

Learner Englishes and World Englishes: A World of Difference?

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In recent years, not only has the distinction between ‘native speaker’ and ‘non-native speaker’ become increasingly untenable, but the differences between EFL and ESL have also come under scrutiny. With the advent of ELF in addition, the cosy concentric circles of Kachru’s Three Circles model is also in question. This paper looks at a corpus of writing by secondary school students in Brunei and examines whether it is possible to make distinctions like learner English or Brunei English on any principled basis. It, therefore, questions whether there is a linguistic basis for differentiating between ‘learner English’ and ‘Outer Circle’ English. It goes on to examine whether different types of English can be then be distinguished on sociolinguistic grounds. It concludes by arguing that the clear cut differences between different types of English are increasingly disappearing, so that all varieties of English should be studied on a level playing field.