

# EKSISTENSI VARIETAS BAHASA INGGRIS DAN BAHASA INGGRIS STANDAR

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**Abstract:** English is not only used by people from ENL (English as a Native Language) countries to communicate with people from ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) countries or vice versa, but it even functions as a lingua franca among non-native speakers. As a result, English varieties or Englishes emerged. This paper proposes an argument that the coexistence of both ‘standard’ and varieties of English is equally important.

**Key words:** standard english, english varieties, englishes, linguafranca

**Abstrak:** Bahasa Inggris tidak saja digunakan oleh penutur asli bahasa Inggris untuk berkomunikasi dengan penutur bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua maupun penutur bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing, maupun sebaliknya. Bahasa Inggris memiliki fungsi lebih, yaitu sebagai *lingua franca* di antara para penutur bahasa Inggris non-asli. Sebagai hasilnya, bahasa variasi-variasi bahasa Inggris, yang juga disebut bahasa Inggris-bahasa Inggris (*Englishes*) muncul ke permukaan. Tulisan ini menawarkan argument bahwa bahasa Inggris standar dan bahasa Inggris variasi sama-sama penting.

**Kata-kata kunci:** bahasa inggris standar, varietas bahasa inggris, linguafranka

English is the most widely used language in the world. Crystal (2002, p. 10) said that the number of L1 (English as the first language) speakers now are over 400 million, L2 (English as the second language) speakers are 400 million, and EFL (English as the foreign language) speakers are 700 million. Thus, approximately a quarter of the world's population speaks and writes in English. No other language has ever been spoken and written by so many people in so many places.

This scale of growth in usage has resulted in an unprecedented growth in regional varieties. Thus, there are Malaysian English, Singaporean English, Indian English as the examples of varieties of English

in the Outer Circle (ESL countries) and British English, American English, Australian English, Canadian English and New Zealand English as the varieties of the Inner Circle (ENL countries). To reflect the plurality of varieties that exist, many linguists prefer to address these varieties as the ‘English Varieties’, ‘Englishes’ or ‘English Languages’.

This recent phenomenon has raised a set of questions: What kinds of English do these people speak? Is it different from ‘Standard’ English? How do these varieties affect the teachers and learners of English? These are issues that this paper would like to address.

## **HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH**

Looking back at the past is very important to understand the present position of English as the lingua franca of international communication. The history of English has been marked by invasions. The English language originated as a result of the invasion of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons from north-western regions of Europe in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. That is the reason why English is, in its structure and, partly, its vocabulary, a Germanic language (the Angles and the Saxons were Germanic peoples). Later, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the Vikings invaded parts of Britain, and their language had a strong influence on English vocabularies. In 1066, Britain was once again invaded, this time by the Normans, coming from northern France. That is the reason why about 45% of the English vocabulary originates from French (Kachru and Nelson, 2001, p. 16).

The foundations for the expansion of English were laid as the British Empire itself expanded (roughly between 1600 and 1900). As Philipson (1992, p. 109) states, ‘whenever British have settled, they have taken their language with them’. That is the main reason why English is so widespread in the world.

However for a language to be a global language, it needs more than military invasions. As Crystal (1997, pp. 7-8) states, ‘It may take a military powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it’. Starting from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economic and cultural influence of the USA has become the major reason for the spread of English.

## **MODELS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH**

Different linguists have provided a variety of labels to categorize the spread of

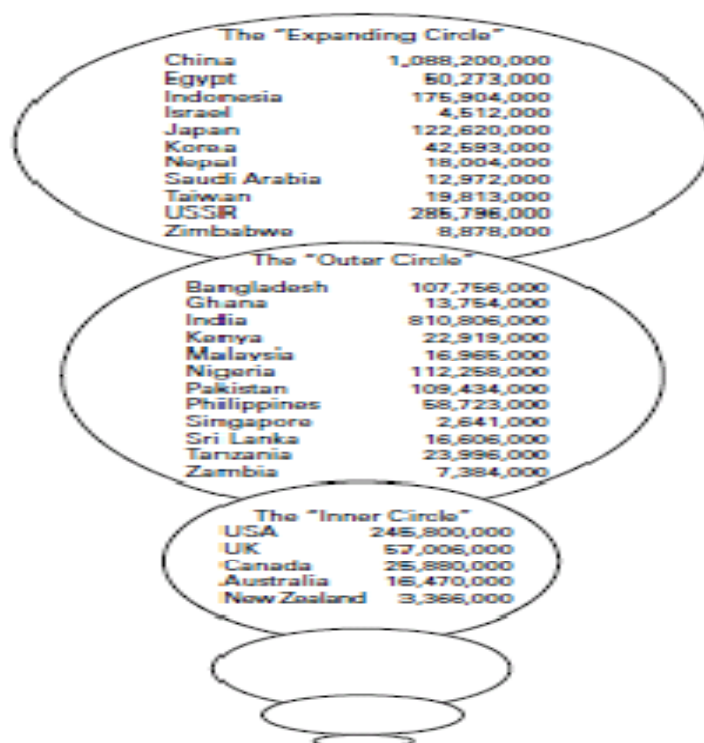
English. Although these labels all describe the same phenomenon, they exemplify different theoretical backgrounds and different approaches.

Traditionally, a distinction has been made between ESL (English as a Second Language) countries, where the language has official status, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) countries where this is not the case, and ENL (English as a native language) countries. However, this model has been criticized because it is difficult to apply in a context of multilingualism (McArthur, 1998, pp. 43–46):

1. ENL is not a single variety of English. It differs markedly from one territory to another (e.g. the US and UK), and even from one region within a given territory to another.
2. Pidgins and creoles do not fit neatly into any one of the three categories. However, they are spoken in ENL settings, e.g. in parts of the Caribbean, in ESL settings, e.g. in many territories in West Africa, and in EFL settings, e.g. in Nicaragua, Panama and Surinam.
3. There have always been large groups of ENL speakers living in certain ESL territories, e.g. India and Hong Kong, as a result of colonialism.
4. There are also large numbers of ESL speakers living in ENL settings, e.g. in the US and UK as a result of immigration.
5. The three categories do not take account of the fact that much of the world is multilingual, and that English is often spoken within a framework of code mixing and code switching.
6. The basic division is between native speakers and non-native speakers of English, that is, those born to the language and those who learnt it through education. The first group has always been considered superior to the second regardless of the quality of the language its members speak.

Another classic model is Kachru's distinction of three concentric circles of English with an Inner Circle (containing the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), an Outer Circle (containing post-

colonial English-using countries such as Kenya, the Phillipines or Nigeria) and an Expanding Circle (which holds the rest of the world). The following is the figure of Kachru's three-circle model (1992, p. 356).



This model has also been criticized by Jenkins (2000, pp. 17-19) because of the following reasons:

7. The model is solely based on geography and genetics. In reality, some English users in the Outer Circle speak it as their first language, e.g. in Singapore. Meanwhile an increasing number of speakers in the Expanding Circle use English for a very wide range of purposes with native speakers and even more frequently with other non-native speakers both in their home country and abroad.
8. There is often a grey area between the Inner and Outer Circles. In some Outer Circle countries, English may be the first language learnt for many people, and may be spoken in the home rather than purely for official purposes.

9. There is also an increasingly grey area between the Outer and Expanding Circles. Approximately twenty countries are in transition from EFL to ESL status, including: Argentina, Belgium, Costa Rica, Denmark, Sudan, Switzerland.

10. Many English speakers grow up bilingual or multilingual, using different languages to fulfill different functions in their daily lives. This makes it difficult to describe any language in their repertoire as L1, L2, or L3.

11. There is a difficulty in using the model to define speakers in terms of their proficiency in English. The fact that English is somebody's second or third language does not of itself imply that their competence is less than that of a native speaker.

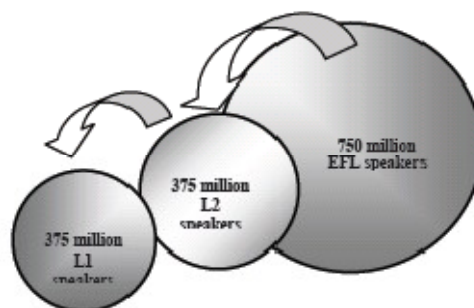
12. The model implies that the situation is uniform for all countries within a particular circle whereas this is not so. Even within the Inner Circle, countries differ in the amount of linguistic diversity they contain.

Graddol (1997, p. 10) suggests a different way of classifying the spread of English around the world. He divides English speakers into three broad categories:

- First language speakers (L1) are those who use English as the first and often the only language. These speakers commonly live in countries where the dominant culture is based around English such as US and Australia.

- Second language speakers (L2) are those who use English as a second or additional language. Since English is present in the community, L2 speakers might use local varieties of English, which reflect local indigenous cultures and languages, increasingly divergent from the varieties of English spoken by first language speakers.
- The third category comprises those who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) or foreign language speakers.

Graddol's model is more dynamic and suggests that L2 and EFL speakers will eventually outnumber L1 speakers.



The diversity of English speakers around the world has contributed to emergence of varieties of English as the following sections would explore further.

### ENGLISH VARIETIES

The term variety is equivalent to the term 'dialect'. However, many people prefer to use 'variety' rather than 'dialect' because the latter often has negative connotations of inferiority. Varieties of English can be defined as 'types of English that are identified with the residents of particular places' (Kachru and Nelson, 2001, p. 10). Varieties (or dialects) are characterized by the differences in vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (p.10). Therefore, American English, British English are basically the same as Euro English, Singaporean English, Indian English in the sense that that are all

varieties of English. The followings are some examples of varieties of English:

*Text A: Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (by Alan Sillitoe, England)*

Do you think if I won the football pools I'd gi' yo' a penny on it? Or gi' anybody else owt? Not likely. I'd keep it all mysen, except for seeing my family right. I don't believe in share and share alike, Jack. ... It's best to be a rebel so as to show 'em it don't pay to try to do you down. ... Ay, by God, it's a hard life if you don't weaken, if you don't stop the bastard government from grinding your face in the muck, though there ain't much you can do about it unless you start making dynamite to blow their four-eyed clocks to bits.

*Text B: Sara and the Wedding (by Karim Raslan, Malaysia)*

'I say take a man and treat him like he'd treat you. *Buat dulu*, only with the handsome one and then you get rid of them: Kelantanese style.' Mak Cik Khatijah sniggered to herself.

'At *bersandings* they all look so cute, like Azman. *Sayang* only their wives. *Cium-cium* and *hormat-hormat*. Yes, *sayang*; no, *sayang*. Then they change. You're not missing anything, Sara. Eh, stir it properly, otherwise it will stick to the bottom.'

'Actually, I'd better change, Mak Cik.'

'Put on your nice *baju*, Sara? Not the frumpy ones. They're for ladies like me. You must enjoy yourself, you know. Experiment. Don't listen to your cousins and your other aunts – they're all so full of themselves. Smug. *Cakap-cakap tak serupa bikin*. They think they are so special. You know, don't you, what I mean?'

'Yes, Mak Cik.' With that Sara bounced up from where she'd been squatting and dashed into the house.

*Text C: Sozaboy (by Ken Saro-Wiwa, Nigeria)*

'But why are you looking at me with corner-corner eye?' she asked again.

'Look you for corner-corner eye? Why I go look for corner-corner eye?' was my answer.

'You dey look my breast, yeye man. Make you see am now.'

Before I could twinkle my eye, lo and behold she have moved her dress and I see her two breasts like calabsh. God in Heaven. What kain thing be this? Abi, the girl no dey shame? Small time, the girl don put back him breast for him cloth. I drink my tomo, super palm-wine.

*Text D: an excerpt from The Nation (6 January 1989), an English daily newspaper published in Pakistan*

Vorontov, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, currently shuttling in the region to find a solution to the Afghan problem, met

Sahabzada Yaqub Khan this morning for about 45 minutes. Sources at Pakistan's Foreign Office are adamantly evasive to comment on the progress made so far. Implying that it must pressurise the Seven Party Alliance to withdraw some of the demands blocking the inclusion of Afghan Communists...

As stated by Kachru and Nelson (2001, p. 10), varieties are characterized by differences in pronunciation, lexical choice, and grammar. An example is in the spelling of several words such as 'gi', 'yo', 'mysen' (text A) and 'dey', 'kain', 'don' (text C) which are written according to the local pronunciation. Other examples are the insertion of phrases and vocabularies from local language as in text B ('*buat dulu, cium-cium*') and in text C ('*calabash, tomo*'), and the absence of subject-verb agreement as in text A ('it don't) and in text C ('she have, the girl don'). Notice also that in text D, the verb 'to shuttle' is followed by 'in' not by 'back and forth' or 'to and from' or 'between', and the adverb 'adamantly' which usually goes with 'against, oppose(d), refuse' in this text is followed by 'evasive' (p. 12).

However, varieties of English or Englishes or English Languages are not foreigner talk (Crystal, 2001, p. 57). They usually reflect the language and culture of local people and will increasingly be different from their origin language (Graddol, 1997, p. 2). Crystal (1997, p. 36) believes that this is a reflection of how the local people fashion out English so that the language will be able to carry their distinctive meaningful experience. In this sense, there is no variation which is superior (Honey, 1997, pp. 6-7).

## 'STANDARD' ENGLISH

The varieties of English in the Inner Circle countries are British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian

English and New Zealand English. People without an awareness of English as a global language tend to regard British and/or American English as the model or the 'Standard' English. Therefore, anything that differs from that model is considered a mistake, and the English spoken in other parts of the world is considered 'bad'. People who hold this view consider that the British and/or American English must be preserved, and prescribed to the rest of the world.

They deny the fact that there are other varieties of English present in the Inner Circle (e.g. Canadian, Australian and New Zealand English). The question is why not selecting these other varieties as the 'standard' English? There are actually no valid linguistic reasons why these other Englishes should not be considered at least as 'standard' as British and American English. People consider British English as the 'standard' one actually because of the historical reason, i.e. the main cause for the spread of English was the British Empire. American English is considered as the 'standard' language because America plays very important role in social and economic fields.

In addition, the linguistic differences within the Inner Circle do not involve only different countries, but are also internal to each country. For example, in England, there are many regional varieties found. A large-scale survey conducted in 313 localities throughout England in 1950-1961 found that the localities were usually not more than 15 miles apart (Crystal, 2002, p. 92). Thus, it is difficult to select one of the local varieties to be the 'standard' British English.

Furthermore, English never had any official body that established rules for what should be 'Standard' English. The English-speaking countries in the Inner Circle have never had any sort of codifier as in the French Academy (Kachru and Nelson,

2001, p.16). It means that what passes for the 'standard' is based only on reasons which have nothing to do with linguistic considerations. In short, electing one of these varieties to the status of Standard English is simply not possible.

People who do have an awareness of English as a global language will hold a different point of view. All varieties of English have the same legitimacy and are not linguistically inferior (or superior) to any other variety. However, there is also the need for international intelligibility, i.e. 'standard' English.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to define what 'standard' English is. McArthur (1998, p.133) states, '[Standard] English is] a widely used term that resists easy definition but is used as if most educated people nonetheless know precisely what it refers to'. Crowley (1999, p.271) explains why the definition is so difficult. First, there are confusions around the term itself. Second, defining 'standard' English is not simply a linguistic debate, but it has had significant impact upon, larger social and political questions. To this, Canagarajah (1999, p.181) states,

If 'standard English' is to be an international language, then the natural process of hybridization, diversification, and development cannot be controlled. ... However, there will be natural processes of self-regulation and intelligibility developed endonormatively as appropriate for different situations of use and changing historical contexts. ... The term 'standard' must then be used more flexibly – each variant, even registers and sociolects ... will have standards of different levels of generality for the respective communities. There will be multiple systems of English with their own norms and rules of usage. 'Standards' become pragmatic systems developed in the process of linguistic interaction by each speech community to conduct effective communication.

English is so widely spread that selecting one variety as the standard is rather absurd. What happens is that 'standard' language will emerge as soon as a language begins to be used in a given context at a given time. Any group of people will converge towards a common 'standard' if they want to communicate. The emergence of 'standard' English should be a reflection of strong bottom-up forces.

At the moment, the variety of English that can be considered sufficiently 'standard' is the written form of English used in publications of public administration, education, academia, and other official materials. Another form is not a variety that people are brought up with but a variety that is only acquired through education (Trudgill, 1999, p. 118).

#### **ENGLISH VARIETIES AND THE 'STANDARD' ENGLISH**

Some people think that only the variety called the 'Standard' English should be used and taught. Other varieties of English especially those from the Outer-Circle countries should not be accepted.

This point of view is actually not acceptable. The varieties of English and the 'standard' English should co-exist. Brutt-Griffler thinks that the existence of varieties of English in other contexts outside the Inner Circle countries should be tolerated simply because the differences within the varieties of English in the Inner Circle countries are widely accepted and not viewed as a threat to global intelligibility:

Most, if not all, Inner Circle English speakers appear willing to meet on a common linguistic plane, accept the diversity of their Englishes, and do not require of one another to prove competence in English despite the considerable differences in the varieties of English they speak and the cross-communication problems entailed thereby ... this situation

must be extended to all-English-using communities. (Brutt-Griffler, 1998, as cited in McKay, 2002, p. 50)

The need for all varieties of English to co-exist is made stronger considering the dual functions that English serves today. According to Graddol (1997, p. 56) and Crystal (1997, p. 138), English is a vehicle for international communication and the basis for constructing cultural identities. To fulfill the first function, English should be intelligible among users around the globe and consequently, requires a common standard. This demands the ability and willingness for English users, including those from the Inner Circle countries, to adjust their English and make it more comprehensible to other users of English worldwide (Jenkins, 2000, p. 135).

As for the other function, English as the language of cultural identity for language users around world, encourage the development of local forms and hybrid varieties (Kachru, 1985, p. 20). To this, Crystal (1997, p. 133) states that varieties emerge because they give identity to the group which own them. International varieties thus express national identities. If a person wish to tell everyone which country (s)he belongs to, an immediate and direct way of doing it is to speak and write in a distinctive way.

With the globalization of the world, people in different regions need to be multicultural, to respect and learn more about different world cultures, thus with English they may conduct mutual communication effectively and excitedly. Besides, people applying the dual function of English will gain more advantage than those who can only use one (p. 138). They have a variety to express their national identity; and they have another one which can guarantee international intelligibility. They can use one of them according to the situation.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

General assumption of purpose for teaching English is to develop students' proficiency which approximately as closely as possible to that of the speakers from the Inner Circle countries especially from the USA and/or the UK. Thus, British English and American English, both widely believed as the 'Standard' English, are considered as the right choice for ESL/EFL learners.

However, it is important to remember that:

- Standard English is not a language, but only one variety of the language
- With the present globalization of English, world Englishes require English users' awareness of English varieties for different purposes.

Therefore Jenkins (2000, p. 128) suggests that it is important for the teachers of English to develop a greater tolerance of difference, to negotiate, accommodate and accept plurality. Then their learners should be encouraged to learn varieties of English to meet different needs, rather than only the Standard English. It is very important to make learners aware of the pluricentricity of English and know when to use one variety versus the other (Baumgardner & Brown, 2003, pp. 245-251).

This is not an easy task for teachers because they face some problems. First, there is a well-established adoration for 'native' norms among the learners. Second, relevant teaching materials related to non-British or American varieties are rare because most of them are produced in the UK and/or the USA. Though this is not easy, yet it is not an impossible task. It demands time, persistence and willingness.

## CONCLUSION

Varieties of English reflect the voices of people and need to be acknowledged. Their existence cannot be avoided because of the

spread of English around the world. Because of the dual functions of English, people still need a 'standard' variety to maintain international intelligibility, and at the same time they need to maintain local identity by having local varieties of English. The co-existence of these two should be continually encouraged and maintained.

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