Asian Englishes
World Englishes

Francis Bond

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What Are World Englishes?

Definition:

- The global varieties of English spoken in diverse cultural, social, and linguistic contexts.
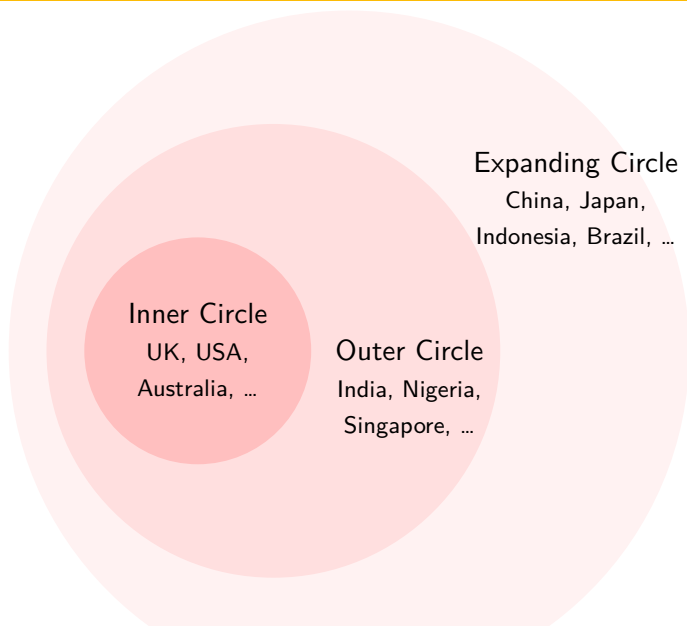- Includes **Inner Circle**, **Outer Circle**, and **Expanding Circle** Englishes (Kachru, 1985).

Importance:

- Reflects the spread of English as a global lingua franca.
- Highlights the adaptability and localization of English in different regions.

Examples:

- British English, Indian English, Chinese English, Nigerian English.

Kachru's Three Circles of English

Expanding Circle
China, Japan,
Indonesia, Brazil, …

Inner Circle
UK, USA,
Australia, …

Outer Circle
India, Nigeria,
Singapore, …

The Inner Circle

Definition:

- Represents countries where English is the native language and primary means of communication.

Examples:

- United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand.

Key Features:

- Historical origin of English.
- Sets linguistic norms often viewed as "standard" English.
- Used as a cultural identifier.

The Outer Circle

Definition:

- Countries where English serves as a second language, often used in government, education, and business.
- Reflects historical colonial influence.

Examples:

- India, Nigeria, Singapore, Philippines.
- Singapore fits all characteristics of inner circle except origin, …

Key Features:

- Nativized varieties of English.
- High degree of multilingualism among speakers.
- Functional roles in administration and education.
- More speakers than the inner circle

The Expanding Circle

Definition:
- Countries where English is used as a foreign language.
- Primarily for international communication and business.

Examples:
- China, Japan, Brazil, Russia.

Key Features:
- Does not have a colonial legacy of English.
- Lacks institutionalized functions in government or education.
- Growing role in globalization and digital communication.
- Has the most speakers!

English-speaking populations across various countries.

Country	Population	Speakers	First L	Other L
United States	312,092,668	297,400,000	244,232,103	42,155,719
India	1,450,000,000	228,539,090	259,678	228,279,412
Nigeria	206,200,000	125,039,680	20,000,000	103,198,040
Pakistan	220,892,331	108,044,691	8,642	108,036,049
United Kingdom	64,000,000	62,912,000	59,072,000	3,840,000
Philippines	110,000,000	70,117,935	36,935	70,081,000
Germany	80,600,000	45,400,000	392,000	45,100,000
Uganda	44,270,000	19,800,000	0	19,800,000
France	67,500,000	38,643,750	0	38,643,750
Canada	37,138,500	30,480,750	20,193,335	10,287,415
Egypt	110,990,000	44,373,802	5,527,302	38,846,500
Australia	23,401,892	21,715,910	17,020,421	4,695,489
Bangladesh	165,323,100	19,838,772	709,873	16,398,158
Poland	38,501,000	18,890,000	103,541	18,786,459
Ghana	27,000,000	18,000,000	0	18,000,000
Singapore	4,044,200	3,900,000	1,953,348	1,946,652

Data from Wikipedia: List of countries by English-speaking population

World Englishes: Quirk vs. Kachru

Quirk's Perspective (Uniformity View):

- Emphasizes a single, standardized form of English based on Inner Circle norms (e.g., UK, US).
- Concerns about intelligibility and global communication.
- Argues that legitimizing non-standard varieties risks misunderstanding.

Kachru's Perspective (Pluralist View):

- Advocates for the legitimacy of Outer Circle varieties (e.g., Indian, Nigerian English).
- Emphasizes linguistic and cultural adaptation (nativization).
- Critiques the deficit model of "errors" and promotes ownership of English by all its users.

Key Themes of the Debate

- **Standardization vs. Diversity:**
  - Quirk: Standardization is essential for global intelligibility.
  - Kachru: Diversity reflects the realities of English use worldwide.
- **Pedagogical Implications:**
  - Quirk: Teaching should adhere to Inner Circle norms.
  - Kachru: Teaching should validate localized varieties.
- **Ownership of English:**
  - Quirk: English belongs to the Inner Circle.
  - Kachru: English is the global property of all its users.

Kachru's Critique: Four False Assumptions

1. **The Homogeneity Assumption:**
   - Assumes a single, homogeneous standard English.
   - Counterpoint: Inner Circle varieties themselves exhibit variation.

2. **The Deficit Model of Non-Native Varieties:**
   - Views Outer Circle Englishes as "deviant."
   - Counterpoint: Outer Circle varieties are contextually legitimate adaptations.

3. **The Pedagogical Purity Assumption:**
   - Insists on teaching Inner Circle norms exclusively.
   - Counterpoint: Teaching should reflect local linguistic realities.

4. **The Intelligibility Assumption:**
   - Claims Inner Circle norms ensure mutual intelligibility.
   - Counterpoint: Intelligibility is context-dependent and mutual.

Innovation –Deviation –Mistake (Kachru, 1992)

Key Distinctions:

- **Innovation:** Creativity in language use; often denied to Outer and Expanding Circle speakers.
- **Deviation:** Comparison with another variety; implies departure from a norm.
- **Mistake (or error):** Related to acquisitional deficiency.

Different varieties are held to different standards!

Standards Across Space

Three "Standard" Englishes:

- Britain, North America, Australia.
- Similarities and differences:
  - Across the three standards.
  - Across varieties within each region (e.g., UK, US).
- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary: The Most Noticeable Divergence (NAmE vs. BrE)
  - **Extended meanings:** e.g., *corn, robin*.
  - **New words:** e.g., *buttle*.
  - **Borrowings:** e.g., *moccasin, squash, toboggan*.
- Since US independence:
  - Technological terms: e.g., *windshield* vs. *windscreen*.

Australian English

Key Features:

- Borrowings from Aboriginal languages: e.g., *kangaroo, boomerang*.
- Unique slang words and phrases.
- Common use of abbreviations and clippings.
  barbie "bbq", *uni* "university", *sammy* "sandwich", *relly* "relative",
  chuck a uey "U-turn"
  Snowy "person with white hair", *Bluey* "red-head", *Bondie* "me"

Quite a lot of Grammar Differences

USEng vs. EngEng (Trudgill and Hannah, 2002):

- **Verbs:** Morphology, auxiliaries.
  - US: *He did already eat.* vs. UK: *He has already eaten.*
- **Nouns:** Endings, use of verbs as nouns.
  - US: *Please action this.* vs. UK: *Please do this/act on this.*
- **Adjectives and Adverbs:**
  - US: *He runs real fast.* vs. UK: *He runs really fast.*
  - US: *How big of a room is it?* vs. UK: *How big a room is it?*
- **Prepositions:**
  - US: *I went on the weekend.* vs. UK: *I went at the weekend.*

Native and Non-Native Speakers of English

Criticisms of NS/NNS Terms:

- Assumes monolingualism is the norm.
- Overemphasizes order of acquisition.
- Reinforces Anglo speakers as reference points.
- Implies unidirectional power relationships.
- Encourages simplistic views of "errors."

Alternatives to NS/NNS Distinction

Rampton (1990): "Experts" → Expertise

- Advantages:
  - Learned, not innate.
  - Relative, partial, and contestable.
- Disadvantages:
  - "Non-expert" implies value judgment.

Jenkins (1996, 2000): MES, BES, NBES

- MES: Monolingual English Speaker.
- BES: Bilingual English Speaker.
- NBES: Non-Bilingual English Speaker.

Codification of Asian Englishes:

- Importance:
  - Acceptance, prestige, classroom model.
- Obstacles:
  - Indigenized varieties seen as "interlanguages."
  - SLA perspective emphasizes NS-like competence.
  - Motivation for acquisition is integrative (admiration for NS culture).

Characteristics of Asian Englishes

Distinct Features:

- **Phonology:** Unique accents and stress patterns (e.g., Indian English retroflex sounds).
- **Syntax:** Influence of local languages (e.g., omission of articles in Singapore English).
- **Lexicon:** Borrowings and cultural terms (e.g., *chop* "seal/stamp" in Malaysian English).
- Extensive code-switching

What is Indian English?

- Indian English refers to the variety of English spoken in India.
- It is influenced by India's multilingual environment and local languages.
- Features unique vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and idiomatic expressions.
- Recognized as one of the most widespread second languages in India.

Key Features of Indian English

- **Pronunciation:**
  - Rhotic: Pronouncing /r/ in words like *car* and *farm.*
  - Flattened vowels: *bat* may sound like "baet."
- **Vocabulary:**
  - Unique words like *prepone* (to reschedule earlier) and *godown* (warehouse).
- **Grammar:**
  - Use of the progressive tense: *He is knowing the answer.*

Unique Vocabulary in Indian English

- **Borrowed words:**
    - *bungalow* (from Hindi: "bangla")
    - *jungle* (from Hindi: "jangal")
- **Hybrid expressions:**
    - *pass out* (to graduate)
    - *out of station* (not in town)
- **Local adaptations:**
    - *hill station* (mountain resort)
    - *timepass* (leisure activity)
    - *revert* (reply — also used in Manglish/Singlish)

Examples of Indian English Sentences

- *Can you prepone the meeting to tomorrow?*
- *I passed out of college in 2020.*
- *He is having a doubt in mathematics.*
- *She went to the market to buy vegetables only.*
- *Let us go for a walk in the evening, no?*

Cultural and Linguistic Significance

- Indian English reflects the diversity of India's languages and cultures.
- It bridges communication gaps in a multilingual society.
- Used in government, education, business, and media.
- Contributes to the global spread of English with a distinct identity.

What is Singlish?

- Singlish is the colloquial form of English spoken in Singapore.
- It combines English with elements from Malay, Tamil, Hokkien, Cantonese, and other languages.
- Singlish is informal and often spoken in casual settings.
- Although not officially endorsed, it is a key part of Singaporean identity.

Examples of Singlish Vocabulary

- **Lah:** *Don't worry lah!* (adds emphasis or assurance)
- **Kiasu:** *He is so kiasu.* (fear of missing out)
- **Shiok:** *This food is so shiok!* (delicious or enjoyable)
- **Blur:** *Why are you so blur?* (confused or clueless)
- **Paiseh:** *So paiseh to ask!* (embarrassed)
- **Ang moh:** *The ang moh loves laksa.* (Caucasian - lit: red head)

Try our Singlish Dictionary!

Singlish Grammar and Syntax

- **Aspect through adverbs, not tense:**
  - *He go already.* (He has already gone.)
- **Tag particles:**
  - *You want coffee, ah?* (adds a questioning tone)
  - *Very expensive, leh.* (adds emphasis)
- **Omission of articles/plurality:**
  - *I go market.* (I am going to the market.)
  - *I buy 3 book.* (I will buy three books.)

Cultural and Linguistic Significance

- Singlish reflects Singapore's multicultural heritage.
- It fosters a sense of local identity and camaraderie.
- Often used in media, humor, and casual conversations.
- Despite government efforts to promote Standard English, Singlish remains a vibrant and unique aspect of Singaporean culture.

What is Hong Kong English?

- Hong Kong English is the variety of English influenced by Cantonese, the primary language spoken in Hong Kong.
- Developed due to British colonial rule (1842–1997) and remains significant in education, business, and law.
- Reflects a blend of British English, local linguistic features, and Cantonese cultural influence.

Key Features of Hong Kong English

- **Pronunciation:**
  - Influence of Cantonese tones on stress patterns.
  - /r/ and /l/ sounds may overlap (e.g., *rice* pronounced as *lice*).
- **Grammar:**
  - Omission of articles and prepositions: *I go market* (I am going to the market).
- **Vocabulary:**
  - Loanwords from Cantonese: *yum cha* (drink tea) and *char siu* (roast pork).

Examples of Hong Kong English Vocabulary

- **Loanwords from Cantonese:**
  - ***Dai pai dong:*** Open-air food stalls.
  - ***Si fu:*** Master or skilled worker.
  - ***Cha chaan teng:*** Hong Kong-style cafes.
- **Hybrid expressions:**
  - ***Add oil:*** An encouragement or cheer, meaning *keep going* or "good luck."
  - ***Long time no see:*** A literal translation of the Cantonese phrase "好耐冇見" (hou noi mou gin).

Common Features of Sentences in Hong Kong English

- **Direct translations from Cantonese:**
  - *He very smart, la.* (He is very smart, you know.)
- **Different grammatical elements:**
  - *I no understand.* (I do not understand.)
- **Unique phrases:**
  - *I go yum cha with family tomorrow.* (I am going to have dim sum with my family tomorrow.)

Cultural and Linguistic Significance

- Hong Kong English reflects the region's colonial past and its Cantonese-speaking majority.
- It plays a key role in education, government, and international business.
- Highlights the blending of British and Chinese cultures in Hong Kong.
- Despite its informal and localized nature, it remains an essential aspect of Hong Kong's identity and communication in multilingual settings.

What is Japanese English?

- Japanese English refers to the variety of English influenced by the Japanese language.
  - Japlish/Engrish is English used by Japanese speakers
  - 和製英語 *wasei eigo* "Japanese-made English" are English-like words used in Japanese

- It often features adaptations of English words and phrases to fit Japanese phonetics and culture.

- Developed due to English education, international business, and cultural exchange.

- Known for unique loanwords, katakana usage, and creative expressions.

Key Features of Japanese English

- **Phonetic adjustments:**
  - Inserting vowels: *table* becomes *te-bu-ru.*
  - No distinction between /l/ and /r/: *light* and *right* sound similar.
- **Vocabulary:**
  - Loanwords adapted to Japanese: *salaryman* (businessman), *OL* (office lady).

Examples of Wasei Eigo

- **Adapted loanwords:**
  - ***Salaryman:*** Office worker.
  - ***Hand phone:*** Mobile phone (from *handy phone*).
  - ***Viking:*** Buffet (originating from *smorgasbord*).
- **Hybrid expressions:**
  - ***My pace:*** Going at one's own speed.
  - ***Skinship:*** Physical closeness or bonding.
- **Creative coinages:**
  - ***Power harassment:*** Workplace bullying.
  - ***Conveni:*** Convenience store.

Cultural and Linguistic Significance

- Japanese English showcases the cultural blending of Japan and the English-speaking world.
- Reflects creative adaptations to fit Japanese language structure and social norms.
- Plays an important role in education, tourism, and advertising in Japan.
- Despite challenges with pronunciation and syntax, it has become a unique and recognizable form of English globally.

Challenges and Opportunities for Asian Englishes

Challenges:

- Perceived legitimacy: Often compared to Inner Circle varieties.
- Codification: Lack of formal standards for some varieties.
- Pedagogy: Balancing local and global intelligibility.

Opportunities:

- Reflects local identity and culture.
- Encourages creativity and linguistic innovation.
- Promotes multilingualism and cross-cultural communication.

The Future of Asian Englishes

Trends:

- Increasing prestige and global recognition.
- Growth of English as a second language in Asia.
- Integration into educational systems and digital platforms.

Key Questions:

- How will globalization shape Asian Englishes?
- Will codification lead to the emergence of new standards?
- How can we balance intelligibility and diversity?

Conclusion:

- Asian Englishes showcase the dynamic evolution of the language.
- They are key to understanding the future of global English.

References

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