LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To identify and describe the varieties of English
- To explain Standard Pronunciation of English
Status of English

- English is spoken today in all five continents as a result of colonial expansion in the last four centuries or so.

- English has also come to play a central role as an international language.

- With regard to numbers of speakers it is only exceeded by Chinese (in its various forms) and Spanish.

- But in terms of geographical spread it stands at the top of the league.
Varieties of English

- The spread of English: a direct consequence of English colonial policy, starting in Ireland in the late 12th century and continuing well into the 19th century.

- In the modern world, varieties of English are divided into four geographical groups:
  - British Isles
  - America
  - Africa
  - Asia, Pacific

- The two main groups are Britain and America, each has standard forms of English which are used as yardsticks for comparing other varieties of the respective areas.
Cont’d

• In Britain the standard is called Received Pronunciation (RP)

• Received Pronunciation: also known as BBC English, Oxford English, Queen’s English (formerly King’s English)

• In America there is a standard which is referred to as several labels, e.g., General American and Network American English (the two most common)
General American: spoken by the majority of Americans, including many in the North-East and South and thus contrasts strongly with Received Pronunciation which is a prestige sociolect spoken by only a few percent of all the British.

Varieties of English spoken outside of Britain and America are variously referred to as overseas or extraterritorial varieties.
Extraterritorial varieties: different from mainland varieties because of their geographical distance from the original homeland & also because in many cases a type of suspension has occurred vis à vis changes in point of origin, i.e. in many respects the overseas varieties appear remarkably unchanged to those from the European mainland.

Varieties of English both in Europe and overseas: variation in certain key features, e.g., special verbal structures to express aspectual distinctions (common to nearly all varieties in the developing world).