

Investigating Variety Status: Cyprus as a Case in Point

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As has repeatedly been pointed out in recent years, the categories “ENL”, “ESL”, and “EFL” should not be considered as clear cut as traditionally assumed but as being located on a continuum (e.g. Biewer 2011: 28; Bongartz & Buschfeld 2011: 48; Buschfeld 2013: 74; Edwards 2014: 25; Gilquin & Granger 2011: 76) in which “the supposed neat divide between ESL and EFL is a rather hazy one” (Buschfeld 2013: 74). As a consequence, investigating varieties in this light has been developing into a new research trend in World Englishes studies. The presentation reports on a large-scale project on the variety status of English in Cyprus, which is one of the pioneers in this development. We present the objectives and findings of the project as well as best practices in methodology developed for the analysis of variety status, more precisely, the following set of questions:

- (1) Should the English language spoken in the Greek part of Cyprus be considered a second-language variety or should it simply be regarded as learner English?
- (2) Can it, in terminological terms, be labelled “Cyprus English” (CyE) or is it more accurate to refer to it as “English in Cyprus” (EiCy)?
- (3) Where can EiCy/CyE best be placed with respect to existing models of and approaches to World Englishes?

The results for question 1 revealed that EiCy is indeed one of such hybrid cases (and thus should be labeled “English in Cyprus”; cf. question 2), to be located somewhere between ESL and EFL status (Buschfeld 2013; see also Bongartz & Buschfeld 2011). Regarding question 3, the presentation finally discusses how such hybrid cases can be accounted for in terms of older and more recent models of World Englishes (e.g. Kachru’s [1985] Three Concentric Circles; Schneider’s [2003, 2007] Dynamic Model).

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