Standard Languages and Language Standards

Gramley, WS 2008-09
The Lingua Franca Core
the expanding circle: EFL

the extended circle: ESL

the inner circle: ENL

An External View of English (after Kachru 1992)
Non-native speakers outnumber native speakers of English.

Communication between non-native speakers is a normal everyday matter.

The New Englishes may differ considerably from native norms and the ideology of the standard language.

"If an international standard does emerge, it will not be identical with any national variety, native or non-native, because all the varieties would, in varying degrees, have contributed to it" (Bamgbose 1998: 11f).

This has led some people to the assumption of the existence of a variety “English as a Lingua Franca” (ELF).
International Standards (approaches and suggestions)

Basic English (Ogden 1930)

General Service List of English Words (West 1936, 1952)

Rudimentary International Pronunciation (Gimson 1978)

Nuclear English (Quirk 1982)

Common Core (Jenner 1989)

World Standard Spoken English (Crystal 1997)

The Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins 2000)
Basic English (Ogden)

An international auxiliary language

BASIC = "British American Scientific International Commercial"
• 850 words
• no verbs
• few rules (easily learnable)
General Service List of English Words (West)

- list of the 2000 most frequent words
- intended as a basis for foreign language learning

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE)* "defining vocabulary"
- approximately 2000 words
- used to define all other entries in this learner's dictionary
Rudimentary International Pronunciation (Gimson)

- useful in international communication (e.g. air traffic control)
- artificial
- derived from an amalgam of existing forms (less syntax, fewer words, simpler pronunciation)
- 12 consonants 24 in RP and GenAm
- 15 vowels 20 in RP and 16 in GenAm
- no voiced – voiceless (lenis – fortis) contrasts
  - wider use of /ə/
- only two diphthongs (/aɪ/ and /aʊ/); /eɪ/ and /oʊ/ for /eɪ/ and /ɛə/ or /ɔʊ/; no centering diphthongs, but V + r
Nuclear English (Quirk)

Not a serious model since
- not based on a native language norm
- not based on an empirical basis
- not culturally neutral
- not conceived of in accord with principles of learnability / teachability
Common Core (Jenner)
Features:
• pronunciation teaching priorities for non-native learners
• based on shared pronunciations of all native speaker varieties
• no concern with a native-like accent as a learning goal

World Standard Spoken English (Crystal)
Features:
• based on native-speaker norms
• possibility of some non-native features being adopted
• not clearly worked out
The Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins)

Jenkins suggests in *The Phonology of English as an International Language* (2000) that there is a need for changing the goals (= standards) of pronunciation in an international context.

The main point is
- not native-like pronunciation but
- successful communication

Further factors are
- teachability
- regional appropriateness
Empirical study based on communication break-down due to pronunciation was one of the bases used.

Reliance on early work (see above)

Prescriptive, i.e. a crucial minimum for successful communication

L1 features (aside from the L2 features prescribed) are acceptable

De facto great reliance on RP and GenAm
Most fundamental points

1. sounds
2. word stress
3. articulatory setting

The latter two will not be picked up here.
Sounds
The 24 consonants, shared by RP and GenAm are essential. However, /θ/ and /ð/ may be replaced by either /t/ and /d/ or by /f/ and /v/ (but not by /s/ and /z/), but Jenkins’ criteria for making a choice is not fully clear. Any variety of /l/ (clear, dark, or vocalized) is acceptable. Rhoticity is part of the lingua franca core, chiefly because it aligns spelling and pronunciation, but must it be GenAm [ɹ]? On the other hand, <t> should always be /t/ (and not [ɻ] as in GenAm when followed by an unstressed syllable).
/p, t, k/ should always be aspirated. *Winter* (and similar words) should not be allowed in an American pronunciation as a homophone of *winner*.

Criticism

1. Learners generally want to have and aim at acquiring a native-like accent

2. Native accents have prestige

3. Non-native accents may carry negative associations

4. Numerous features of the ELF core are controversial

5. The approach is not restricted to phonology

6. Expectation of accommodation presuppose considerable English language skills

7. Audience effect is noticeable: people accommodate to their partners' apparent pronunciation


