phrases *English as a world language* and *world English* and, on the other, *English as an international language* and *international English*, even though in general terms (if not in some dictionary definitions) *world English* has tended to be the more all-embracing term.

The Trudgill-Hannah sense of standardness was augmented by a language-teaching development that became known in the 1980s as (*Teaching*) *English as an international language* (*TEIL*, *EIL*), a term and approach meant to contrast strongly with two sets of established terms and pedagogical approaches, (*Teaching*) *English as a Foreign Language* (*TEFL*, *EFL*) and (*Teaching*) *English as a Second Language* (*TESL*, *ESL*). The (T)EIL concept was two-fold, each area distinct from the other. In the UK it was promoted by the applied linguist and language teacher Peter Strevens, notably through his *Teaching English as an International Language* (*TEIL* 1980), while in the US its principal proponent was Larry E. Smith at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, who took a more sociocultural line. Smith wrote the entry for

TEIL in *OCELang* (1992), whose opening section runs:

A term in language teaching and applied linguistics for teaching the use of English between or among speakers from different nations. Such persons may be native speakers (such as Americans and Britons who may not always understand each other well), non-native speakers (such as Thais dealing with Arabs or Mexicans dealing with Japanese), or native speakers and non-native speakers (such as Americans dealing with Hungarians, or Ethiopians dealing with Australians).

For Smith, (T)EIL differs from (T)EFL and (T)ESL in that native speakers also need to make an effort in international situations. Underpinning it is the view that English belongs to all its users, that ways of speaking and patterns of discourse are different across (and inside) all languages and communities, and that such ways and patterns influence both native and non-native speakers when a language serves as a shared international medium, often in ways that inhibit easy communication. In short, we all need to co-operate and accommodate. Smith is noteworthy in being associated with two 'rival' systems and

From *World Englishes* by Gunnel Melchers & Philip Shaw, London: Arnold, 2003

■ From the back cover blurb: English is increasingly becoming the world's lingua franca. If we are not native speakers of one of the many varieties of English, then we may be students of English, or use English regularly for academic or business purposes. *The English Language* series, which is international in focus, aims to synthesize the wealth of existing linguistic research both on and in English... 'English is now truly a global language, to an extent that no other language has ever been. *World Englishes* provides an overview of the global variation in vocabulary, grammar, phonology and pragmatics of English around the world.

■ Phrases from the text, from p. x to p. 11: 'to present and describe global variation and change... 20 years of teaching an undergraduate course called "Global English" at the Department of English, Stockholm University, and work on the dialects of the British Isles, and Philip Shaw's many years of work with speakers of English from every part of the world... social patterns of global variation... English as a Foreign or international language... better under-

stand the world they live in... the language's regional and social patterns of global variation... informants from all over the world... Graphic maps & World Atlas'... categorize the world around them...noticeable in many spheres of life... the worldwide expansion of English... after the Second World War... its conquest of the world... In other parts of the world... the role of English as an international language of communication – its use in the "expanding circle" created by globalization... the overall statistics for English worldwide... the worldwide impact of English... One out of five of the world's population speaks English... international business... international competitions... worldwide spread... the global sway... the worldwide spread... a cosmopolitan vocabulary... a worldwide perspective... an influential world language... our own account of World Englishes... this world language... varieties of English around the globe... the classification of World Englishes... our presentation of world Englishes... the political situation in the real world'

sets of terms: on one side, (T)EIL and *international English*, on the other his joint approach with Braj B. Kachru (above, as journal co-editors), which focuses on *world English(es)*.

Although (T)EIL has been a minor movement in English language teaching (ELT), it had an influence on the mainstream at about the time when the lines between EFL, ESL, and ENL were beginning to blur, notably as a consequence of migration and mixing. Students from many backgrounds with many needs now find themselves sharing classrooms in cities like London and New York. In London, for example, children from some 350 language backgrounds go to school in a medium that is more or less foreign to most of them yet present and essential all around them. Their teachers, to be effective, need to teach across an entire ENL/ESL/EFL/EIL methodological spectrum.

Despite all of the above, as we have seen, major lexicographers have failed to capture *international English*. The *OED2*, *NSOED*, *NODE*, and *Encarta* all deal with *world English* (two of them incorporating the term into publicity and prelims, and one into its name); none has listed and defined *international English*. In

addition, in the earlier emphasis on *world English* as standard English, some limited the wide range implicit in the name while none reported on *international English* as a term used by language scholars and others for the standard variety around the world. However, *international English* cannot be set aside as a more limited version of *world English*. Rather, its essence seems to be three-fold: distribution across nations; standardness; and *lingua-franca*-hood. It is what millions of non-native parents specifically want for their children, especially as provided by *international schools* in locations like Hong Kong and reflected in the *internationally acceptable English* that Singaporeans have as their collective goal.

Global English: from the mid-1990s

A less clear-cut use may be in store for *global English* as a label, despite the significance in recent dictionaries and elsewhere of such usages as *global*, *globalize*, *globalization*, *global village*, and *global warming*, which cover different areas from *international*, *internationalize*, *internationalization*, *international village*, and (the non-viable) **international warming*. In all

probability, however, both *international English* and *global English* will appear in the next editions of major dictionaries, and an effort may even be made to contrast them (perhaps under *world English*, with cross-references from and to the others). Although *global English* was too late for *COCELang* in 1992, I included the following entry in the *Concise Companion* (*COCELang* 1998):

GLOBAL ENGLISH A term of the 1990s for English as the world's pre-eminent language: 'The future of global English' (title of the closing chapter of David Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 1997); 'Technology... lies at the heart of the globalisation process, affecting the world of education, work and culture; it has helped to ensure that global English has become firmly entrenched as the lingua franca within such activities' ('English and the Internet', in *GEN: Global English Newsletter, Monitoring the Changing Role of English in the World*, 1, an electronic newsletter issued by [the] BRITISH COUNCIL, November 1997). [As far as I know, only one issue of *GEN* appeared. If there had been more, the phrase might have been in wider use today in the English-language business.]

Alongside it I also thought it useful to have an entry *global language*, because of the close ties between the two. It runs:

GLOBAL LANGUAGE A late 20c term for a language used everywhere on earth (and usually linked with English): 'It has become the language of the planet, the first truly global language' (Robert McCrum *et al.*, *The Story of English*, 1986); 'What is a global language? – A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country' (David Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 1997); 'The future of English as a global language therefore may depend, in large measure, on how the language is taken up and used by young adults in Asian countries' (David Graddol, *The Future of English?*, 1997); 'English is shockingly emerging as the only truly global language' (Michael Toolan, 'Recentering English', in *English Today* 52, October 1997). [We may note here that in this article Toolan considers re-naming English as simply *Global*. A citation: 'In the case of *Global*, its non-English majority of users are increasingly claiming ownership of it.']

Whereas it may be no surprise that the Crystal and Graddol citations come from the same year, 1997, it is worth noting that McCrum *et al* called English 'the first truly global language'

in 1986, when *world English* and *international English* were well in the ascendant. Given that phrases like *English as a world language* and *English as an international language* have apparently helped precipitate first *world English* then *international English*, it is no surprise to find that expressions like English 'as the first truly global language' preceded *global English* by about a decade. It might even have emerged without *globalization*.

For much of the 20th century, *global* was simply a geographical term historically associated with the titan Atlas carrying the globe of the world on his back (whence *atlas of the world*). *Global* tends to imply ecological/economic scale (*global warming*, *global investment*), the US magazine *BusinessWeek* handles everything of the kind (from *global conglomerates* to *global MBAs*), and in Davos in Switzerland a *global jet set* annually achieves almost the cosiness of McLuhan's *global village* (1963): the acceptable face of *globalization*, perhaps, as opposed to any unacceptable vision of American (or Anglo-American, or English-language) hegemony.

In 1997, David Crystal's *English as a Global Language* (*EGL*) was published. In it, he uses both *world English* and *global English*, but not *international English*, although *international* appears in other combinations. However, the two terms he uses cover the same territory as *world English* covered on its own in his *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* (*CEEL* 1995). There he used it alongside the fuller phrase *World Standard English* (*WSE*), which appeared at the heart of a radiating diagram of mine, 'The Circle of World English' (in *ET* 32 Oct 92), which he reproduces, acknowledges, and discusses. His further development, in both works, is *World Standard Spoken English* (*WSSE*), a radical concept which I had left implicit in 1992. Many commentators deny that a converging speech style exists or is likely to emerge worldwide any time soon, and may not be comfortable with a World Standard English even in print form. However, the existence of both are patently clear for me, in a dual US/UK mode: think of *The International Herald Tribune* (US) *The Economist* (UK), CNN International (US), and BBC World Service (UK).

In *EGL* (of which a second edition appeared in 2003), *World English* and *global English* appear to be style variants, indicating that at least two and probably all three terms can be so used if one wishes. *Global* and *globalization* were

vogue words when *EGL* came out in 1997, and *global* made sense in terms of public awareness and publicity. The following is a brief sampling of parallel *world English* and *global English* usages in *EGL1*, together with some general uses of *international* [underlines mine]:

- 1 [p. viii] I have thus tried to tell the story of World English [cap W] objectively and without adopting the kind of triumphalist tone which is unfortunately all too common when people write on English in English.
- 2 [p. 25] How far back do we have to go in order to find the origins of global English?
- 3 [p. 97] English has long been recognised as the international language of the sea.
- 4 [p. 101] English – with all its failings – remains the recommended language of international air travel.
- 5 [p. 136] Even if the New Englishes did become increasingly different, as years went by, the consequences for world English [lower-case w] would not necessarily be fatal.

Crystal uses *global* in relation to English in both title and text, and in the text uses it synonymously with *world* in attributive position, apparently more for stylistic than technical reasons: *world English* and *global English* are two names for the same phenomenon. Given that the intended readership was primarily non-specialist, strictness of terminology may not have been a crucial concern. At the close, however, and interestingly, he sets *global* aside, uses *international* in its general broad role, then returns to *world* (within his concept WSSE), pretty much as it was in *CEEL*:

- 6 [p. 136–7] A likely scenario is that our current ability to use more than one dialect [of English] would simply extend to meet the fresh demands of the international situation. A new form of English – let us think of it as ‘World Standard Spoken English’ (WSSE) – would almost certainly arise. Indeed, the foundation for such a development is already being laid around us.

He notes, however: ‘[The impression that WS(S)E already exists] is misleading in several respects. A totally uniform, regionally neutral, and unarguably prestigious variety does not yet exist worldwide.’ It seems to me, however, that this statement applies as much to national standards, notably with regard to speech, but we know they exist, at least for publishing and

in the media. WSE also exists, although it varies somewhat within nations and from nation to nation in terms of people’s educational levels, kinds of employment, social class and aspirations, sociocultural fluency, and use of print, broadcasting, teleprompts, and computers. A world standard is not however simply one or more national standard writ large. It is, as it were, a ‘federative’ entity, tending towards uniformity, without ever necessarily becoming ‘federal’. Like all language standards, it approximates to an ideal, and is not absolute.

Envoi

In the preface to *OGWE*, I talk about providing ‘as comprehensive and accurate a description as possible of English as a world (or global or international or universal) language – beauty spots, warts, and all’ (xi). Although a (quasi-)synonymy may seem intended (*world, global, international, universal*), I was more concerned with simply bringing together some of the attributives used to characterize English in the 19th century. *World, international, and global* are not now easily detached from English when we consider it as a medium for anyone anywhere who wants/needs to use it. And, although English is far from being used everywhere by everybody (and may never get there), even *universal* no longer seems too big a term, because millions who do not use English nonetheless know bits of it, and know about it. Yet even so, a securely standard area continues to be a minority resource, for ENL, ESL, and EFL users alike.

English is however further along the road to universality than any language has ever been, and much further now than in the 1920s or even at the end of the 1970s. Recent related studies demonstrate this globality in their titles: Janina Brutt-Griffler, *World English: A Study in its Development* (Multilingual Matters 2002); Michael Cronin, *Translation and Globalization* (Routledge 2003); Jennifer Jenkins, *World Englishes: A resource book for students* (Routledge, 2003); Gunnel Melchers & Philip Shaw, *World Englishes: An introduction* (Arnold 2003); Christian Mair, ed., *The Politics of English as a World Language* (Rodopi 2003); and Jacques Maurais & Michael A. Morris, eds, *Languages in a Globalising World* (CUP 2003).

We don’t need to wait for something ‘totally uniform, regionally neutral, and unarguably

World, international, global

Some representative citations

From *BusinessWeek*, 21 Apr 03, in part (the three words listed separately)

WORLD

America and the World [article heading]
 the world's attention
 the world's dictators
world leaders
 the world is shocked
 reshape the Arab world
 made the world a dicier place
 threat to world peace
 told the whole world...
 the world is more likely to accept
 the world could soon slip into recession
 The World Trade Organization
 ...while much of the world now sees
 Bush as a lonesome cowboy with an
 itchy trigger finger
 the postwar world
 the world's problems
 the world's needs
 a World Economic Forum meeting
 Third World countries
 the world's poor
 Europe's role in the world
 the new world that's emerging

INTERNATIONAL

International Outlook [section heading]
 an international monitoring body
international economic consultation
international spats over Iraq
international affairs
international problems
 Blair unveiled a Doctrine of the International
 Community
 As Blair said in Chicago – 'We're all
internationalists now'

GLOBE/GLOBAL

around the globe
global economic relations
 the global economy [3 times]
Global Wrap Up [section heading]
global trade talks
Globalization and growth
global tensions
Globalization; the driver of the 1990s boom
 the real challenge to the world and
globalization as we know it

deeper into the global thicket
global multilateralism
global consensus
 a global scale

From *Newsweek*, 5 May 03, in part (the three words listed together, in order)

the virus that's spreading around the globe...
 isn't the only... threat facing a 21st-century
world that is growing ever smaller
 isolate him both domestically and
internationally
 the Washington think tank Center for Strategic
 and International Studies
 U.S. Agency for International Development boss
 Andrew Natsios
 the climbing world
 the International Federation of the Red Cross
 and Red Crescent
 donations to 'international' causes went up
 an international fund-raising consultancy
 Even Julie Andrews herself doesn't live in the
world her name invokes
 The world is in 'shock and awe'
 the world's mediator
 'not since the most power-crazed emperors of
 Rome has the world seen the exercise of
 brute aggression on such a scale'
 the world's energy supplies
 75 percent of the world
 The World Health Organization
 ...set off global alarms
 San Francisco's International Airport
global threats
global cooperation
 [title] Tracking the Global Spread [of SARS]
Globalism A crowded, mobile population helps
 disperse new infections
international business and tourism
 the entire global economy
global economic growth
worldwide recession
 American International Group
 the world's largest insurer
 the rest of the world
 no one in the world knows what to base
 predictions on
 working globally to contain them
 into every corner in the world
 travelers from around the world



the world's farms
the world's largest health agencies
the world's largest oil reserves
[title] 'When Worlds Collide'

From *The South China Morning Post* 23 Apr 04, in part (the three words listed together)

the secretive North Korean government cut international phone lines
one of the principal transit points in the world
the global presence of American-owned businesses
a world of targets for our enemies
an increasing international dimension
Hong Kong is one of the world's principal transit points
findings by the World Health Organization
China's entry to the World Trade Organization
He still jets around the globe
open to the outside world
good for Asia and the world
We must not leave the global picture
economic development along global trends
the dean of the School of International relations
Islamabad would escape international condemnation
the US House of Representatives International Relations committee
the US agency for International Development conceal such a scam from the world
This is the world of the Society for Textbook Reform
not atypical for similar funds worldwide
The Who/Unicef global strategy approved in the World Health Assembly in 2002
this year's World Breastfeeding Week
So, Hong Kong, don't listen to the Old World anymore
based on increased international air travel
the longest non-stop commercial service in the world
Window on the World [section heading]
describing the enclave [Macau] as a "suburb of the world"
At a recent international seminar on the Asian media
unmatched by any technology company in the world
International men of mystery? [title]
hell-bent on global destabilisation
the world's most powerful person shuns the international spotlight
flood the international media
the second-most favoured destination worldwide

Walt Disney Television International's Asia-Pacific Managing director
to become the world's No 2 advertising market
Venture to develop global standards
the development of open global standards
also the international co-ordinator
the interoperability of global RFID standards
a worldwide implementation of RFID
a lack of global standards
to embrace internationally accepted standards

From *The Economist*, 20 Mar 04, in part (the three words listed together)

The world this week [heading]
Global agenda [section heading]
[China] the envy of the world and a boon to global markets
the fastest-growing large economy in the world
welcomed by the rest of the world
the Brotherhood's contribution to global Islamic work
the highest living standard in the world
a world without poverty [ad]
International Director: Africa [ad title, × 2]
Join our International Directors' team [ad]
On international terms and conditions [ad]
PLAN International [ad: phrase repeated × 2]
global coordination and implementation of
PLAN International [ad]
global fund-raising [ad]
worldwide operations [ad]
strong international credibility [ad]
a field related to multi-national business, world affairs [ad]
the highest concentration of turbines anywhere in the world
his policy on global terrorism
to understand how the world was changed by
September 11th
Distinguished Leadership in Global Capital Markets [ad]
almost as big a shock to Spain, and the world
sent tremors round the world
portray himself as the vanguard of a global *jihād*
'a global movement infected by al-Qaeda's radical agenda' [quotation]
Afghan camps have dispersed around the world
'...evil people in the world' [quotation]
a comprehensive study of global attitudes
armed forces distributed around the globe
the second world war and the Korean war
the biggest restructuring of America's global forces since 1845
the unknown unknowns of international terrorism



the pre-Iraq international rancour
will help to shape the global review
the International Committee of the Red Cross
suggested a revised global 'posture'
when its own empire sprawled across the globe
a good time to review America's place(s) in the
world
make their mark on the world stage
The whole world's gaze is fixed on China
Around the globe, shelves are stacked
churned out by 'the world's workshop'
dictate global prices
its relations with the rest of the world
accessed to the World Trade Organization in
2001
the global integration of China's economy
now the sixth largest in the world
socialist regimes around the world have
crumbled
Internationally, China has become respectable
overtake America as the world's biggest
economy
even the best are not globally competitive
But it has been with the rise of globalisation
in Shanghai between the two world wars
as measured by the World Bank
the group's poor 6% global average
There wasn't anyone anywhere in the world
could surpass Japan as the world's second-
largest new-car market
high by global standard
'Look out world, here we come' [ad]
the world's largest trading nation
Prestigious global brands
Global companies that control scarce resources
Monitor international price trends
We set the global standard for success [ad]
a results-oriented environment unmatched in
the world [ad]
the University of International Business and
Economics [ad]
In the heart of the sport industry. And, now,
global [ad]
in partnership with the World Bank Institute
[ad]
Duke Center for International Development
[ad]
one of the largest industrial construction
projects in the world
the world's top brewers
higher than their global margins
the two global suppliers, Airbus and Boeing
high world prices
London's Royal Institute of International
Affairs
the World Bank's William Mako and Chulin
Zhang

a strong international presence
create its own global stars
globally competitive 'national champions' by
2010
the Fortune 500 list of top global firms
'global' companies such as Haier
China has not built a truly competitive global
firm
a deficit... with the rest of the world
In the rest of the world, meanwhile
lots of genuinely global companies
will have to play by international rules
looks every bit the global success
a world away from the chaos of nearby
Shenzhen city
harder to compete internationally than at home
continue to build its global champions
life on the world stage can be nasty, brutish and
short
taking global markets by storm
one third of all socks sold worldwide
the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy
report
the World Bank's words
the world's last big communist country
one in three microwaves sold the world over
the globe's second largest piano maker
compy's that can compete globally
As the World Bank's strategy report notes
the Institute for International Economics
lending arm of the World Bank
protect the economy from a world slowdown
global investment banks
to list Chinese companies internationally
the Royal Institute of International Affairs
to build a global brand
that decorate the world's most expensive cities
looks like a global success
gearing up to become even more global
their country can build global brands
international expansion must seem logical
eyeing up the rest of the world
create a genuine global brand
After China joined the World Trade
Organization
'This is a globalised era'
the very opposite of a focused, global brand
stronger global demand
[Australia and Spain] the world's [consumers]
most exposed to higher interest rates
the world economy has enjoyed its most stable
decade
often claimed that the world has become a more
uncertain place
UBS Global Asset Management
And since the second world war



From *The International Herald Tribune*, 15 Apr 04 [Asia] (the words listed together, in order)

International Herald Tribune [title]
America's enemies around the world
'We're changing the world,' Bush said
he reminded a global audience
every man and woman in this world
the greatest power on the face of the earth
the most volatile corners of the world
America's moral mission in the world
Since World War II
their world-girdling tour
international affairs adviser in Khabarovsk
familiar with international practices
Briefly International [column heading]
only under UN or international command
World News [page heading]
America's enemies around the world
the enemies of the civilized world
the will of the civilized world
confirm to a watching world
executive vice president of Global Underwriters
the international community cannot stand idle
the U.S. Agency for International development
sped up global warming
the world's hunger for beef
the world's largest exporter of beef
international demand has led to shortages
this mess will require international support
a global problem fueled by global markets
That calls for global solidarity
Would it have been better for the world if
integrating themselves into the global economy
the most open economy in the Arab world
the world has been divided between 'us' and
'them'
the world was made up of drivers and
passengers
80 percent of the world's knowledge
look at the world and this war
needing Japan for its role in World War II
a firestorm of criticism in the Muslim world
beginning with the World Trade Center attack
elsewhere in the world
in contact with the spirit world
the spinning Earth
the moon, planets and other bodies
the World Trade Center rose and fell

If the Earth were this perfect
The mass of the Earth [twice]
The Earth's rotation
Dermatologists worldwide
Warm Welcome to the World [headline]
Its standing in global markets
Australian businesses around the globe
So far from the world's financial... centers
The best in the world
Globally recognizable companies
Global growth bolsters sales of coal
Premium news for global thinkers [ad]
Direct to your inbox from around the world
The International News Alliance
8 of the world's most respected newspapers
worldwide news in English
from a truly global perspective
from the International News Alliance
Citigroup, the world's biggest financial services
company
World Cross Rates/Asian Cross Rates
to compete globally
Global prices raise net at copper producer
as global prices of the metal surged
China, the world's top user of the metal
Tokyo electron, the world's second-largest
maker of semiconductor production
equipment
Hynix, the world's fourth largest maker of
computer memory chips
China used a third of global steel supply in 2003
coverage of the world of business
from the international media and marketing
industry
Global Funds [twice]
International Markets
the United States and other parts of the world
even more global debate and discussion
International Business Travel
the international business traveller
the global weather report
the world's daily newspaper
Samsung, the world's second largest chip maker
Samsung, the world's top DRAM maker
Samsung, the world's second-largest handset
vendor
Intel, the world's largest chip maker
From the world's top newspapers
Brought to you by the International News
Alliance □

prestigious' to decide that within world English there is a manageable 'standard' core and a further range of negotiable comprehension. We have never had uniformity and/or neutrality in English, and it would be perverse to expect it to emerge in the rough and tumble of today's

eclectic usage. Yet, as CNN, the BBC, and even Microsoft suggest, the community of English users may have fewer problems at the world, international, or global level than in past national levels. There may now indeed be more conformity than less. ■