




# PLACE

(textbook chapter 3)



# Social factors...

- There are different social factors affecting language variation.
- Can you name any?

# Place...

- Regional differences are something everybody acknowledges.
  - *Because there are differences even at the level of formal language...*
  - *For example, British vs. American English*

# Place...

- Sociolinguists have always been concerned with place.
- Be it nation, region, county, city, neighborhood, or block, place has long been adduced as a key correlate of linguistic variation, and geography has often entered into explanations of variation.

# But why?

- Different places/varieties established by people from different places, backgrounds
- Barriers to interaction let each variety develop in its own way (or avoid changes that happen elsewhere)
- Different varieties are in contact with different other languages or varieties
- This is easier to understand by looking at actual examples

# How English Evolved?

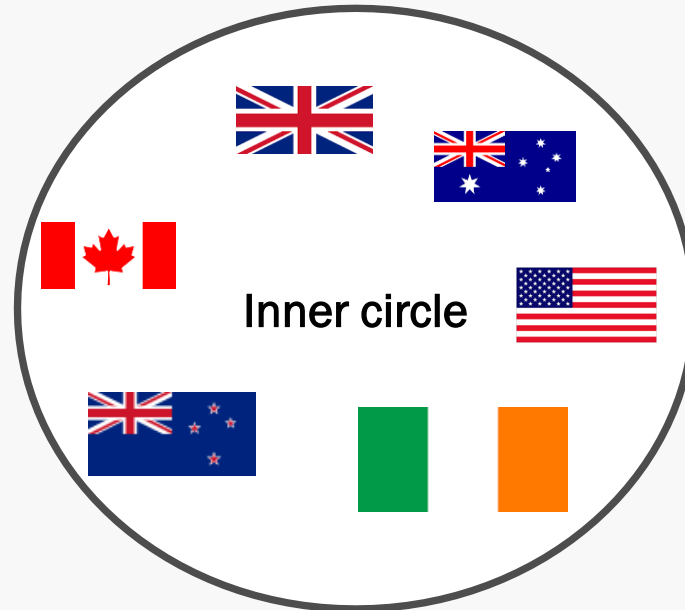


# “Circles” of English

- According to the Indian linguist, Braj Kachru, English around the world can be defined in terms of three concentric circles:
  - *Inner circle*
  - *Outer circle*
  - *Expanding circle*

# Inner Circle

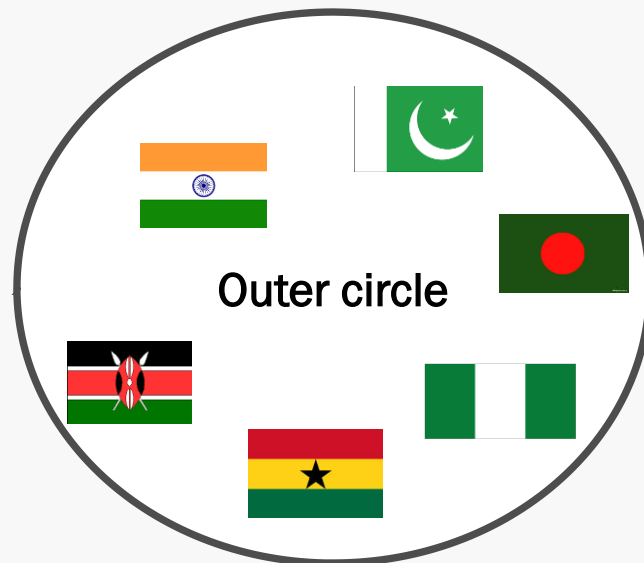
- The inner circle refers to the traditional, historical and sociolinguistic origins of English where it is used **as a first or native language**- English is the official language.





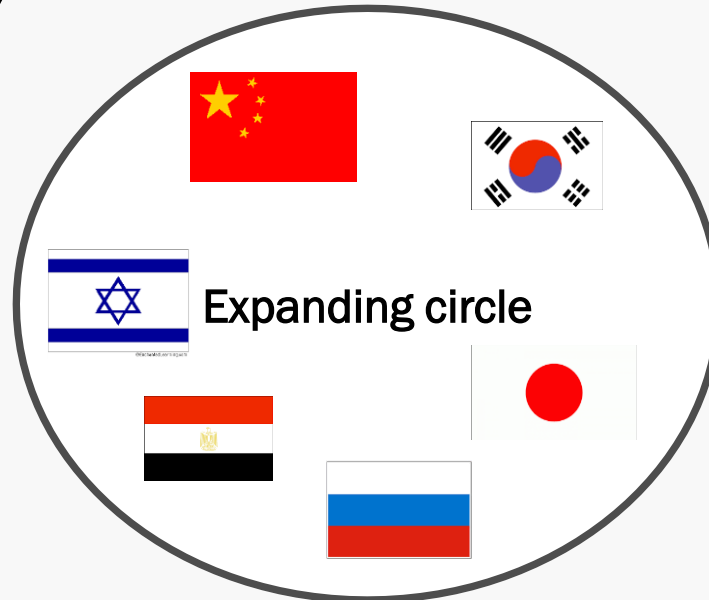
# Outer Circle

- The outer circle includes countries colonized by Britain and the United States where English is spoken as a second language and where it plays important historical and governmental role in multilingual settings.



# Expanding Circle

- The countries in the expanding circle, did not institutionalize English as an official language, but recognized the importance of English as a foreign language (almost the whole world?).



# Three Circles...

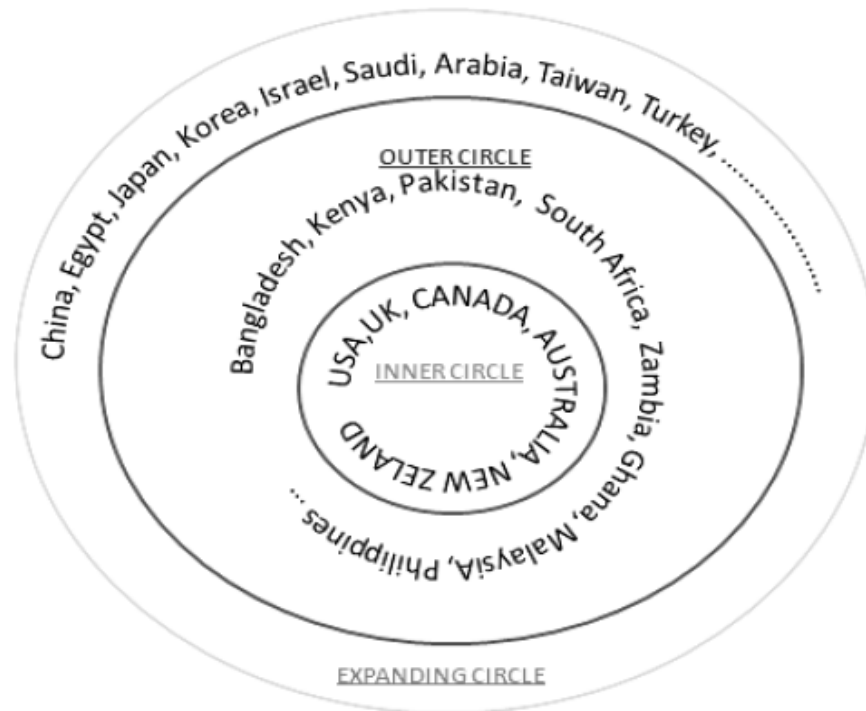
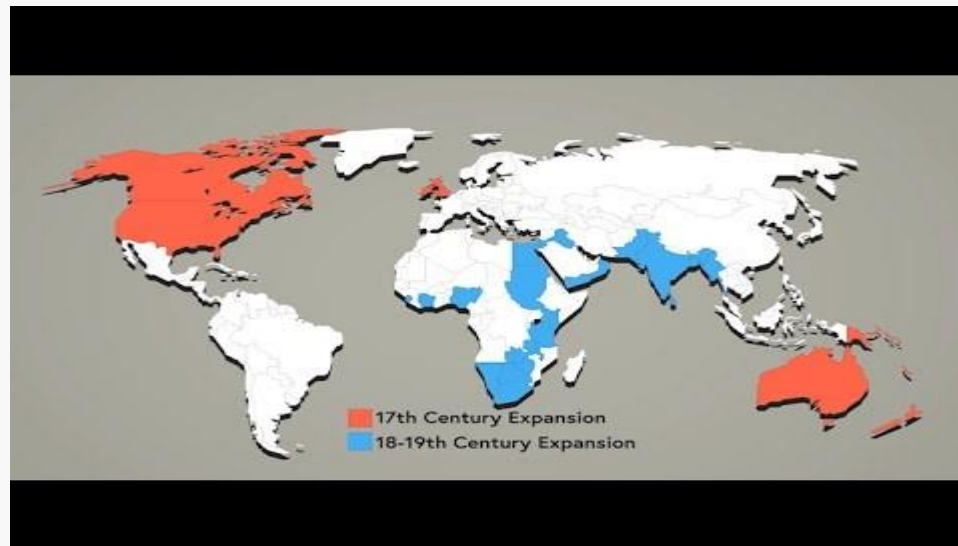


Figure 1. Concentric circle model (Adapted from Kachru (1997))

# How English Became a global language?



# Recognizing regional Englishes

- Many pronunciation differences
  - *Especially vowels (which change fast/easily)*
- Occasional grammatical differences
  - *I have just eaten vs. I just ate*
  - *I might could do that*
  - *Different from, different than, different to*
  - *I'm after eating*
- Many lexical (word) differences

# TPS: what do you call...

1. A sweetened carbonated beverage
  - [http://dialect.redlog.net/staticmaps/q\\_105.html](http://dialect.redlog.net/staticmaps/q_105.html)
2. Rubber-soled shoes that you'd wear in the gym
  - [http://dialect.redlog.net/staticmaps/q\\_73.html](http://dialect.redlog.net/staticmaps/q_73.html)
3. A sandwich, usually filled with cold meat or cheese, served on a long bun
  - [http://dialect.redlog.net/staticmaps/q\\_64.html](http://dialect.redlog.net/staticmaps/q_64.html)

# Local and lexical

- What words (if any) are associated with your home region?
- Do people from your home region actually use those words?
  - *Or are they out-dated stereotypes?*

# How isolation affects the development of different dialects...

■ Three types of isolation:

- social
- physical
- linguistic



# Physical Isolation

- When a group of speakers of a dialect are cut off from another group of speakers.
- Actual barriers to travel
  - *Examples: mountain valleys, islands*
- **Example:** Newfoundland English
  - *Big island in the north Atlantic*
- Retention of traditional language features
  - *Stay where you're to*
  - *I'm after hearing that*
  - *I loves it*

# Linguistic isolation

- When speakers of a dialect are cut off from other varieties and have maintained older features and they have developed differently than those other varieties of that language.

# Linguistic isolation

- “Islands” of one language in a “sea” of another
- **Example:** Québec French
  - *French speakers surrounded by English*
- Again, retention of traditional features
  - *Flambe, not flamme, for ‘flame’*
- Some effects of contact with English
  - *Un bill (bill), des bines (beans)*

# Social Isolation

- A dialect of a language that has been socially isolated by conventions or attitudes (e.g. prejudice, distrust, difference)
- **Example:** African Nova Scotian English
  - *Speakers of traditional African American English surrounded by whites, limited integration*
- Again, retention of traditional features
  - *He gonna go*
  - *I goes*

# Other factors may reinforce isolation

- Limited access to education, media
- Limited in-migration – nobody bringing in innovations from “home” community

# Shibboleths...

- It refers to a situation where the pronunciation of a word becomes a stereotype of a speech community.
- Most varieties of English have their own shibboleth.

## Examples:

Newfoundland: *b'y* for 'boy'

Jamaicans: *mon* for 'man'

Pittsburghers: *dahntahn* for 'downtown'

# 3-minute essay

- Do you think local dialects are going to change or disappear, or not?
- What forces may affect their survival?
  - *Media, internet, travel, tourism, education...*

# Discussion

- Were you ever in a situation where people could tell where you were from by the way you talk?
- What accent or other linguistic features gave you away?



# Discussion

- Can you think of any regional *shibboleths*?
  - *A word whose specific pronunciation is associated with a particular group*

# Discussion

- Can you think of movies, theater, or TV shows where actors have portrayed somebody from a different dialect area and either succeeded so well that they fooled you, or failed miserably?
  - *What about House?*
  - *Matt Damon in Invictus?*
  - *Craig Ferguson in The Drew Carey Show?*
  - *Brad Pitt in anything?*

# Discussion

- What other shibboleths can you think of?
- Do they serve as identity markers?
- Are any of them associated with social characteristics other than place, such as class, gender, or ethnicity?

# Discussion

- Can you think of any other words like *eejit* in the shibboleths box, where a particular (local) pronunciation of a word doesn't mean the same thing as the standard pronunciation?

# Exercise (text Ch. 3, no. 1)

- “Translate” into North American English:

- As I left the lift, the caretaker stopped me. “I was just about to knock you up,” he said. “The estate agents just rang, and they’d like to show your flat. You’ll have to sort out all that rubbish.” The flat looked like a dustbin and smelled of spirits. Sweets, draughts, rubbers, and biros covered the table. Dungarees, trousers, vests, and pants were all over the cupboard. Where had that nappy come from? Or that dummy? Whose torch was that? Whose wellies? The kitchen was even worse. Courgettes, bits of aubergine, biscuit crumbs, and empty crisp packets littered the floor. Treacle was everywhere. It was too much. I took the lot down to the pavement, tossed it in my boot, and left it under the flyover next to the chemist’s. I doused it in petrol and lit a match.

# Exercise (text Ch. 3, no. 1, part 2)

■ After you translate the text:

- (a) If you're not British or North American, which of the underlined words do you use? If you don't use an underlined word, what word do you use instead?
- (b) If you're North American, which underlined words were you somewhat familiar with, maybe through media or books? Are any of them words that you've read in books, only vaguely understood, and never looked up?
- (c) If you're British, are there any underlined words (or specific meanings) here that you didn't realize might be unfamiliar to speakers of another variety of English? Are there any underlined words that you don't use yourself? What words do you use instead?

# Exercise (text Ch. 3, no. 2)

- Survey five people (or more). Find out where they're from, and what they call:
  - (a) A sweetened fizzy drink
  - (b) A long padded piece of furniture, usually with arms, that seats several people
  - (c) Rubber-soled shoes that you'd wear in the gym
  - (d) Not going to school when you're supposed to
  - (e) A sandwich, usually filled with cold meat or cheese, served on a long bun
  - (f) The covered area in front of the front door of a house, usually up a couple of steps
- Report on what you discover

# Exercise (text Ch. 3, no. 3)

- Using the list of words given below, ask at least five people:
  - (a) How do you pronounce this word?
  - (b) Do you know of any other pronunciations for this word? What are they?
  - (c) Who uses these other pronunciations?
- Word list: *herb, lever, lieutenant, news, student, missile, leisure, marry, merry, ice, man*
- Report on what you discover



# Exercise (text Ch. 3, no. 4)

- Watch some television (on the internet, maybe). Look for shows (older or recent) whose location matters, such as *Dukes of Hazzard*, *Ballykissangel*, *Heartbeat*, *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders*, *Under One Roof* (the Singaporean one), or *Republic of Doyle*
- What distinct language features do you notice?
- If you come from one of the places (supposedly) represented by these shows, how do you feel about the idea that your people speak like that?
- Do you ever feel like kicking people who say, “Wow, you sound just like the people on...”?

# Exercise (text Ch. 3, no. 5)

- Ask people who travel or move a lot if they have any stories about misunderstandings due to words meaning different things in different places
- If they can't think of any, try prompting them with words like *togs*, *rashers* (of bacon), *bent*, *thongs*, *trainers*, or some of the words from exercise 1