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## Phonetic Features of Linguistic Units

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the main phonetic features of the variants of the English language of the countries of the "outer circle". The authors give a general description of West African, East African, Indian, Singaporean, and Filipino English at the level of phonetics and phonology. The obtained conclusions make it possible to judge that the linguistic situation in the modern world is such that it becomes almost impossible to ignore new phonetic features in the variants of the English language. With the growth of the number of people who speak English, who express their culture through it through the use of pronunciation patterns of their native language, the phonetics of modern English is also changing.

**Key words and phrases:** phonetics; phonology; society; variant of the English language; West African English; East African English; Indian English; Singaporean English; Filipino English.

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Considerable interest of researchers is attracted by new variants of the English language, which are proposed to be regarded as independent national variants that establish and develop their own norms, through which the national and cultural identity of the people is expressed and preserved. In the works of linguists, one can increasingly come across the idea that adherence to the intra-national norm of the English language is a conscious desire of the speakers of this variant to focus the attention of the interlocutor on their national identity with the help of language and, therefore, to preserve national identity. It can be assumed that pronunciation standards are gradually fading into the background, giving way to dialects that need to be studied and taken into account in the process of intercultural communication. Thus, the development of these issues is in our time a wide field for scientific research. Uzbek and foreign linguists explore the sociolinguistic, socio-economic, socio-cultural aspects of the spread of the English language, the result of which is the formation and development of world variants of the English language, receiving the status of an independent means of communication within the country and in business intercultural interaction. However, studies in the phonetic systems of the world variants of the English language are still being carried out without a proper system and the necessary intensity.

The purpose of this article is to identify and consider the main phonetic and phonological features of the variants of the English language of the countries of the "outer circle". Thus, within the framework of this study, the following tasks were set: to clarify the categorization of the spread of the English language in the world; to identify distinctive phonetic features of variants in the territories of the "outer circle" of the spread of the English language. The most cited classification was proposed by the Indian linguist B. Kachru and is known as the sociolinguistic theory of "three concentric circles" [10, p. 434-455]:

1. The Inner Circle is represented by countries where English is the native language: Great Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. In the countries of this "circle" English is the national language, but, despite this, there is no single pronunciation option in them. So, in the UK, the population of each of its four parts uses its own, unlike others, regional type of pronunciation in speech. It is worth noting that all of them are even more different from the

accepted national pronunciation in the United Kingdom - Received Pronunciation (RP). The formation of phonetic features of these pronunciation variants was significantly influenced by local languages and dialects that still exist on the territory of the country, but are less commonly used [5, p. 245].

2. The "outer circle" (Outer Circle) includes countries in which English is the official second language: India, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Nigeria, Malaysia, Philippines and others. Historically, these countries were British colonies and the history of the English language in them dates back hundreds of years. It is this fact that played a leading role in the development of pronunciation variants of the English language of these countries. Freed from English domination, they did not abandon the use of the English language. Moreover, the language is constantly changing, pronunciation forms are still in their infancy, because. At the moment, there is an outflow of native speakers of English - residents of Great Britain - and English is under a very strong influence of local dialects [5,p. 248].

3. "Expanding Circle" (Expanding Circle) represent countries where English is the main foreign language in which international communication is carried out in the field of business, technology, diplomacy: China, Japan, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Russia, European countries and other. The study of English in them is proceeding at an "accelerating pace": a whole industry has appeared associated with teaching English, it has become a kind of criterion for a person's education, a pass to the world of business contacts and diplomacy.

Although the "labels" presented are inaccurate and somewhat misleading, many scholars would agree with P. Bruthiaux that they offer "constructive conventions for the classification of variants of the English language on a global scale" [6]. There are no clear distinctions between "circles", since "the status of the English language in the language policy of countries changes from time to time" [7]. Researcher T. I. Shevchenko, generalizing the experience of considering the systemic variability of the phonology of the English language in different territories of the globe, notes many common processes affecting all elements of the system: consonants, vowels, word stress, rhythm and intonation. At the same time, the decisive factors in the variability and identity creation of each specific type of pronunciation are the following characteristics of the social context: the time of the transfer of the English language to a new territory, indicating a certain stage in the development of the language norm in England, the initial region of residence and the social composition of native speakers, the impact of contacting languages and cultures [5, p. 253]. The scientific novelty of this study lies in the fact that a comprehensive analysis of the phonetic and phonological differences between the variants of the English language of the countries of the "outer circle" was carried out, where the history of the development of the English language is a process of transition from the original variety to new forms of existence, the norms of the English language change and adapt to the local language, which makes these options interesting to consider and study.

West African English is used in such former colonies of the British Empire as Nigeria, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, and Cameroon. In Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone, English is still de facto the official language, but in fact it has long since been superseded by local languages. In The Gambia, the official language of English is gradually being replaced by French. And in the future it is planned to abandon the use of English in favor of the native language. In Ghana, the situation is better - about a third of the population speaks English there. And the Cameroonian government is also keen to keep the use of English and French, also the official language, but in reality very few Cameroonians speak both French and English, many neither. The government has set up several bilingual schools in an attempt to teach both languages more equally. The main phonetic features of the West African variant [2, p. 128-130]:□

➤ This variant is non-rhotic, i.e. sound [t] is not pronounced. Thus the words ten and turn

are homophones;

- The diphthongs [ɪə] and [ɛə] correspond to [ɪa] and [ea]. For example, peer - [pɪə], pair - [peə];
- Consonants at the end of words like button and apple are not syllable-forming like they are in RP. Compare: button - [bʊtɪn] (West African) - [bʌtn] (RP), apple - [apʊl] (West African) - [æpl] (RP); □
- it is allowed to pronounce combinations of letters mb and ng at the end of words - bomb, plumb, climb, etc.; ring, king, bang, etc.;
- Reduction of consonants at the end of a word. For example, last - [las], passed - [pas]; □
- Stunming of voiced consonants at the end of a word. For example, proud - [praʊt], robe - [rɒp]; □
- This option is isosyllabic (syllable-timed language), which makes it illegible and incomprehensible to native English speakers.

East African English, according to J. Schmidt, is limited to three countries - its "heart" - Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania [8, p. 230]. Some features can also be found in other parts of Africa, but East African English differs from other varieties in its coherent unity. As a native language at home, it is used by people with higher education in mixed marriages. The level of East African English depends on two factors: education (on the duration and degree of formal education in English) and on social status (on the need and amount of language use in everyday life) [3, p. 61].

Thus, the variants of the English language that exist in the territories of the "outer circle" are based on the pronunciation norms of the "inner circle", but at the same time develop their own phonetic rules, fixing them in dictionaries and textbooks. At the moment, scientists are interested in the question: will these dialects cross a certain line and form into separate languages that are not dependent on English? If this happens, there is a risk that the phonetics of these dialects will become completely incomprehensible to other English speakers. To achieve successful intercultural communication, which is the interaction of cultures through their representatives, and cross-cultural communication, which is a "point of contact" of several cultures, it is necessary to take into account the phonetic features of the interlocutor's language system, since these aspects are subject to cultural influence and reinterpretation. This means that in order to correctly understand the native speaker of one or another variant of the English language, one should study the territorial features of pronunciation.

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