

Research Article

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Abstract

This study aims to uncover the dynamics of the evolution of English in Rwanda, using Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model. Even though Rwanda has had no history of British colonial rule or that of any other Anglophone country, it currently presents a situation of a non-postcolonial environment where English plays a preponderant role on a par with many dimensions of the status of English in Outer Circle countries such as Uganda or Ghana. Despite the fact that the Dynamic Model was primarily meant to account for the evolution of English in postcolonial environments, its applicability (with a few caveats) to the current linguistic situation in Rwanda provides a robust articulation of the trajectorial development of English in this country.

1. Introduction

As is the case in Namibia, where English has the status of an official language (Schröder 2021), English is also an official language in Rwanda and the sole medium of instruction from grade four to university, despite the fact that neither Namibia nor Rwanda was colonized by Britain (Schröder 2021; Meierkord et al. *fc.*). Crucially, Rwanda does not have any colonial history linked to Britain, since it was a German colony from 1898, then a Belgian Trust territory from 1916 (Meierkord et al. [forthcoming.](#)), with French as a co-official language alongside Kinyarwanda at independence (Spowage 2020). After the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 and the contemporaneous capture of power by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), Rwanda started using English in its public domains, given that the RPF was mainly composed of former refugees, many of whom had lived in Uganda (an Anglophone country) since 1959 (Brooks 1998; The New Times 2011, Samuelson 2013). Thus, in the 2003 Constitution, English was declared an official language alongside French, while, in 2008, English was declared the sole medium of instruction in all tertiary institutions; subsequently, English became the sole medium of instruction from grade four up to university (Spowage 2020).

It thus follows that English is now well entrenched in everyday life in Rwanda, especially in public domains such as education, the media, international business, as well as international relations (Eyssette 2022). While I am aware of the problem associated with the nomenclature of emerging varieties of English, i.e. the dichotomy 'Rwandan English vs. English in Rwanda' (see e.g. Proshina 2023), I will mainly use the two terms descriptively in this study without taking into account the semantic and usage nuances between them (see Schneider 2007 for an explanation on nomenclatural preference). This study, therefore, seeks to delineate the dynamics of the evolution of English in Rwanda, situating it within the relevant phases of Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model, in light of the fact that, just like Namibia (cf. Schröder 2021), Rwanda presents a situation of a non-postcolonial environment where English plays a preponderant role on a par with many dimensions of the status of English in Outer Circle countries such as Uganda or Ghana.

The analysis in this study is based on document analysis of available legislative and scholarly literature as well as print mass media articles. The study is structured as follows: Section 2 provides an overview of the Anglophonization of Rwanda, by highlighting the role of the former Rwandan refugees in Uganda under the umbrella of the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) in shaping and consolidating this new linguistic ecology in Rwanda. This section is followed by Section 3, summarizing the phases of the Dynamic Model (Schneider 2007), which are shown to be adequate in tracing the development of English in Rwanda, provided certain caveats (following Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017) are taken into account as regards some dimensions pertaining to Rwanda as a non-

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postcolonial Outer Circle county. Section 4 delineates each of the dynamic phases through which English in Rwanda has gone, taking into account all the parameters of development proposed in the Dynamic Model, while highlighting the particularities observable in the Rwandan situation. A conclusion is provided in section 5.

2. An overview of the Anglophonization of Rwanda: The role of the RPF and Uganda

As already mentioned above, Rwanda is a former colony of Germany and Belgium, and it used French as its only exogenous official language until 1994. Prior to the events of 1994, culminating in the ascension of the Anglophonic RPF to power, English was only used in Rwanda as a foreign language. That is, Rwanda was effectively what Kachru (1985) refers to as an Expanding Circle country, also known as an English-as-a-Foreign Language (EFL) country. Thus, it seems right to posit that English owes its current status in Rwanda to the RPF, which is still the ruling party in the country to date (Spowage 2020). Relevantly, Samuelson (2013, 219) states that ‘with political and economic power concentrated in the hands of an elite group of Anglophone returnees from Uganda, the decision to establish English an official language was made in 1996.’ Spowage (2020, 98) states that the RPF was formed in Uganda by Rwandan elite refugees and, in its early establishment in Rwanda after the genocide against the Tutsi, it was dominated by Anglophone Rwandan returnees (including President Paul Kagame) who had had a good education in Uganda. According to Samuelson (2013, 219), the victory of the RPF allowed a large influx of Rwandan refugees to return ‘to their homeland from nearby Anglophone countries (Uganda primarily, but also Kenya and Tanzania).’ Thus, while there were more returnees from other Anglophone countries, such as Tanzania or Kenya, Samuelson (2013) indicates that the returnees were primarily from Uganda.¹ Moreover, Spowage (2020, 98) also argues that ‘evidence suggests that the better-educated English-speakers generally occupied the highest positions in the RPF hierarchy, and this must be taken into account if we are to consider the politics of language in post-genocide Rwanda.’ According to Spowage (2020), the bulk of these better-educated English speakers came from Uganda. In fact, Spowage (2020, 111) shows that the majority of the initial 4000 RPF troops from Uganda were speakers of English (at different levels of proficiency), with around 50% having attained secondary education, 20% university education and the majority of the rest having attained primary education. English in Uganda is mainly acquired at school.

Furthermore, with the new policy of the full Anglophonization of the education sector in the country (i.e. in 2008), it was imperative to have Anglophone teachers. This led to the recruitment of teachers from neighboring countries (Jakachira 2019), many of whom came from Uganda. Murungi and Baguma (2010) emphasize this dimension in their article, ‘Exodus to Rwanda: Why teachers of English are crossing to Rwanda’, which they start with an advert-like statement: ‘Wanted: Teacher trainers in

English. And being a Ugandan teacher of English is added advantage.’ Based on the above, it seems right to conjecture that Ugandans were preferred over other (African) nationalities in the recruitment drive of teachers of English in Rwanda. However, Meierkord et al. (forthcoming) indicate that information about the exact number of Ugandan teachers and other professionals in Rwanda is scanty, although it is estimated that up to 30,000 Ugandan professionals and semi-skilled workers lived in Rwanda as of 2019 (see also Jakachira 2019), while many other Ugandan workers were reported to have worked in Rwanda illegally (Ngonzinza 2019). At the same time, many Rwandans could come to Uganda for studies at all levels of education, and, in some cases (especially in border areas), they would even constitute up to a third of the population of some of the Ugandan educational institutions (The Monitor 2020).

We can now discern that the role of Uganda in the Anglophonization of Rwanda did not stop at being the cradleland of the RPF, but it was subsequently perpetuated by Ugandan teachers (and other workers) in Rwanda, as well as Rwandan students in Uganda (who would return home after their studies). It thus seems that we cannot talk about English in Rwanda without factoring in Ugandan English. Even when we consider other regional Englishes, especially Kenyan and Tanzanian Englishes, as having an influence on English in Rwanda, it seems that Ugandan English has played the role of an ‘epicentre’ (cf. Leitner 1992; Schneider and Schröder 2021), in a sense that its influence on what we could ultimately term as Rwandan English could be much more significant than any other regional variety, as Meierkord et al. (forthcoming) have suggested. But we know that Rwanda has its indigenous language, i.e. Kinyarwanda, whose role in the manifestations of particularities in English in Rwanda or Rwandan English should be evident, as is the case with all other second language varieties of English (Meierkord et al. *fc.*). At the same time, we are aware that French has been used in the country for several decades, and, moreover, formerly Francophone teachers were required to learn English so that they could teach in English (Samuelson 2013). Thus, any further delineation of English in Rwanda will have to take into account the linguistic dynamics resulting from the nexus of these sociolinguistic realities embedded in the linguistic ecology of the country.

3. The Dynamic Model and non-postcolonial Englishes

Schneider (2007) proposes a universal evolutionary cycle of all postcolonial Englishes in the world, while attempts to apply this model to non-postcolonial Englishes have also been made (Schneider 2014; Schneider and Schröder 2021). Schneider’s (2007) model, i.e. the Dynamic Model (henceforth DM), posits five trajectorial phases in the development of postcolonial Englishes: (i) *Foundation*: English is established in a new territory by colonial expansion, where different regional dialects are spoken. Toponymic borrowing of local place names into English discourse is manifested, while some indigenous people start speaking English. (ii) *Exonormative stabilization*: Contact between settlers and

indigenous population increases, while the linguistic norm is mainly external, i.e. British. Lexical borrowing now includes the domains of fauna and flora as well as local culture, while cases of phonological and syntactic transfer are perceptible among the indigenous people who speak English. (iii) *Nativization*: Here, the colonized territory gradually moves toward political and cultural independence, thereby expanding contacts between settlers and locals; this has been said to lead to the emergence of particular distinctive structures in the English spoken in the colony at the levels of lexis (with increased borrowing), sounds, and grammar. (iv) *Endonormative stabilization*: This stage is usually reached after political independence, and associated with nation building, during which a positive attitude towards the features of the local variety develops, despite the fact that cleavages regarding these features will continue to manifest themselves among some sections of the population. (v) *Differentiation*: Here, internal differentiations become more apparent, leading to the emergence of new dialects and sociolects within the new variety.

The DM, as a model dealing with postcolonial Englishes, clearly leans towards countries that were colonized by England or the USA (Edwards 2016; Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017; Schneider and Schröder 2021). As is clear and as is the case with Namibia (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017), the introduction of English in Rwanda is not a result of colonization, as Rwanda was colonized by Germany and Belgium, respectively, which, by virtue of not being Inner Circle English speaking counties (or even Outer Circle countries), did not use any iota of English during the entire colonization period. Rather, they used German and French, respectively, with the latter being adopted as an official language at independence onwards, while the former is said to have not taken root properly, since the German administration was purely indirect rule (Eyssette 2022) but also short-lived.

However, it is possible to couch the evolution of English in Rwanda within the phases of the DM, albeit with some necessary adjustments. Adjustments that allow us to keep the five phases of the DM when analyzing non-postcolonial Englishes were proposed by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017) in their Extra-and Intra-territorial Forces Model, where tweaks in nomenclature were applied, among other adjustments. For that matter, in the case of Rwanda, as we maintain the phases of the dynamic trajectorial development propounded in the DM, we should bear in mind that we can obviously not talk about, e.g. the STL (settler community), but rather we can talk about the RTN (returnee community), as there were neither settlers nor administrators from England; rather, there were Anglophone returnees from mainly Outer Circle countries under the tutelage of the RPF, whose base is said to have been in Uganda (Samuelson 2013; Spowage 2020). The parallelism between the STL and the RTN is that the two groups were not only speakers of English but they were also bringers of English to an area (but they are different because the STL were L1 speakers of English, while the RTN were L2 speakers of English). On the other hand, as is the case in the DM, the characterization of the IDG (indigenous community) is fully

relevant to the case of Rwanda. But the IDG in Rwanda comprises Rwandophones, many of whom were Francophonic, while the RTN involved Anglophonic Rwandophones.² As is clear, both the RTN and the IDG share a common denominator, i.e. both are Rwandophones; however, they differ in terms of one group being Anglophonic, while the other is not. As is the case in the DM, we will have four parameters for each phase, i.e. (i) history and politics, (ii) identity construction, (iii) sociolinguistics of contact, and (iv) linguistic development/structural effects.

4. Phases in the development of English in Rwanda

As already pointed out and following Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017), we will follow the phases proposed in the DM, with the necessary adjustments in order to characterize the development of English in Rwanda, which falls under non-postcolonial Englishes.

4.1 Foundation

As already indicated above, until 1994, English in Rwanda had been in the category of EFL or Expanding Circle, i.e. only restricted to a few instances of international communication and only taught in secondary schools and tertiary institutions as a subject after independence in 1962 (Sibomana 2010). Crucially, while the use of English as a foreign language in Rwanda may not be excluded totally from the Foundation Phase since it created a (small) group of Anglophone speakers in the country, it is the arrival of returnees led by the RPF in 1994 which marked the actual commencement of the journey to the Anglophonization of Rwanda, and, as a result, English assumed the functions it performs in Outer Circle countries. For that matter, for the current purpose, the apparent contributions of the EFL speakers of English in Rwanda will only be referred to sporadically. The history and politics of the Foundation Phase was characterized by the RTN military expedition and conquest led by the RPF/RPA, while the IDG (had to) accept(ed) the new politico-military leaders and their associates.³ We should note that in post-colonial Englishes in the DM, this parameter is characterized by colonial expansion and military outposts for the STL and occupation/sharing of territory for the IDG. While the DM indicates that, in terms of identity construction, the STL is part of the original nation and the IDG is indigenous, in the case of Rwanda, both the RTN and the IDG are in principle indigenous but the former had a very strong socio-cultural and political attachment to the host country(ies) in as far as most of the young people under 36 had not set foot in Rwanda and many of them did not even have Kinyarwanda names nor did they speak Kinyarwanda (Samuelson 2013).⁴ This is because, as Rockenbach (2018) puts it, the literature about Rwandan migrants and refugees in Uganda, for example, has shown the ability of Rwandan migrants and refugees to assimilate into the local culture.

As for the sociolinguistics of contact, the DM shows that there is cross-dialectal contact among the STL, while there is minority bilingualism (i.e. the acquisition of English) among

the IDG. In Rwanda, while it is true that the Anglophonic RTN came from mainly different East African countries, thereby occasioning cross-varietal contact (i.e. Ugandan, Kenyan, Tanzanian Englishes), it has been said that most of the politically and militarily influential Anglophonic RTN, including the initial 4000 troops, were from Uganda (Samuelson 2013; Spowage 2020). And we are aware that, even within each country, there are sub-varieties of English; hence, cross-varietal contact could also have taken place from this perspective. As has already been hinted at, minority bilingualism (involving English) for the IDG started when Rwanda was an EFL country. But one could say that during the actual Foundation Phase in Rwanda (i.e. following the advent of the RPF), it was imperative for sympathizers and supporters of the RPF to familiarize themselves with the exogenous language (with its endogenous flavor) of the political elite, since by the end of the hostilities between the RPF/RPA and the then government in 1994, 'Rwanda was under the control of an Anglophone government that in short order declared English to be an additional official language, alongside Kinyarwanda and French' (Samuelson 2013, 211). Hence, some people in the IDG started acquiring English, and in many cases, these people became trilingual, speaking Kinyarwanda, French and English.

The DM posits koinéization and toponymic borrowing as the key elements in the linguistic development component in the Foundation Phase. In the context of Rwanda, this koinéization could be seen from the perspective that members of the RTN spoke different varieties of African Englishes. But, based on what has been presented in section 2 above, one could assume that the resultant koiné could be said to have been dominated by Ugandan English. In addition, the Rwandan EFL speakers could be said to have had their own particularities that contributed to the koiné to some extent. Toponymic borrowing could be said to have taken place in terms of adopting names of places as they had been prior to 1994. In fact, to date, the location of Rwanda's State House is still referred to as *Village Urugwiro* (Butamire 2023), maintaining the French word order pattern. In this phase, the DM predicts incipient pidginization in trade colonies. Even though Rwanda was not a (trade) colony (of England), a code known as *Kinyafranglais* is said to have taken root in Rwanda (Eyssette 2022). This could be said to have had its genesis in this phase. Similar to Camfranglais in Cameroon, which is a hybrid language involving French, English, Cameroon Pidgin English and Cameroon indigenous languages (Schröder 2007), *Kinyafranglais* is a mix of Kinyarwanda, English and French (Eyssette 2022).

4.2 Stabilization

Phase 2 of the DM is known as *Exonormative Stabilization*. However, following proposals by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017), we can adjust the nomenclature used in the DM to suit circumstances for non-postcolonial Englishes. Hence, just like Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017) have suggested, we will refer to this phase as *Stabilization*. This is because, in

our case, the stabilization does not involve an exonormative model, rather an endogenous model arising from predominantly regional varieties of English (presumably dominated by Ugandan English). In the DM, the history and politics component of Phase 2 involves stable colonial status and the establishment of English as the language of administration, law, education, etc. In Rwanda, the RPF gained a stable political and military status and stature, and indeed declared English as one of the official languages and later as the sole medium of instruction from grade four up to university. Identity construction in the DM has 'British-plus-local' for the STL, and, for the IDG, it is 'local-plus-British'. Similarly, in Rwanda, the RTN could be characterized as 'Anglophonic-plus-local' and the IDG as 'local-plus-Anglophonic'. Note that here 'local' includes Francophonic attributes as well.

As regards the sociolinguistics of contact in Phase 2, the acceptance of the exonormative model and the expansion of contact by the STL in the DM could be compared to the acceptance of the endogenous model of English and more successful inroads into the fabric of the Rwandan society by the Anglophone Rwandans (i.e. the RTN). For the IDG, the DM postulates spreading (elite) bilingualism, while in the case of Rwanda, one can say that there was spreading elite trilingualism, but with young people becoming more and more bilingual (in Kinyarwanda and English) especially from 2008 when French was officially dropped as a language of instruction. We should note that the endogenous model on which the RTN banked to install English in Rwanda, i.e. Ugandan English (and possibly plus a few aspects of other East African Englishes), presents a situation where (a) non-Inner Circle variety(ies) is (are) seen to provide the norms for a developing variety – something that Kachru (1985) had not thought about. However, Mair (2013) has shown that Outer Circle Englishes can also provide the norms, with Jamaican English influencing young British English speakers in London.

Structurally, Phase 2 in the DM involves lexical borrowing, especially for fauna and flora as well as cultural terms. For Rwanda, Meierkord et al. (forthcoming) report that there are borrowings from Kinyarwanda used in English in Rwanda such as *gacaca* 'grassroots community justice', *imihigo* 'performance contract', *umuganda* 'communal work'. These are expressions referring to socio-cultural dimensions that may not be lucidly expressed using English words or borrowings from (an) endogenous English(es), since they seem to be particular to Rwanda. Notably, while English in Rwanda has been reported to use many Ugandan English borrowings such as *katogo* 'mix of bananas and offal or beans' and *kyeyo* 'menial jobs' (Meierkord et al. forthcoming) – words exclusively borrowed from Luganda, which is a Ugandan language, it appears there was a need to borrow the above Kinyarwanda words in order to take care of the relevant Kinyarwanda socio-cultural aspects. As pidginization becomes entrenched in trade colonies during this phase (Schneider 2007), as stated in the DM, one can say that *Kinyafranglais* also has entrenched itself in the Rwandan society during this phase – a code that Eyssette (2022) has dubbed a 'household language' in Rwanda, while Niyomugabo (2012) indicates

that the code is ubiquitously used even in public spaces such as the Kigali Institute of Education.

4.3 Nativization

It seems that English in Rwanda (or, for that matter, Rwandan English, as Schneider 2007 would prefer to refer to it at this stage of development) has entered Phase 3, i.e. *Nativization*, or one could say that it is in its early stages of transitioning to Phase 3, as, for example, borrowing has gone beyond toponymic places and cultural terms to include loanwords from French in domains such as business, e.g. *essence* 'petrol', *taxi-moto* 'motorcycle taxi', etc. (cf. Meierkord et al. [forthcoming](#)). This is revealing, as we realize that borrowings in this country not only come from an indigenous language but also from an adstrate exogenous language – a situation similar to Namibia, where Afrikaans plays a significant role in the nativization of English there (see, e.g. Schröder and Schneider 2018).

The Nativization Phase is politico-historically characterized by what Schneider (2007) refers to as weakening ties with the land of origin. Although the RTN had gone home (i.e. to an already independent country) and thus had no political claim over belonging to Uganda (i.e. the cradleland of the RPF/RPA) and although Uganda had no claim over Rwanda as its political dependency, the RTN (specifically the RPF/RPA) had very close social ties with their former host country (Uganda). In addition, the geopolitics in the region kept the two together for long. However, differences in approaches to the same geopolitics, especially the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) between 1997 and 2000, triggered political fissures between Uganda and Rwanda (McKnight 2015), with ramifications on the socio-political fabric that linked the RTN in Rwanda with Uganda. It has been stated that one of the triggers for the military clashes between Uganda and Rwanda in Kisangani (DRC) in 1999 was the fact that the Uganda army commander in the DRC used to refer to the soldiers of the RPA as 'boys' (McKnight 2015, 41), given that many of them were (junior) members of the Ugandan army between 1980 and 1990. The RPA soldiers did not like this appellation (McKnight 2015) and wanted to prove that they were no longer (junior) members of the Ugandan army, thereby asserting not only their autonomy but also their capabilities. Since the RTN had a strong politico-military texture, the above assertion by the RPA/RPF (the influential members of the RTN) and the resultant military confrontations between the RPA and the Ugandan army could be seen as a manifestation of the beginning of weakening ties between the RTN and Uganda (the cradleland of the influential members of the RTN, i.e. the RPF/RPA).

Despite the weakening of political/military ties between Rwanda and Uganda from 1999, social ties remained relatively strong, manifested by many Rwandans continuing to study in Uganda with, for example, one (small) university alone (Kampala University) having up to around 500 Rwandan students in 2019 (Meierkord et al. [forthcoming](#)). Likewise, there were many Ugandans working in Rwanda as professionals or semi-skilled workers (Jakachira 2019; Ngonzinja 2019; Meierkord et al. [forthcoming](#)). However,

in 2019, another (diplomatic) crisis erupted between the two countries and Rwanda not only stopped its citizens from traveling to or living in Uganda, but also closed all its borders with Uganda (Mukhaye 2019). Even though this crisis was later settled in 2022, the socio-political ties between the two countries had ostensibly weakened substantially (Reyntjens 2022). This means that the continued strong contact between Rwandans and Ugandans had now diminished and so had exposure to Ugandan English for Rwandans. The weakening socio-political ties could mean that Rwanda looked up to itself (including relying on the IDG) for its socio-political needs, thereby blurring any gap that could have existed between the RTN and the IDG, similar to what the DM posits in relation to the reduction of the gap between the STL and IDG as regards identity construction in Phase 3.

Sociolinguistically, while Meierkord et al. ([forthcoming](#)) have reported that the level of proficiency in English is still generally low among the IDG, what is clear is that trilingualism (for older Rwandans) and bilingualism (for the younger ones) are obviously thriving in line with the tenets of the DM for Phase 3. Moreover, what the DM characterizes here as pressure on the IDG to acquire the STL's language is vividly observable in Rwanda, where a legislation has made English (the RTN's exogenous language in its endogenous and now gradually indigenized form) the sole language of instruction from grade four to university (cf. Samuelson 2013; Meierkord et al. [forthcoming](#).) in lieu of French – the hitherto (main) language of instruction. Given the general low level of proficiency of English in Rwanda as reported above, there are no reports yet on whether there are L1 speakers of local English or not. It is also not yet clear whether there have been sociolinguistic cleavages over departures from endogenous norms or not. These two features are listed under the sociolinguistic conditions of Phase 3 in the DM.

The linguistic context of Phase 3 in the DM encompasses heavy lexical borrowing, phonological innovations and structural transfer spreading from the IDG to the STL, as well as code-mixing. While the Kinyarwanda accent of English has been reported (Meierkord et al. *fc.*), it is not clear whether this emanates from the IDG or whether the RTN moved to Rwanda with this accent. But we know that the RTN might have had diverse accents when they returned to Rwanda depending on which part of Uganda (or even East Africa) they lived in and whether they were (fluent) speakers of Kinyarwanda at the time of returning. We have already hinted at the magnitude of borrowing in English in Rwanda insofar as it involves not only Kinyarwanda, but also French, including formal French expressions. For example, formal French expressions such as SARL 'Ltd' are very common. For instance, the oldest English newspaper in Rwanda, *The New Times*, is registered as *The New Times Publications SARL* (see *The New Times* website), with the French acronym used in lieu of its English equivalent *Ltd*. In a similar vein, code-mixing is said to be ubiquitous in Rwanda involving the three languages, i.e. Kinyarwanda, English and French (Kayigema and Mutasa 2017), a situation that has been equated to the emergence and consolidation

of what has been termed *Kinyafranglais* (Eyssette 2022). For instance, Kayigema and Mutasa (2017, 107) provide the following example: *He sings well, n'est-ce pas?* 'He sings well, doesn't he?', which is a mix of an English statement with a French tag. All these linguistic effects are predicted in the DM in Phase 3.

4.4 Other phases

The other two phases in the DM are *Endonormative Stabilization* and *Differentiation*. It is obviously still too early to talk about these phases in relation to English in Rwanda, which is barely approximately 30 years old in the country (from the perspective of its Outer Circle use and functions). However, sometimes incipient aspects of these phases can manifest themselves in earlier phases. For example, Schneider (2007) recognizes that phonological differentiation may come as early as possible but will only be more evident in Phase 5. Relatedly, Schröder et al. (2021) have indicated that Namibian English is in Phase 3 but it already shows significant dimensions of phonological differentiation based on ethnolinguistic criteria and identities. At the same time, Isingoma and Meierkord (2022) have shown aspects of endonormative stabilization in Ugandan English, despite placing it in the Nativization Phase, where some lexical and grammatical forms are so entrenched that using the British/American English forms is viewed as making a mistake. Hence, we may not rule out a few dimensions of the two phases in Rwandan English, despite the fact that one can say that it is still in its early stages of Phase 3. For example, as far as code-mixing is concerned, young educated people may show more code-mixing involving Kinyarwanda and English, while older people may show more code-mixing involving Kinyarwanda, French and English – an aspect of *Differentiation*. In addition, literary creativity – usually manifested in Phase 4 in the DM – is already taking place. Indeed, there are many works written in English, especially on the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, for example, Omar Ndizeye's (2020) *Life and Death in Nyamata: Memoir of a Young Boy in Rwanda's Darkest Church*, which was published by Amsterdam Publishers.

5. Conclusion

The current study has attempted to trace the development of English in Rwanda, using the evolutionary phases proposed in the DM, while adjusting certain dimensions, as proposed by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017), so as to accommodate the non-postcolonial background characterizing English in Rwanda. Abstracting away from EFL Rwanda, the implantation of English in Rwanda, with functions of an Outer Circle country, started with the advent of the RPF, whose influential members came from Uganda, including from the Ugandan army, and this has a bearing on the variety of English spoken in Rwanda as regards its trajectorial development. The study suggests that English in Rwanda seems to have entered Phase 3, i.e. *Nativization*, or it is in its

early stages of entering this phase, as aspects of features of this phase have been observed.

The study has considered Ugandan English as the (main) endogenous source of the development of English in Rwanda. While this is premised on the fact that the bulk of the influential members of the RPF indeed came from Uganda and became the key decision makers and policy overseers in Rwanda, the role of other Englishes in shaping English in Rwanda has not been (sufficiently) established, as the current study has banked on a few revelations contained in Meierkord et al. (forthcoming) to float the epicentral nature of Ugandan English in this respect. It is probable that a multi-endogenous source, as well as some aspects of exonormative models, might have had a (somewhat) significant role in this development, despite the reported epicentral role of Ugandan English. This extent should be investigated in the future.

Notes

- 1 Ta (2016, 28) states that figures from the UNHCR indicated that, officially, there were 550,000 (registered) Tutsi refugees around the world, of whom 350,000 lived in Uganda. But Ta (2016, 18) also states that non-official figures indicated up to 1 million Tutsi refugees.
- 2 We should note that not all the RTN were Anglophonic and not all the IDG were Francophonic. However, in the current study, we are only interested in the RTN who were Anglophonic, while, for the IDG, both the Francophonic and non-Francophonic groups are relevant to our study.
- 3 RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army) was the armed wing of the RPF and later changed to RDF (Rwanda Defense Forces) in 2003 (Donelli 2022).
- 4 In addition to referring to the language spoken by Rwandans, *Kinyarwanda* also refers to 'anything associated with the Rwandan culture'.

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