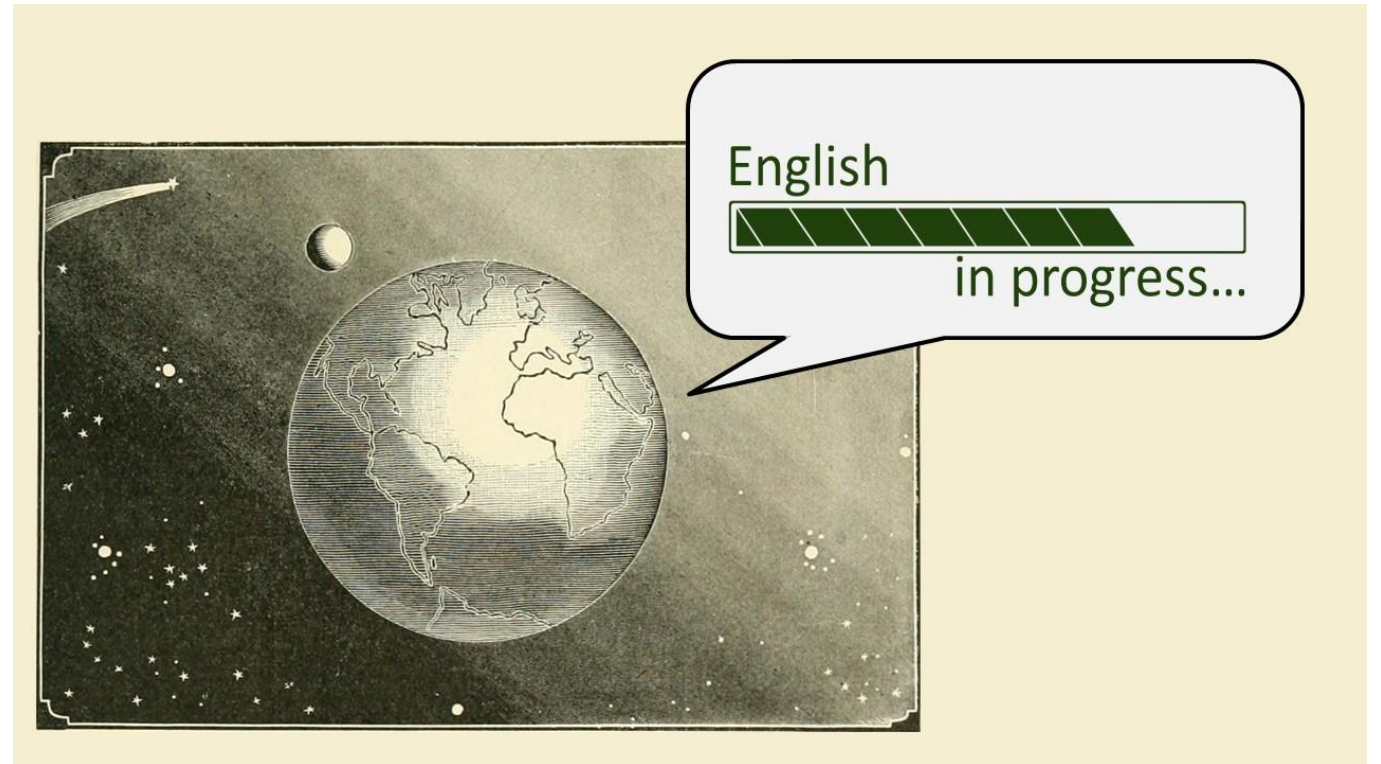# Minority Englishes

Heddwen Newton

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Heddwen Newton

I write two newsletters:

A monthly newsletter on English as spoken by the younger generations and as spoken all around the world: **englishinprogress.substack.com** 1500 subscribers and growing every day ☺

A monthly newsletter on how Dutch speakers speak English: **englishandthedutch.substack.com** Almost 900 subscribers. Less growth for this one, but just as much love from me!

25-minute presentation

25-minute discussion about how you could give minority Englishes a place in your classroom

Any questions? Just stop me and ask!

Minority English = an English variant that is spoken by a cultural minority

The four that get the most media and academic attention:

- Australian Aboriginal English
- Multicultural London English
- Lavender Englishes (LGBTQ)
- African American English

What I would like you to come away with:

- Other variants of English are not "wrong".
- Code switching is a thing.
- "Cool English" often comes from culturally repressed minorities.

- Lots of resources and YouTube videos to use in the classroom

Australian aboriginal English

That's my aunty, unna!

Mob

Resources:

https://theconversation.com/10-ways-aboriginal-australians-made-english-their-own-128219

(Not much on YouTube)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-hQC_BKzFE

Multicultural London English

Basically cockney plus immigrant influences, such as Jamaica

You may think your students don't know this variety of English, but they do!

Musicians: Little Simz, Stormzy, Dizzee Rascal

Netflix series: Top boy

Some great resources on YouTube, e.g.:

https://youtu.be/wGJeLMCORQs?si=4rXD_Ck8S04Mk6cm

Just google the term. There is tons!

Lavender languages
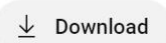
A code to recognise one another

A way to have secret conversations

Not much on YouTube (strangely!). This great video is about lavender Englishes, but also other lavender languages:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjqKcvu3Ycs

How Queer Communities Created Secret Languages | Otherwords

Storied
804K subscribers

Subscribed

12K

Share   Download   Clip

Polari

Gay slang used in London until the late 1960s

A great topic to explain *why* subcultures often develop their own way of talking, and why this was even more important during times of persecution.

This YouTube video is great to show how difficult it was to understand by people who aren't "in the know". (I like to start it somewhere in the middle and just show it for 20 seconds or so)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8yEH8TZUsk

naff

to zhuzh

to ogle

camp

Ballroom English

Documentaries: Paris is Burning, Kiki

Series: Ru Paul's drag race

Terms:

let's have a kiki

spill the tea

No good short resources on YouTube, unfortunately. If you have the time to do a longer project, I recommend watching "Kiki" (trailer here), but this is much more about Ballroom culture than about the language.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8XBGt4-qDs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hCIN6Gctes

African American ~~Vernacular~~ English

- ~~Ebonics~~
- Black English

Your students definitely know this type of English!
Musicians: Ice Spice, Beyonce, 50 cent
Series: Atlanta, Swarm, Black-ish
Films: Sorry to bother you, Get Out

I finna go do this
Can I aks a question?
They don't be trying to understand.

African American ~~Vernacular~~ English

Resources:

Great overall video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YxH43Cw6tI

AAE in American schools:

https://youtu.be/9iVOZ_-Xwrc?si=FeGAX89jKJF_oCH9

The lady in pink in this video is, I think, a great example of AAE:

https://youtu.be/aQrtB7cZDrA?si=h6gDXf0mZW-Rv_z4&t=45

What I would like you to come away with:

- Other variants of English (and Dutch!) are not "wrong", they just have different grammar rules, pronunciation and vocabulary.

- People who grew up speaking a different variant have to learn to **code switch.** This costs brain power. They deserve respect, not derision.

- "Cool English" often comes from culturally repressed minorities. (Is this cultural appropriation? Is that bad? That's a discussion question!)

Discussion question

Would you teach your students about minority Englishes? Why or why not?

From what age/ English level would this subject be appropriate?

Would you get push-back from colleagues? ("We only teach British English here!")

Discussion question

Do you have students who code switch? (e.g. from Moroccan Dutch to general Dutch?) Would a lesson on code switching be interesting or relevant?

Discussion questions could include: How much mental load does code switching really take? Should students who have a different home language or dialect get extra time on tests?

Discussion question

Would a lesson on queer community Englishes make your queer students feel more marginalised or more empowered?

Discussion question

Would you talk about cultural appropriation with your students?

Discussion questions could include: Is it cultural appropriation when non-black people use AAE "slang" on the internet? Is that bad?

(My own opinion on this is reflected by eminent linguist John McWhorter, [for example in this piece.)](#)