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Varieties Of English Spoken In The World

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Abstract

A few centuries ago, the English language consisted of a collection of dialects spoken mainly by monolinguals within the shores of a small island. However, English serves many purposes throughout the world now-a-days. At the beginning there was only one variety of English existed that is the native variety. There are so many varieties of English worldwide. Even within the native land of English i.e. the British Isles, one can find so many variants of English. It is not an exaggeration to state that

English is a language- the language on which the Sun does not set, whose users never sleep (Quirk, 1985:1).

Keywords: Varieties, British Isle, Native, England, Received Pronunciation.

The following section presents a description of the major varieties of English spoken in the world:

The British English

The British Isles is a geographical term which refers to the two large islands that contain the main lands of Scotland, North Ireland, the Irish Republic, Wales and England, together with a large number of other, smaller islands that are part of the territories of these countries. There are around eleven (11) varieties of English language here alone.

- **English Spoken at Orkney and Shetland** - It is a variety of English of Orkney and Shetland, known as “the Northern Isles” situated in the northern part of the British Isles. Scandinavian heritage is an integral part of Orkney and Shetland identity as it was spoken once in this area.

- ***Scottish English*** - It is the variety of English spoken in Scotland. Scottish Standard English, taken here as Standard English spoken with a Scottish accent, is a possible variety for many speakers of Scotland, depending on social context. There are only slight regional differences in Scottish Standard English across the country. The *Scottish National Dictionary* recognizes four main dialectal divisions of Scots whose names reflect their geographical distribution across Scotland; Mid or Central Scots, Southern or Border Scots, Northern Scots and Insular Scots.
- ***Irish English*** – The English language was introduced to Ireland with the coming of the Anglo-Normans from West Wales in the late 12th century. For many varieties of English on the island of Ireland, there are different designations. Anglo-Irish is an established term in the literature to refer to works written in English by others born in Ireland and the term is also used in politics.
- ***Welsh English*** – The longer-standing language of Wales is Welsh, belonging to the Celtic branch of the Indo-European family. Anglicization down the centuries was aided by events which boosted the status of English while lowering that of Welsh. Under the Acts of Union of 1536-1543, English was made the language of Government and Law in Wales.
- ***English Dialects in the North of England*** – Northern English is one of the principal dialects of English language spoken in North East England commenced by Germanic tribes.
- ***The English in the West Midlands*** - People who migrated during industrial revolution introduced this variety which is mocked at for its unusual sounds. There are two major dialects recognized in contemporary urban region viz., Birmingham and Black Country to the west.
- ***The Dialect of East-Anglia*** – It is a dialect which has immense contribution in the formation of Standard English and the advancement of American English, spoken in East Anglia.
- ***The Dialect in south of England*** – The Southeast, the Southwest and East Anglia are the major dialects spoken in Southern England.

- **Channel Island English** – The dialects of English spoken in Channel Islands are Guernsey English, Jersey English and analogous dialects of English. The original language here is Norman French, but English is the prevailing language these days.

- ***Received Pronunciation*** - Early in the 20th century Daniel Jones (1917: VIII) described the model accent in *An English Pronouncing Dictionary* as:

The accent that we most usually hear in every day speech in the families of Southern English persons whose men-folk have been educated at the great public boarding-schools. This pronunciation is also used by a considerable proportion of those who do not come from the South of England, but who have been educated at these schools. The pronunciation may also be heard, to an extent which is considerable though difficult to specify, from persons of education in the South of England who have not been educated at these schools. It is probably accurate to say that a majority of those members of London society who have had a university education, use either this pronunciation or a pronunciation not differing greatly from it.

However, as the century progressed, ‘public school’ turned to ‘boarding school’, ‘London Society’, became ‘Londoners’, and by 1926 his label had become **Received Pronunciation** or **R.P.**, a term first used, though not as a specific label, by A.J.Ellis (1869:23).

- ***British Creole*** – It is a language significantly influenced by English language used by British colonies. It is spoken by British born people of Caribbean milieu migrated to Britain since 1948.

The Americas and the Caribbean

- ***Standard American English (StAmE)*** – It is a set of dialects used in the United States by educated people in formal settings.
- ***New England English*** – It is a language spoken in New England Area that envelopes Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Islands. It consists of the dialects of the Eastern New England and the Western New England.
- ***New York, Philadelphia and other Northern Cities*** – This is one of the recognizable dialects spoken by European and non-European Americans who live in these areas.

- ***Rural Southern white Accents*** – These accents occur throughout the southern part of the United States, with the exception of southern Florida.
- ***The Urban South*** – This is the language spoken in urban parts of the South England. The urbanization took place in two phases: first phase from 1880 to the beginning of World War II and the second phase began during World War II and continues still today.
- ***The West and Midwest*** – The area stretches from western Pennsylvania across central sections of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and widens at the Mississippi river to include Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota and eventually the Great Plains and the western states as it continues to the Pacific Coast.
- ***English in Canada*** – It is a variety of English spoken in Canada and is the mother tongue of about 24 million Canadians. Since its introduction in Canada in the mid 18th century by British colonies, this variety of English has been increasing in popularity.
- ***Newfoundland English*** – This is a variant of English language with numerous dialects initiated in the region of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- ***African American Vernacular English*** – Also called Black English, this variety of Afro-American English is spoken throughout the United States and in some parts of Canada predominantly by Afro-Americans.
- ***Gullah English*** – This variant of English is predominantly spoken along the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia by African Americans. This variety comprises many African loanwords and influences from African languages in grammar and sentence structure.
- ***Cajun Vernacular English*** – Cajuns live all along the Gulf Coast from Texas to Mississippi. Though English is the sole language of education it is not extensively used within the Cajun communities and in the family settings.
- ***Chicano English*** – It is a dialect of American English used by Chicanos. One major variety of *Chicano English* is *Tejano English* which is the combination of Spanish and English humourously referred to as *Spanglish*.
- ***Bahamian English*** – It is a dialect of English spoken in the Bahamas by Bahamian Diasporas.

- ***Jamaican Creole and Jamaican English*** – These are the two varieties of English spoken in Jamaica. Jamaican English is the combination of both American and British English dialects along with many aspects of Irish intonation.
- ***Bajan English*** – It is a variety of English-based Creole language spoken in the Caribbean island of Barbados. English is the official language here and was introduced under British colonization.
- ***The Creoles of Trinidad and Tobago*** – The first Creole language spoken in Trinidad and Tobago was a French-lexicon. There are two Creole varieties of English spoken in these areas namely French and English – lexicon.
- ***Suriname Creoles*** – Suriname Creole people are inhabitants of Suriname from Africa. The Creole languages in this area are Sranan, Ndyuka and Sramaccan.
- ***New Zealand English*** – Introduced by Captain Cook in 1769, it is a form of language spoken in New Zealand. Before the advent of English language the only language spoken in New Zealand had been *Maori*. However, Australian English, British English in Southern England, Irish English, Scottish English, Received Pronunciation and the native Maori language exert major influence on New Zealand English.
- ***Maori English*** – It is a particular variety of New Zealand English considered an official language. It is not a homogeneous variety, there are several distinguishable varieties of Maori English.
- ***Australian English*** – It is a major variety of English introduced in 1788 in Australia. It is the first language, de facto official language spoken throughout the country. This variant of English language came from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland to Australia.
- ***Bislama English*** – It enjoys the respect of being the first language of many urban areas and second language for the rest of the country.
- ***Solomon Islands Pijin*** – It is a variant of English language spoken throughout the Solomon Islands.
- ***Hawaiian Creole English (HCE)*** – First introduced here by Captain Cook in 1778, HCE is a language spoken by many people in United States of Hawaii.

- ***Fiji English*** – It is variety of English language spoken in Fiji which is a group of islands in the southern Pacific Ocean. Introduced here in 18th century by British colonies, English language enjoys the status of being the official medium of instruction in schools.
- ***Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea*** – It is known as Pidgin spoken in Papua New Guinea. It is the largest and fast growing language de facto national language.
- ***Norfolk Island and Pitcaril English*** – These are the varieties of English spoken in Norfolk Island and Pitcaril. Standard British English is the role model for these varieties.

African and South & South East Asia

- ***Nigerian English*** - It is a variety of English spoken in urban areas of Nigeria and it takes its base from British English. In recent years some words from American English have made their way into Nigerian English because of its close contacts with the United States.
- ***Ghanaian English*** – It is a colonial variety of English spoken in Ghana which is a costal West African country. It is one of the official languages in Ghana along with the nine sponsored languages of the government.
- ***Liberian Settler English*** – It is a variety of English treated as official language spoken in the African country of Liberia. The settlers are the descendants of African Americans who immigrated to Libera in 19th century.
- ***Cameroon English*** – It is a post-colonial variety of English spoken in Cameroon.
- ***East African English*** – It is a variety of English language spoken in East African countries namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania since the coming of the English here during latter half of the 19th century.
- ***White South African English*** – This is the language of South Africans who are of European descent.
- ***Black South African English*** – It is the variety of English spoken as first language of multilingual Black elite in South Africa.

- **Indian South African English** – This is the variety of English spoken by the people of Indian descent living in South Africa from South India primarily from Tamil and Telugu, and miniature members from Malayalam and Kannada.
- **Cape Flats English** – Introduced in the working class neighbourhoods in Cape Town by British colonial regime in 18th century, it is the variety of English spoken in Cape Town.
- **St.Helena English** – It is the variety of English spoken in St.Helena which is located in the South Atlantic Ocean. It is now England's second oldest residual colony after Bermuda.
- **Indian English** – Indian English is a cover term for a number of varieties of English used as a second language in India. These varieties evolved during and after the colonial rule of Britain in India. English is one of the official languages of India, with about 300 million speakers.
- **Pakistani English** – It is the variety of English used in Pakistan. English was introduced in Indo-Pak subcontinent in 16th century by the British. In 1947 India and Pakistan got independence from the British and English was retained as an official language in both countries.
- **Singapore English** – Introduced by the British in 1819, it is the variety of English spoken in Singapore. Standard Singapore English and Singapore Colloquial English (known as *Singlish*) are the major varieties of English in this country.
- **Malaysian English** – It is the variety of English spoken in Malaysia as a second language. Malaysian English and Malaysian Colloquial English (known as *Manglish*) are the two varieties of English used in Malaysia.
- **Philippine English** – It is the variety of English spoken in the Philippines. English was introduced here in 1900s and enjoys the status of being the official language along with Filipino. It is a variety of General American English.

Conclusion

The process of colonization started when the Portuguese, in their search for feasible spice markets, came to India through a new sea route discovered by Vasco da Gama in 1498 and established their colonies along the west coast of India. A century later the English, the Dutch, the Spanish and the French entered and there was a war for the dominance among them. The English emerged victorious and commenced establishing their suzerainty. Queen Elizabeth-I granted her assent for the establishment of *British East India Company*, a trading body on the last day of the year 1600. In course of time the English established their colonies all over India with a view to get control over the people's land, wealth and power. Before 1800, the East India Company did not show any interest for the education of Indians but imparted English education only to their employees and some Anglo-Indians.

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