

Excellent



FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
U210A/B TMA COVER FORM (2009/2010)

TMA No: 01

Part (I): STUDENT INFORMATION (to be completed by student)

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I confirm that the work presented here is my own and is not copied from any source.  
Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Part (II): TUTOR'S REMARKS (to be completed by tutor)

Tutor name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date TMA received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_

TUTOR'S REMARKS:

Excellent handling of the TMA topic:  
- Clearly set introduction that lays out the outline  
- discussion is comprehensive, analytic and ties details very well with the key aspects of this TMA (selection, power, relation between language & nation) and (factors leading to standardization) leading up to an evaluation of the role of the national language.

The theory (Fairclough) and linguistic terminology (differentiation, leveling, elaboration...) is clearly defined and very well applied to the practice of English and the different experience of each of the colonies.  
Colony types.

Language: (very minor → pay attention to use of article 'the' and avoid 'dangling modifiers').

Mark Allocated to TMA	STUDENT MARK		
	For content : a maximum of 15 marks	Marks deducted for lang. & communication errors: a maximum of 3 marks	Earned Mark
15%			

### TMA01

During the modern period the dialect of the south-east of England was selected as the national language of Britain.

Discuss views on the inclusive role of the national language and views on the exclusive relations of the chosen dialect with the south-east elite class in England.

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Undoubtedly, English has a special and a distinctive position in the world at the present time. It is the most widely spoken language in the world. Though English shares its origins with many other languages, it did not develop in Britain as a separate language until about the mid of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Throughout its history of expansion and its 'contact' with other languages, English has dynamically changed and has developed different varieties which developed several regional dialects. The resulted variations represented a problem in a time when there was an emphasis on national unity. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was the rise of ideas about 'nation-state' and 'national' language. As a result, in Britain, one standardized variety was adopted and promoted to serve as a national language.

However, this essay discusses the reasons of the need of using a national language and the basis of selecting a particular social dialect, the south-east Midland, that became the national language of Britain. Moreover, the essay illustrates the different steps of standardization and shows the political, economical, cultural and other factors that served the process of English standardization within the British Isles and promoted its expansion to the abroad colonies. Furthermore, it discusses the debate on, and the ideological perspective about, the relationship between language, nation and power. A further point discussed, is the inclusive and exclusive role of the national language within the British Isles and beyond it, the trends associated with its emergence, and the 'nationalist reaction' to the imposed elitist dialect.

Initially, during the 14<sup>th</sup> century many events were taking place which supported English. At that period, English <sup>was</sup> used more widely in law, court, education, church and literature. Purposefully, these were attempts to open up <sup>the</sup> new construction of English 'national identity'. It is believed that **language** is 'the decisive component of a unified national identity', so English language was the element of the unification of England (Leith 126, 130). Significantly, the concept of 'national language' is <sup>also</sup> the product of 'Modernity'. Externally, the European society was experiencing a significant movement towards new concepts of modernity that was associated with social changes during the modern era. Modernity involved great values of intellectual liberation, rational thinking and ideas about an ideal world; one which is 'regulated' and 'unified'. The idea of modernity in thinking had its roots as early as the Renaissance era.

**The Renaissance**; the 'revival of learning' was a historical and social event that moved from Italy to Europe; it promoted the interest in knowledge and encouraged the translation of Greek and Roman works. **The invention of printing**, which was the technological result of the European Renaissance, served the purpose of distributing knowledge in English widely. Thus, printing was a key factor in the standardization of English (Leith & Graddol 136,137). In fact, before mentioning the contribution of printing, it is important to bear in mind and not deny the role of **King Alfred** the Great in the development of English language as a national language.

**Alfred's** contribution lies in his defense of the Anglo-Saxon territories against the Vikings. Alfred ordered English to be used instead of Latin. He selected the West Saxon dialect to translate many Latin texts. Moreover, his encouragement of writing and learning English, and the translation of Latin texts into English had created a national awareness among the people. Accordingly he is seen as the national hero and the emblem of 'Englishness' (Leith 107,108). Supportively, <sup>and a few centuries later, after the strong influence of French</sup> printing helped English to be learned widely <sup>on England</sup> and expanded <sup>decreased</sup>.

Printing was introduced into England by **Caxton** in 1476. As it is known, there were different English dialects at that time. In fact, these led Caxton to select the **East Midland dialect** <sup>which was associated</sup> as the medium of printing <sup>as the medium</sup> ~~which~~ was associated with the growing power of **Merchant class** in London. He selected this particular dialect because it was the dialect spoken by the dominant capitalist class and regarded as the 'correct' form. **Selection** is the first step of standardization. **Standardization** is the process whereby a specific social dialect is elevated and promoted into what is called 'Standard' or even 'National' language. The next step after the selection is **codification**. The selected variety needed to be filtered to codify the fixed rules of vocabulary and grammatical usage as well as constructing a standard spelling system. For example, education was a focusing agency that contributed to the existence of grammar books. Codification meant a 'minimal variation in form' while elaboration meant 'maximal variation in function' (Leith & Graddol 138, 139).

**Elaboration** is the third step which was emphasized by the focusing agency which was represented through the reliance on English language. English required a linguistic expansion to contain a wide range of functions and consequently be able to replace Latin in learning. Thus, there were efforts to make English more perfect. For example the expansion of literary English was accomplished by 'copiousness' to give a dimension of 'eloquence', 'significance' to provide a variety of **synonyms** for stylistic variation, and re-establish ancient English words to avoid borrowings from Latin (Leith & Graddol 141-143). Lastly, the **implementation** completed the useful side of standardization where a sense of pride in the standard variety was increased so that no other language variety than the standard one is used within official domains and schools which focused on the RP pronunciation (Leith & Graddol 138-150).

Economically, standardization was tied up with the emergence of **Capitalism** out of feudal system in England. England flourished because of

the growth of capitalism by the growth of trade, banking, stock exchanges and in addition to the centralization of England as a manufacturer and exporter of different products. Consequently, social problems emerged due to the social divisions between the wealthy merchants and landlords who enjoyed all the privileges, and the poor labourers and factory workers who suffered from poverty. This social gap motivated new concepts about 'social correctness' and created forms of English to indicate one's social class (Leith & Graddol 137). Obviously, Printing and Capitalism were two interrelated factors that coincided in the selection of the Midland dialect which represented the prestigious dialect of the dominant powerful upper class and regarded as 'true' and 'correct' form. Language is, somehow, determined by power.

The linguist Norman Fairclough, argues that the individual's language and activity are constrained by certain social structures such as; social institutions, social class, gender, which satisfies the interest of the dominant groups in society. Standardization is as an example of exercising what he calls 'power behind discourse', where one social dialect declares power by seeking to be the 'Standard' variety (Fairclough 46-47).

Another factor that contributed in the expansion of English as a national language is the **Reformation**. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Reformation was a significant historical event that allowed the breaking away from the authority of the Roman Catholic Church in northern Europe. England too celebrated its independence from Catholicism to Protestantism, when King Henry VIII established himself as the head of the English Church. This activity had important linguistic consequences that enlightened the definition of 'Englishness' by translating and publishing the Bible in the English language. Henry VIII promoted English as a national language and excluded Latin or other European languages (Leith & Graddol 149). There are some ~~other~~ other religious and political factors in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries which emphasized on one national language, <sup>one major factor is</sup> the Puritanism.

After the Reformation, Puritanism replaced Catholicism and called for English as a national language to achieve the equality of all English people in the eyes of God (Leith & Graddol 153). It is believed that 'correct grammar was next to godliness' (Leith & Graddol 161). Politically, the philosopher Hobbes argued that language and political order were closely interrelated so if the language breaks down, the society breaks down as well (Leith & Graddol 158). Consequently, tendency towards 'correctness' and 'perfection' of vocabulary and pronunciation of English was initiated by Dr. Samuel Johnson's dictionary (1755) and then was integrated by Walker's 'A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary' (1791) which, <sup>was</sup> restricted to the pronunciation of Londoners <sup>who were considered?</sup> ~~to be~~ ('the models of pronunciation') throughout England (Leith & Graddol 153, 161).

dangling  
descriptive  
phrase

the Londoners  
not the pronunciation

Furthermore, there were more historical motivations that lie <sup>lay</sup> behind the expansion of <sup>the</sup> English language. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a huge increase in literacy; <sup>the</sup> Industrial ~~revolutions~~ <sup>Revolution</sup> was one of the factors that contributed to such growth. There was also a shift from <sup>a</sup> rural to ~~an~~ industrial society between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century; <sup>the</sup> this shift was associated with the movement of a large population from rural background to work in cities, <sup>as</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>the and so</sup> there was an increase in schooling because the upper and middle classes were excited about ensuring their social position and differentiating themselves from the vulgar dialects of the working class. This period was <sup>also</sup> characterized by the rise of empirical science. <sup>The</sup> Industrial ~~Revolution~~ <sup>Revolution</sup> was the driving force for the expansion of English outside England, within the British Isles - Ireland, Scotland and Wales - and worldwide.

With the emergence and spread of the British Empire, English was adopted in regions around the world, such as North America, India, West Africa, and Australia. The emergence of the United States as a superpower has also helped the spread of English. The dominance of Standard English and imposing it within the British Isles; Ireland and Scotland, and on rural territories outside England faced different attitudes and reactions. As this

dominance might lead to the discrimination of other languages and hence of losing identity (Leith 180-181). But economically and politically, unemployment and the rise of outlaws were results of population growth; these served as laborers in outside colonies.

However, different factors encouraged the colonial activity within the British Isles. **The political incorporation** was a part of the colonial activity which was sometimes applied by force in order to establish English-speaking communities. Therefore, colonization has always been related with **nationalist reactions** and anti-colonial reactions that motivated independence movements and sometimes the standardization of a local variety of English (Leith 182, 183).

Within the <sup>colonies within the</sup> British Isles ~~colonies~~, British English became the prestigious and polite standard language which led to the degradation of <sup>native languages</sup> (e.g. Scots) and sometimes the decline of (e.g. Irish) pre-colonial languages. ~~The~~ <sup>The</sup> Irish were against the British Protestant<sup>s</sup> as they remained <sup>a</sup> Catholic state. This motivated anti-English feelings among the Irish who wanted <sup>an</sup> independent cultural and linguistic identity. Therefore a tendency for 'internal differentiation' was promoted by the Irish to form their own local variety - the Irish 'substrate' which was a combination of Irish accents and grammar beside the English vocabulary. In order to ensure 'unity', to maintain a sense of belonging and **exclude** themselves from the colonizer, the Irish used the **Hiberno-English** as a 'national language' whereas English was used as a 'second official language' helping the independence movement (Leith 187, 189). This example illustrated the resistance of Standard British English in Ireland. Followed is an example of an ambivalent attitude.

If those were the feelings of the Irish, why did they have to speak English?

On the contrary, in Scotland English came to be the prestigious and polite form of speech, whereas Scots was used among the working class and by conservative people who felt a sense of identity by speaking their regional dialects. Historically, Scotland was brought into contact with many settlers

(King Henry VIII Elizabeth) Political domination, famine, immigration

with different linguistic backgrounds - the Pictish, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Norse-speaking people. However, Scottish Gaelic was the dominant language that had its own range of dialects with special spelling conventions which represented the Scottish national identity. But it was destructed as it was seen as savages by the colonizer. Hence, the **Scots nationalist reaction** was ambivalent; some were proud in both and welcomed Scottish-English bilingualism, whereas others were proud of their local language and believed that the Scottish identity was European rather than British and believed that '**to be Scottish was to be not English**', thus they asserted their cultural identity by re-establishing the Scottish English in school program and universities as well as translating the Bible into Scot (Leith 190-192).

Beyond the British Isles, English in **America** and **Australia** was used as a mother tongue because the English settlers displaced the pre-colonial population, so the aboriginal languages had very little impact limited to the use of words which referred to animals and local cultural practices (Leith 184). The mixed origins of the settlers in North America created diverse varieties of English, which promoted two opposing tendencies. The first emphasized on the exclusion of differences between the speakers through '**dialect leveling**' by using the prestigious British English as a focusing agency to **unify** the American. When North America became an established English-speaking community, the linguistic tendency moved towards '**internal differentiation**' in order to create dialect boundaries between the economically distinct southern and northern areas of America (Leith 184,185). After declaring its independence, North America emphasized '**linguistic uniformity**' in American speech and distinguished themselves from the British and formed their own **Standard American English** (Leith 197-198).

Gradually, the British Empire expanded to **West Africa** and exercised political and economic control over the African population. A few number of people learned English as a second language, whereas others continued to use

their local languages. Therefore, the aboriginal languages had a great linguistic effect on English which led to the rise of new African English varieties such as the Nigerian English. The Nigerian English was a result of two linguistic devices - ~~the~~ 'internal differentiation', and 'clefting' that arranged Nigerian grammatical patterns with English vocabularies (Leith 205). It is worth noting that in West Africa the superior white rulers mistreated the pre-colonial population and excluded them from the rights of vote and education (Leith 203, 205). In Nigeria and India, the pre-existing population was maintained and English was used as a second language, so it was extensively influenced by the local languages leading to the creation of new substrates - the Indian and the Nigerian Englishes. The most difficult linguistic contact was that experienced in the Caribbean islands where the pre-colonial population was replaced by African laborers who created new local forms of English - the pidgins and creoles for limited contact purposes (Leith 206).

considered as inferior to the selected standardized dialect

How did the British whites view these new forms?

Different attitudes and reactions resulted towards the imposed Standard British language; some welcomed it and took advantage of it and felt unified; others felt excluded because of some differentiation and were happy with their local language<sup>s</sup> which symbolize~~x~~ their identity, heritage, culture and history. Even some of the native-speakers felt ~~as~~ excluded.

elaborate a bit more of English within England

In conclusion, it is known now that there were many ~~and~~ different factors that influenced the change of English into <sup>a</sup> standard variety. Moreover, it is clear that the role of national language is debatable. It can be regarded as inclusive<sup>a</sup> in <sup>the sense that</sup> which it unifies the nation and people under one language; on the other hand it can be regarded as exclusive because of using and elevating one social dialect at the cost of the other local dialects.

### **References :-**

- 1- Graddol D., Leith D., and Swann J., **English history, diversity and changes**, Arab Open University, Ireland, Colour Books Press, Dublin, 2002.
- 2- Fairclough N., **Language and power**, Harlow: Pearson Publication, 2001.