Title: *World Englishes: Into the Future*

Abstract

The development of World Englishes (WEs) as an academic discipline over the last 40+ years has seen at least two influential theoretical models and a smorgasbord of methodological approaches, the latter including the use of digital technology for data collection and analysis. Digital technologies have also created spaces in which the English language thrives, spreads and morphs. The impact of the digital on the use of English in traditional spaces of speech and writing needs more discussion. For instance, is the use of English in interconnected digital spaces contributing to the birth of a 'standard' global English? If so, what are the features of this 'global' English, and what impact might it have on the distinctive features of local varieties, as digitized communicative environments increase? These questions are relevant to the ELT classroom, already a site of tension between local Englishes, indigenous languages, and abstract standards derived from British or American English. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, what challenges will the developments of artificial intelligence and machine learning pose for data in WEs studies in the future?