

3 types of linguistic variation in the English language: regional/social/stylistic

Language contact: a result of the spread of English

(Clayton et al, 2018) A process of language change whereby multiple languages come into social contact and have linguistic influence over one another in the form of borrowings, grammatical and phonological change, formation of pidgins and creoles, and higher rates of bilingualism.

Standard English:

(Trudgil, 1995) The variety of English usually used in print and which is normally taught in schools to non-native speakers learning the language. It is also the variety spoken by educated people and used in news broadcasts and other similar situations.

(Crystal, 1990) A variety that is seen as largely neutral with respect to regional identity, carries the most overt prestige, is a desirable educational target and is widely understood; it is not a matter of pronunciation, rather of grammar, vocabulary and orthography

- Regulated by an authority / institution: the French Academy and Academy of the Hebrew Language (some degree of linguistic ownership)
(Pakir, 1994) codification is 'the act, process or result of arranging in a systematic form of code the system of linguistic rules shared by people in their acts of communication'

A 2022 report by the French Academy, the academy that regulates and upholds standards for the French language, has warned that the growing use of English by private and public bodies in France risks poor communication and could even undermine social cohesion; in their words "today's communication is characterised by a degradation that must not be seen as inevitable". Over 30 pages, the report picks through dozens of texts from public institutions, organisations and private firms. Using many examples of bilingual wordplay, the academy claims that there is an overuse of English that risks an "impoverishment of French vocabulary", "growing discrimination among sections of the public" and even "defiance that has visibly developed in recent years against all kinds of authorities". One example of a term in the report is "le weekend" that the academy claims should be rejected by loyal French speakers in favour of "le fin de semaine", in the bid to protect the French language. However, in practice, most French speakers pay little attention to the academy's rulings and use the language however they like. In fact, French speakers are so inclined to using English that they created their own non-standard English terms such as "le brushing" to mean blow-dry and "le footing" to mean jogging.

- Responsible for the upholding of standards

- (Widdowson, 1993) Linguistic ownership: A controversial step further from 'linguistic rights' to control who may speak a language, where it is spoken, and whether or not it is written; May also be referred to as language exclusivity
- Defence for the enforcement of standard language usually has to do with protecting the purity of language, promoting clarity and mutual comprehension

New Englishes: indigenised/nativised/localised varieties

Platt et al (1984): 4 criteria

- Developed mainly through education system, is used as a medium of instruction in the classroom
- Developed in country with few native speakers of English
- English serves a range of functions in the country
- English has become nativised, adopted its own linguistic features (argued that this is also true for 'Old Englishes' the inner circle varieties)

Singapore English:

- Singapore Standard English (SSE): Similar in grammar and vocabulary to Standard English but it is spoken with a Singaporean accent
 - Variety of English used by educated Singaporeans for formal purposes
- Singapore Colloquial English (SCE) or 'Singlish'

(Chng, 2003) 'Singapore's local brand of colloquial English (that) is recognised as the quintessential mark of Singaporean-ness'

- Superstrate: Standard English (as spoken by the British, Americans, Eurasians, Indians and Ceylonese), Main substrate: Baba Malay, Second substrate: Southern varieties of Chinese (especially Teochew, Hokkien and Cantonese)
- In 1956, English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil were declared the four co-official languages of Singapore; Where English was used as a tool for inter-ethnic communication as it was ethnically neutral
- In 1987, English was made to be the main medium of instruction for all schools due to an increase in English being used as the predominant language spoken at home

Linguistic Features	Definition	Examples
Pragmatic particles	Has grammatical and pragmatic functions	'Leh', 'lor', 'meh' and 'what'
	Emotive particle: express	'Lah' - Stressed version:

	the attitude of the speaker and thus plays a pragmatic role - Usually at the end of an utterance and are equivalent to a hedge or tag question	associated with a persuasive, conciliatory or explanatory attitude - Unstressed version: often used to convey impatience or annoyance
Subject dropping	Null subject	'Still got fever?' (null subject 'you')
Auxiliary-subject inversion in interrogatives	Auxiliary subject is fronted instead of the primary subject	' <u>You</u> want <u>what</u> ?' instead of ' <u>What</u> do <u>you</u> want?' (where the primary subject 'what' is changed with the auxiliary subject 'you')
Tense-marking	Lack of marking in verb forms (Tay, 1993) Also seen in SSE	'I <u>work</u> here 25 years ago.' 'He always <u>go</u> there every Sunday.'
Fronting (Syntax)	Bringing object or complement to the front	' <u>This type</u> also you interested.'
Deletion of indefinite articles (a/an) and verb (are)	(Extra info: Indefinite particles (a/an) Definite particle (the)) (Tay, 1993) Also seen in SSE	'You very good dancer hor?' 'They dress very nice leh.'
Tag question		'...okay?' '...right or not?' '...correct?' '...is it?'
Copula deletion	Omission of a form of the verb 'be' ('be', 'am', 'is', 'are', 'was', 'were', 'being', 'been')	'My handwriting not clear.' where the verb ' <u>is</u> ' is the null copula
Borrowings (vocabulary)	Loanwords, usually from Malay and Chinese dialects	'Makan' meaning 'eat' in Malay 'Chin cai' meaning

		unconcerned about details in Hokkien
Semantic shift	Differences in semantics from standard forms in the inner circle	'Kindly' is often used instead of 'please' 'Porridge' means rice or 'congee' in SgE as compared to an oat-based preparation
Lexis	Including acronyms, initialisms, conversions, derivations, coinage, reduplication, blending and clipping. Conversions: changing grammatical category without changing the word form Derivation: use of derivational affixes	More recently (For C-19): - 'WFH' for work from home; now also commonly seen in job advertisements as the idea becomes more mainstream - 'CB' for circuit breaker, a government mandated lockdown measure during the peak of the pandemic '<u>Off</u> the light' preposition to verb 'Arrow' noun to verb 'Maggi' for all instant noodles 'Pampers' for all diapers 'Void deck' 'Agak agak' where 'agak' is Malay for 'to estimate' 'Jalan jalan' where 'jalan' is Malay for street
Redundancy		'<u>Additionally</u>, Jane has <u>also</u> won many awards.' 'Unit price <u>from</u> \$2,000 <u>onwards</u>.'

Modals		Habitual 'will' used to refer to something that occurs repeatedly instead of simple present tense in Standard English. 'On Sundays, we <u>will</u> go to church.'
Non-standard (Singapore) pronunciation Sometimes, over-pronunciation due to over-compensating to sound better at English or to sound more posh		'Can I <u>heptch</u> you?' 'Children' as 'Chew-ren' 'Three' (/θri:/) as 'Tree' (/tri:/)
Consonants	Such as consonant deletion in consonant clusters, plosive deletion (if it follows another plosive), fricative deletion Also, non-rhotic like Standard British English, and unlike the US	Fricatives (th sounds): 'Think', 'This' Plosive deletion: 'Limp' as 'Lim' 'Sent' as 'Sen' - Also affects past tense marker '-ed' 'Beamed' /bi:md/ as /bim/

- Models to describe SCE:
 - (Platt, 1977) Lectal continuum model: ranging from the lowest variety (the basilect) through the medium range (the upper mesolect and lower mesolect) and to the highest variety (the acrolect)
 - Platt associated the different varieties with socio-economic status and educational level, implying that the variation exists not out of choice but is determined by these other factors
 - (Gupta, 1994) Applied the diglossic approach to Singapore English: categorised into high (carries prestige, standardised, literary heritage is usually encoded in H) and low varieties (used for language acquisition but H is learned later on)
 - Different from Platt, language variation is now viewed as a matter of speaker's choice and intent and is not determined by socio-economic background or educational level

- Where the L variety is also growing in literary tradition in the form of plays, novels and lyrics in songs ('Why U So Liddat' by Siva Choy, a memorable rap song produced in the 1990s humorously highlighting stinginess, more commonly termed as the 'kiam siap' mentality)
- (Pakir, 1991) Expanding triangles of English expression (English-knowing bilingualism): used to describe English expression amongst English-knowing bilinguals where SgE is seen to vary along the clines of formality and proficiency (years that the speaker has had learning English)
 - Visually, more advanced speakers have larger triangles and are easily able to move up and down the formality cline. Lower educated speakers gave smaller triangles where the smallest has SCE as their working language
- (Alsagoff, 2010) Cultural orientation model: states that there are 2 functions of English in Singapore as a global language and a local language
 - Globalist orientation
(Wee, 2003) 'The role of English as a global language is always discussed hand in hand with its economic capital and status as a language of science, commerce and technology, clearly indicating that the need to use English is motivated and associated with a global perspective – English is clearly seen as an instrument and means of global participation in financial and economic markets.'
 - Localist orientation:
 - SCE as a lingua franca in multi-ethnic, multicultural Singapore
 - Inextricably linked to Singaporean identity
- Roles of English in Singapore

(Pakir, 1998) Utilitarian (commutative tool between locals and with foreigners as a working language in trade, industry, law, administration, education and the media), Unifying (common language between different ethnic groups in Singapore), Universal (serves both private and public domains, formal and informal settings)

 - Inter-ethnic lingua franca
 - SSE: Language of identity and culture
(Spotsky, 1998) H variety is used in literacy, education and government, while the L variety maintains market value as a marker of membership of a peer or ethnic group
(Foley, 1998) 'The educated Singaporean wants to sound like a

Singaporean'

- SSE vs SCE use in Singapore

(Chew, 2007) According to the SGEM market research, when faced with language choice between SSE and SCE, pragmatic reasons tend to override cultural ones in the choice of language.

- However, unlike the objective of SGEM, most Singapore English speakers are of the view that a trade-off may not be necessary, at least for proficient speakers who are able to code-switch

'Speak Good English' movement (2000) launched due to concerns about declining standards of English, to promote the use of good English and decrease the use of Singlish

- (Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, 1999) 'Singlish is a handicap that we would not want to wish on Singaporeans' and expressed that the 'lesser educated half of the population' may not have the luxury to code-switch

British English:

- Received pronunciation (RP)

- AKA 'public school accent', 'BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) accent' or 'Queen's or King's accent'
- Associated with the south-east of England where prestigious universities such as Oxford and Cambridge are located, resulting in more of an educated accent
- May then be referenced with Standard Southern British English (SSBE)

Attitudes towards language variation:

- Prescriptive: whatever is different from the chosen standard variety is erroneous or deviant
 - Used on SgE in early days but it was understandable because only 56% were literate in 1980 (Gopinathan et al, 1998)
 - Often exonormative, by reference to a foreign standard
 - Sometimes seen as a interlanguage (learner language that has not yet reached the target) / fossilised language (language used when learning has ceased short of native-like competence) / learnese (incorrectly learned English containing errors)

SgE examples:

Singapore's current education minister, Chan Chun Sing, has been criticised for his tendency to use Singlish throughout his political career. He faced the most backlash when an audio recording of a private meeting between him and people of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) was leaked. While the content of the audio was controversial, many have focused on the heavy use of Singlish instead as reported by The Straits Times, the most widely circulated newspaper in Singapore. One such viewer was Lim Tean, a prominent local politician, who wrote a lengthy Facebook post remarking that the way Chan Chun Sing spoke was "a disgraceful glorification of Singlish", adding that Singlish "has no place in a first world country, where proper English should be taught and spoken". It is also noted that in addresses to the public and on official business, Minister Chan Chun Sing writes and speaks in SSE but is still criticised when he uses it in informal or private settings.

- New Englishes are also often not recognised by purists from the ENL countries that believe that only English varieties of the ENL countries are correct

On the British Council's India web page under "Why study with the British council?" in 2013 it read: "Teaching is at the heart of our cultural relations work in India. We are a world leader in English language teaching. Our certified teachers help you learn real English using a curriculum developed and proven through more than 75 years of experience in over 110 countries." The term 'real' was subsequently removed but it showed clearly that although English had been spoken in India for centuries, even established as an an associate official language and has likely developed generations of native speakers of Standard Indian English, it is implied that the British Council believes that learners of English still need input from its members to enable them to learn English.

Demand for native English speakers for teaching roles is high, NFL speakers are preferred even over trained, professional English teachers who have been trained in language pedagogy. In China, many teaching job advertisements clearly state that being a speaker

from a NFL country is a requirement; often the only requirement. Paradoxically, a non-native teacher would have been through the process of learning English as a foreign language, an experience that is only shared between non-native speakers and their students but it is often what classifies them as inferior to teachers from NFL countries.

- Results in linguistic insecurity, coined by Labov to describe how people feel when their language variety is constantly denigrated, and their acceptance of negative stereotyping of their English by the dominant native speaker community

- Descriptive: discussion in terms of differences, comparative approach

(Mohan, 1992, D'souza 1993) approaching different Englishes as 'a variety in its own right'

(Foley, 1998) One of the reasons given for an endonormative approach to SgE is that 'the educated Singaporean wants to sound like a Singaporean'

- Often endonormative, taking local context and standard into consideration
- (Foley, 1998) Reasons for the approach: serves different functions in Singapore, multiplicity of foreign standards (so many that the one chosen may not be backed up by the Singapore environment), the educated Singaporean wants to sound like a Singaporean

The notion of register rejects the contrast between "correct" and "incorrect" language, reframing language as a series of contextually appropriate choices – business register, formal register, informal register...

- Other views

(Cameron, 1995) Verbal Hygiene, argued that people with conservative views:

“Use ‘grammar’ as the metaphorical correlate for a cluster of related political and moral terms: *order, tradition, authority, hierarchy and rules*. In the ideological world that the conservatives inhabit, these terms are not only positive, they define the conditions for any civil society, while their opposites: *disorder, change, fragmentation, anarchy and lawlessness* – signify the breakdown of social relations. A panic about grammar is therefore interpretable as the metaphorical expression of persistent conservative fears that we are losing the values that underpin civilisation and sliding into chaos.

(Greene, 2011) Declinist view of language / (Milroy and Milroy, 1999) The complaint tradition

A tendency noted by Lane Greene for prescriptivists to view language as being in a state of constant decline from a once great peak. The notion that there was a “golden era” of English grammar, when everybody was capable of using “correct” forms of English, and that those abilities have gradually declined over time. // Disapproval of the way people use language, especially in relation to grammar and the meaning of words, has a long tradition with strikingly consistent themes.

(Halliday, 1997) Linguistic table-manners

Since language is an integral part of identity and perceived behaviour, artificial rules about language use or so-called “etiquette guides” have always been popular. Promoting artificial rules that gradually become part of a speaker’s habit.

(Baron, 2008) Language whateverism: a laissez-faire attitude towards following the rules of standard English

- Baron proposed that there is a possible explanation for the decline in the upholding of standards of English even in formal or professional registers, that is that a new generation of language users are raised to be indifferent about language rules – or the need for consistency in linguistic usages
 - Proposes that this behaviour is a natural reflection of:
 - 1) Changing educational policies: encourage self-expression “in their own words”, increasingly informal (feel less need to conform to rules of standard), and non-normative
 - 2) Shifts in social agendas towards multiculturalism: to celebrate change, diversity, and inclusivity
 - 3) Move in academia towards philosophical relativism
 - 4) NCT: influencing offline discourse

5) Increased demand for writing to be produced quickly: typewriters, keyboards allow people to write and share documents much more quickly even without reflecting about what they have written

- Gave a few plausible outcomes:
 - Writing will increasingly become an instrument for recording informal speech rather than a distinct form of linguistic representation
 - As a literate society, people will continue to write but will revert back to an attitude that is more indifferent towards differences in spelling and grammar
 - Language will play a reduced role as a status marker
- Suggests that if linguistic entropy continues to snowball, society will find itself in a position of defending the inherent regularity of linguistic systems, while finding that culturally-accommodating, technology-savvy, and clock-driven language users are increasingly unable to understand one another

Other varieties of English:

1. Inner circle variety: Australian

- Only accepted into the inner circle in 1970s, only recently reduced the perception of being an erroneous form
- Australian English differs heavily in terms of its vocabulary compared to other inner circle varieties, though some of their non-standard expressions have become popular in mainstream usage

Diminutive -ie suffix: Barbeque (Barbie), Self-facing portrait (Selfie), Tinnie (for a can of beer), Lippie (lipstick)

2. Outer circle variety:

3. Expanding circle variety: Japan

African-American vernacular English (AAVE):

- Absence of possessive -s marking "at my mama house"
- Absence of 3rd person singular -s marking "she have 3 kids"
- Zero copula "she in the same grade"
- Habitual "be" "we be at church on Sundays"
- Completive "done" "I done already finished that"
- Use of "ain't" for negation "I ain't lying"
- Multiple negatives "I ain't got no friends at that school"