

Seminar: The Diversity of English I/II

Instructor: Yutai Watanabe

Email:

1. Theme and content

The English language, once only spoken in the British Isles, has spread around the world with an estimated 1.5 billion speakers, including many who are non-native. At the same time, the language has been developing a wide range of variations, depending on the social and cultural contexts in which it has been transplanted and used. The seminar will be concerned with the major varieties of English both in the Inner and Expanding Circles.

We will start out in the Spring Semester by confirming our conceptual framework based on Kachru's (1985) Three Circle Model and Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model of Postcolonial Englishes. Then we will compare some varieties of Inner Circle English, with regard to the phonological and lexical features. In 2018, we also took a specific interest in the 'lesser-known' regional accents such as Welsh and Pittsburghese. For feature identification, we will watch a number of locally produced movies and YouTube clips.

The Fall Semester will be dedicated to examining English in the Expanding Circle, particularly in mainland Europe and Japan. While analysing the features of non-native accented English, we will contrast the two regions in respect of the users' various ideologies and attitudes towards English. Through the process of individual or collaborative research, we will also discuss a number of sociolinguistic issues: the dichotomy between L1 and L2 speakers, the native-speakerism, plurilingual individuals in multilingual societies, etc.

2. Course methods

Students will take turns to review book chapters or journal articles assigned by the instructor, noting key terms and concepts, which can then be proactively studied by consulting reference materials. The other students in the class will contribute to the discussion with their questions and observations. Each student is expected to write a short/extended essay on their chosen topic towards the end of the 3rd/4th year.

3. Selection process

(1) The seminar membership is limited to a maximum of eight 3rd year students. A few 4th year students may be accepted only if they are highly motivated and demonstrate a solid background in linguistics.

(2) Email me with an essay describing your interest in the seminar attached, by no later than the 5th November at 17:00. It is a good idea to refer to the relevant linguistics courses you have taken. My email address:

(3) Interviews will be held in my office between the 7th and 30th of November. I will arrange a mutually convenient date and time. The office is . Applicants who are studying overseas during this time may be interviewed by email or when they return to Japan next spring.

4. Open seminar

I will be pleased to invite prospective students to observe the seminar on the following dates and times. The classroom is S601 on the 6th floor of Sotobori Building.

- (1) Friday 5th October in the 3rd period (13:10—14:50)
- (2) Friday 12th October in the 3rd period (13:10—14:50)

Please tell me your intended date of visit at least three days in advance by email, so I can prepare handouts.

5. Requirements for application

Successful applicants must be knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the seminar theme. They are expected to have completed or be studying 200-level linguistics courses with a good understanding.

6. Who will benefit from this seminar?

Students interested in (socio)linguistic topics: English dialects and accents, native vs. non-native pronunciation, ‘Japan English’ in education, etc.

Students understanding the rationale for English as a medium of instruction in GIS, despite a majority of professors/lecturers being non-native English speakers.

Students who find the following videos interesting. Viewer discretion is advised, as some clips contain coarse language.

- (1) ‘Happy Hour’
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZLBY3lYtsQ>
- (2) ‘Singlish Chat on Phone’
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwhmJaWIU2M>
- (3) ‘24 Accents’
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dABo_DCIpM&feature=related
- (4) ‘藤井美菜 CM’
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkT8AE8Ad4Q>