

SUMMARY OF WASEDA LECTURES

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These lectures first discuss the notion of English as an International Language (EIL) and the legitimization of Philippine English as an indigenized variety of English. They then move on to a description of the linguistic features of Philippine English at the phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels. Finally, potential sources of miscommunication shall be dealt with.

English as an International Language (EIL) and the Legitimization of Philippine English

There are four indicators of the status of English as an international language: (1) the economic strength of English (i.e. economic strength of its language community); (2) the number of countries (i.e. a total of 63) in which it is used either as a first language of a considerable portion of the population, or as an official language of the country; (3) the extent to which a language is studied as a foreign language (i.e. English is the most widely studied foreign language in the whole world); and (4) the dominance of English in 'international domains' such as economy, diplomacy, and science (Ammon, 2001).

In explaining the legitimization of Philippine English as a variety of world Englishes, perhaps it will be helpful to invoke Platt, Weber, and Ho's (1984, pp. 2-3) criteria (quoted in Bautista, 2000, pp. 2-3). They are as follows: (1) It has developed through the educational system, that is, it has been taught as a subject and, in many cases, also used as a medium of instruction; (2) It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was not the language spoken by most of the population; (3) It is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write it in the region where it is used, e.g. in letter writing, in the writing of literature. It may be used as a lingua franca among those speaking different native languages or even among those who speak the same native language but use English because it is felt to be more appropriate for certain purposes; and (4) It has become 'localized' or 'nativized' by adding some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words, expressions. Given all these criteria, it may be said that Philippine English is a legitimate variety of world Englishes.

Phonological Features

Philippine English may be characterized as consisting of five vowels [a], [ɛ], [ɪ], [ɔ], and [u]. Another characteristic is the use of substitution for certain sounds. These include the use of [a] for [æ], [ɛ] for [e], [ɪ] for [i], [ɔ] for [o], and [u] for [u]. The consonant system, on the other hand, consists of [b], [d], [t] [g], [k], [s], [ʃ], [h], [j], [č], [l], [m], [n], [ŋ], [r], [w], [y], and [z]. In addition, [θ] is substituted by [t], [ð] by [d], and (ž) by [š].

Regarding its supra-segmentals, Philippine English may be described as follows. First, it uses the final rising intonation in all types of questions, both *yes-no* and *wh* questions. Second, Philippine English rhythm is syllable-timed, rather than stress-timed. Next, speakers of Philippine English put the primary stress on different syllables of words such as *colleague*, *menu*, *thereby*, *hazardous*, *pedestal*, *baptism*, *utensil*, *percentage*, *dioxide*, *itinerary*, *preparatory*. Added to this list are words stressed by the typical Philippine English speaker on a syllable different from the General American English (GAE) norm. These include *govérn*, *catégory*, *circúmstance*, *afflúent*, *charácteric*, *adólescent*. In GAE, the primary stress is found in the first syllable of the first five words, whereas in the last word the third syllable is stressed instead of the second, as in Philippine English.

Lexical Features

The lexical features of Philippine English have developed via the following processes: normal expansion, preservation of items which have been lost or become infrequent in other varieties, coinage, and borrowing.

Normal expansion includes two types, namely, adaptations and extensions of meaning and shift in part of speech. Examples of the first type are *Pampers* (which means disposable diapers), *pentel pen* (color marker). Examples of the second are *fiscalize* (from 'fiscal'), *conscienticize* (from 'conscience').

The second process may be exemplified by the following: *folk* ('provincial,' 'barrio'), *solon* (which means 'lawmaker'), *viand* (which means 'meal'), *family way* (meaning 'pregnant').

Coinage derives from the following processes: (1) analogical constructions (e.g. *awardee* (for recipient of an award, patterned after *examinee*, *grantee*), *jubilarian* (for one celebrating a jubilee)); (2) clipping (e.g. *ballpen* (for ball point pen), *Amboy* (for a Filipino perceived to be too pro-American)); (3) abbreviation (e.g. *NGO* (for non-government organization), *CR* (for comfort room, i.e. rest room in American English)); (4) total innovations (e.g. *Imeldific*, *Taglish*, *presidentiable* (potential presidential candidate)); (5) English compounds (e.g. *American time* (being

punctual), *bar girl*, *bedsheet*, *captain ball*, *colonial mentality*); and (6) combinations of one English element with one borrowed element: (e.g. *bakya crowd*, *balikbayan box*, *colegiala English*).

Borrowing from different languages (e.g. Tagalog) may be classified according to the semantic fields to which they belong, namely, flora and fauna (e.g. *abaca*), food (e.g. *adobo*), national identity/culture (e.g. *amor propio*), politics (e.g. *barangay*), life (e.g. *arbulario*), and expressions (e.g. *daw* or *kuno* (shorthand for “it is said,” “according to the grapevine”)).

Syntactic Features

The syntactic features of Philippine English include the following (1) lack of subject-verb agreement especially when there are intervening prepositional phrases (e.g. *The teacher, as well as the students, are leaving for an educational trip tonight*) and when special nouns are used (e.g. *The information are confidential*); (2) missing or inappropriate article usage (e.g. *[A] Majority of the respondents believed that capital punishment was wrong*); (3) inappropriate preposition (e.g. *Oil price hike will result to an increase in the prices of prime commodities*); (4) inappropriate tense usage (e.g. *The drug was found beneficial after it has been ignored for the longest time*); (5) substitution of count nouns for mass nouns and vice-versa (e.g. *The equipments were found defective*); and (6) lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement (e.g. *The suspects who has been identified by the police will turn themselves in*).

Discourse Features

One discourse feature of Philippine English is the absence of a significant difference in careful and casual styles. Another is that Filipino writing in English is basically monostylistic, i.e. formal classroom composition style is prevalent even in texts which call for an informal style.

Potential Sources of Miscommunication

At the phonological level, miscommunication may occur due to the absence of discrimination between critical sounds of English and the non-recognition of pause breaks. At the lexical level, miscommunication may result from the use of localisms (e.g. *comfort room*) by a Philippine English user when interacting with a user of another variety of English. On the other hand, a potential source of miscommunication at the syntactic level is inappropriate tense usage. Finally, at the discourse level, miscommunication may occur in reading and writing when the expectations of users of English in the Inner Circle deviate from those of in the Outer Circle and even those in the Expanding Circle.