

# Study on the English Varieties of “One Belt, One Road” Countries\*

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**Abstract**—There are various studies about “one belt, one road” countries. This study is about the varieties of English in different countries. The hypotheses of characteristics analysis are proposed and tested. The tool used in this study is AntConc3.2.4 and log-likelihood ratio calculator. The target corpora are Hong Kong corpus, Singapore corpus, India corpus and Kenya corpus. The main characters discussed are in lexis, some of which are about grammars. Some cross-linguistics influences are discussed.

**Index Terms**—the inner circle, the outer circle, the expanding circle, English varieties

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the division standard of Kachru (1985), the whole world is divided into three circles: The Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle.

The nations that use English as the mother tongue belongs to the inner circle, like British English, American English, Canadian English, Australia English, etc. Some nations that use English as second language belongs to the outer circles, such as Africa English, India English, etc. the others that use English as the foreign language belongs to the expanding circle, like Chinese English, Japanese English.

Nations belongs to the outer circle are somewhat influenced by the British culture and language because many of them used to be colonies of Britain before the Second World War.

The corpus-based study and corpus-driven study are used widely in the study of the English of American blacks is different from that of Africans. In this research, the corpus-based study is used. Actually, this kind of study is not widely used in the study of varieties in Chinese scholars' research.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gao Yihong, Xu Hongchen (2014) published a paper about the study of the attitude to English varieties. In this paper, volunteers are interviewed about their experience of serving as a volunteer. Before this, there is a test of their attitude toward the spoken English of athletes from four different countries. After the period of the games, volunteers are tested again. Their attitude toward the four different accent are somewhat changed. The study shows that the spoken English of different countries are not the same and after a period of adjustment, they got familiar with the different accent and spoken languages.

Sylviane Granger of Belgium Louvain University has collected the learners' linguistic data and built the learners' corpus of different countries from the outer circle and expanding circle respectively.

Gerald Nelson organized the ICE (International Corpus English) which include the data from more than twenty countries. The corpus includes written English and spoken English.

Pan Zhangxian (2002), Hu Xiaoli (2008) and Zou Hang (2015) concluded Chinese English Varieties.

But research based on corpus is rare while most of the researches are descriptive research.

## III. HYPOTHESES

It is widely accepted that the features of English varieties may be different. This time, the features of language in the same circle may be discussed. The objects of the research are Singapore English, India English, and Kenya English. Chinese Hong Kong English also belongs to the outer circle. With its mother tongue being Chinese, it is chosen for the research. Most of the Singaporean came from China two or three generations before and they can also speak Chinese. So it is chosen. Kenya can represent Africa, while India represents Southeast Asia. The four objects all belongs to the outer circle.

The hypotheses are the followings:

1. Although they are in the same circle, the features of the languages are different.
2. The usage of personal pronoun and modal verb are different.

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3. The English varieties are somewhat influenced by their mother tongue and culture.

IV. PROCEDURE AND RESULTS

The ICE includes spoken English and written English. ICE was designed for facilitating comparative studies of regional and national varieties of English (Nelson, 2004). Each part makes up of one subcorpus that concludes data from one variety of English and consists of about one million words from 500 texts.

The size of the corpus of different country is different. The size of each corpus is shown in figure1.

FIGURE1

Hong Kong	Singapore	India	Kenya
14266702	8090041	12728875	4649071

The tool of the study is AntConc3.2.4. A series of researches are conducted. The first research is to check the frequency of certain words. The tool button to realize the function is concordance. After checking the numbers, bar chart is used to show the features of the frequency. Then another tool log-likelihood ratio calculator is used to analyze the characteristics of the varieties.

Firstly, scholars considered that personal pronoun are used a lot more than people whose mother tongue is English. So personal pronoun and its usage are listed in figure 2.

FIGURE2

	Hong Kong	Singapore	India	Kenya
I	32850	19460	63966	29014
you	24362	19428	12045	27770
he	6303	5946	5945	11056
she	3571	2632	2067	4343
they	8479	6246	5766	11155
total	18353	14824	13778	26554

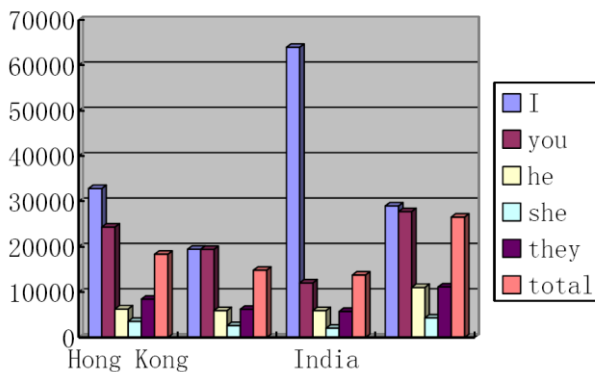


Figure3

The bar chart Figure 3 shows the obvious difference of the usage of personal pronouns. Indians usually use I while Kenyans usually use he, she or they. And the difference is very obvious.

The next step is to calculate accurately. Because the number of each corpus is different, the specific calculation is conducted by log-likelihood ratio calculator.

FIGURE4

Corpus Size 1		Corpus Size 2		
A		B		
14266702		8090041		
Word	Freq. in Corpus 1	Freq. in Corpus 2	Log-likelihood	Sig.
I	32850	19460	23.25	0.000 *** -
you	24362	19428	1234.99	0.000 *** -
he	6303	5946	780.45	0.000 *** -
she	3571	2632	102.52	0.000 *** -
they	8479	6246	242.33	0.000 *** -
total	18353	14824	1008.34	0.000 *** -

FIGURE5

Corpus Size 1		Corpus Size 2		
A		B		
14266702		12728875		
Word	Freq. in Corpus 1	Freq. in Corpus 2	Log-likelihood	Sig.
I	32850	63966	14043.80	0.000
you	24362	12045	2963.90	0.000
he	6303	5945	9.44	0.002
she	3571	2067	252.89	0.000
they	8479	5766	256.74	0.000
total	18353	13778	236.27	0.000

FIGURE6

Corpus Size 1		Corpus Size 2		
A		B		
14266702		4649071		
Word	Freq. in Corpus 1	Freq. in Corpus 2	Log-likelihood	Sig.
I	32850	29014	14440.51	0.000
you	24362	27770	19637.00	0.000
he	6303	11056	11839.64	0.000
she	3571	4343	3308.14	0.000
they	8479	11155	9238.93	0.000
total	18353	26554	24133.36	0.000

The three figures show the results of the comparison between Hong Kong and Singapore, India and Kenya respectively. The results show that most of the personal pronouns are used differently in different countries. Although they all belong to the outer circle, the varieties are different. Compared with Hong Kong English, the use of first personal pronouns in Singapore English is less. And there is a substantial difference. But the use of first personal pronouns in Hong Kong English is less than that in India English. In the comparison with Kenya, speakers in Hong Kong use more first personal pronouns, but less second and third personal pronouns. And there are substantial differences in the use of the third personal pronouns, the log-likelihood is up to 2587.45.

Then, the frequencies of other words are also listed and analyzed, including modal verbs and auxiliaries shown in figure7 and 8, privatives shown in figure 9 and 10, propositions and conjunctions shown in figure11 and 12, courteous and adverbs shown in figure13 and 14.

FIGURE7

	Hong Kong	Singapore	India	Kenya
must	877	1061	896	2653
should	2157	1458	1556	4429
have to	1697	1073	1010	2537
ought to	45	42	14	72
might	484	338	282	908
may	2116	1401	1405	3807
can	6085	4639	3282	10268
could	1062	1045	949	2997
will	5740	4501	3778	10619
would	3144	2395	1887	5993
shall	59	111	220	536

FIGURE 8

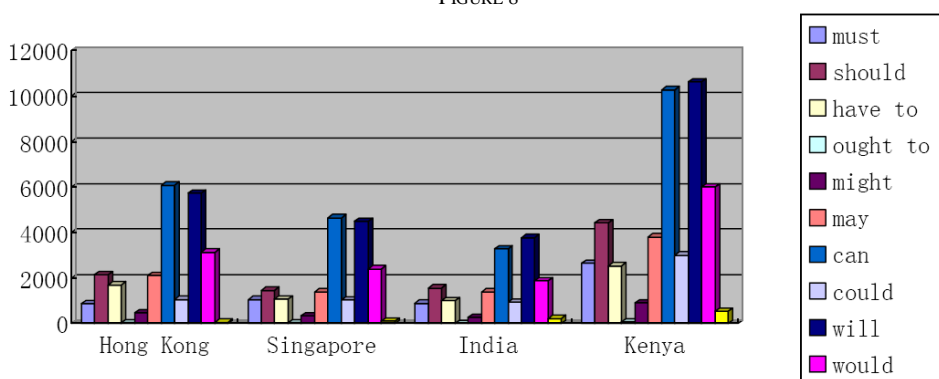


FIGURE9

	Hong Kong	Singapore	India	Kenya
do	10996	5761	2503	7592
do not	1108	712	384	1121
not	20296	12477	6291	17741
no	12200	7275	3879	8909
never	1530	903	378	1302
seldom	99	24	6	29
hardly	183	133	77	191

FIGURE10

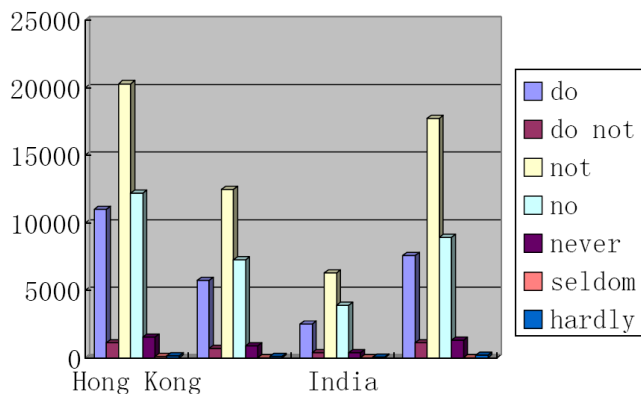


FIGURE11

	Hong Kong	Singapore	India	Kenya
to	94997	56832	26917	80530
from	13880	8797	4586	12174
of	92641	60574	33871	83434
and	90576	54813	28477	76167
but	19301	10414	4910	13509

FIGURE12

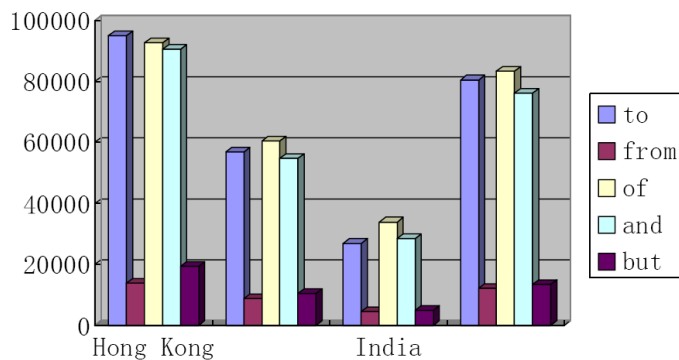
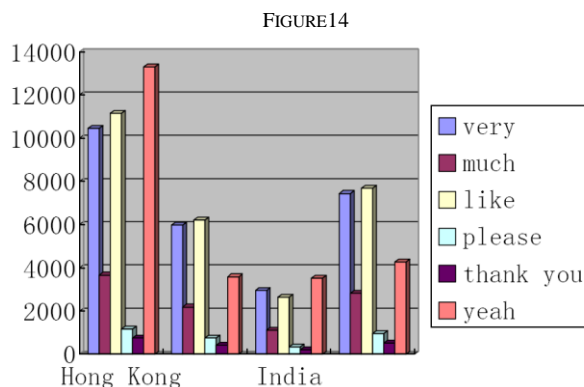


FIGURE13

	Hong Kong	Singapore	India	Kenya
very	10455	5977	2942	7439
much	3663	2188	1110	2826
like	11157	6205	2646	7695
please	1162	752	342	959
thank you	750	412	210	520
yeah	13297	3582	3510	4279



According to the analysis of the modal verbs, such as should, can, could, will, it is discovered that there are a lot more modal verbs used in Kenya English and the difference is obvious. Indians use less modal verbs than the other countries. The use of modal verbs in Singapore English is a little more than that in Hong Kong English.

It can be seen that Kenyans like to use can, will very much. Kenyans like to use modal verbs much more than people in other countries comparatively.

According to the results of figure10, it is concluded that people in Hong Kong usually use “do” while not use “do not”. It shows that they have strong responsibility. Kenyans use like to use “do” while Indians do not like it. Kenyans use more “not” and “no” than people in other countries. “Never, hardly, seldom” are not usually used.

Result of figure 12 shows that Kenyans use more conjunctions and prepositions while Indians use the least. The situation in Hong Kong and Singapore are in the middle and the difference between them is not obvious. That may be because about 70% of the Singaporeans are from China. So they are both influenced by Chinese.

Result of figure 14 shows that people in Hong Kong and Kenya like to say “yeah”. Kenyans also like to say “please” and “thank you” while Indians use the least. Kenyans also like the other words “very, much, like”.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Discussion of Different Usage in Vocabularies

The results show that the hypotheses are all tested. The use of verbs, personal pronoun, privative and Courtesies are different. Every kind of English is influenced somewhat by there own language.

Because Hong Kong citizens and 70% of Singapore citizens speak Chinese as their mother tongue, so the difference between the two variations is comparatively small as we have supposed. This proves mother tongue transformation has great influence in English variation.

The style of Indian variation and Kenya variation are not so strict, some words are used a lot while the other words are used so less. This may related with their characters. Africans are not so strict and precise as Asians who sometimes practice emotionally. Indians use a lot of first personal pronoun, which reflect that they consider about themselves too much. Chinese people are very strict with their life and work.

There is no theoretical foundation about the reason of the differences of English varieties. In the process of the research, more principles were discovered. The variations happened in pronunciation, grammar, vocabularies, pragmatics, and different varieties were formed.

### Discussion of Difference in Other Aspects

Some scholars consider that Chinese people have formed our own characteristics in the development of English. In Hong Kong English, dragon boat, dragon dance, dragon gate are used because they are influenced by Chinese culture.

Singapore English has formed for about 200 years. In this context of colonization, the British left behind a nice gift--a common language. In the last 20 years, English has become a major native language in Singapore. It is the only language that connects the three major racial groups. That is a tool of expressing national link in Singapore society. It has its own specific characters in grammar and lexicology.

For example:

-You are planning to go, is it?

-He came yesterday, is it?

-She has gone, is it?

-Help me, can?

-Help me, can or not?

The above examples show that Singapore English are somewhat influenced by Chinese. They use “is it” while not the corresponding verb to form the antonym. They use “can or not” to form antonym, showing that they are somewhat influenced by Chinese. In talking about the features of Singapore English, some examples are chosen to show.

For example:

makan--food

adapt—traditional law

kampong—village

amok—crazy

These verbs come from Malay. Some verbs as “dadah addict” come from Malay, which means “drug addict”.

Another example: “Can you take spicy food?”

“Take” here means eat or drink. Local people sometimes use some non-standard English.

For example: He has study for two hours.

Or: You are teaching us today, is it?

The reason why there are features of Singapore English is that communication functions. Actually, Singaporean is proud of their special English.

The foreign trade between Britain and India originated from 17<sup>th</sup> century. During that period, many Indian youngsters, especially those from rich families, began to study English very hard. English soon became the second language at that time.

In 19<sup>th</sup> century, the English literature works has emerged in India. And meanwhile, India literature and culture has been spread to the whole world. India is a country with many languages and dialects. Until 1960s, there are still new languages being discovered. India is also a country with a lot of nationalities. As a foreign language, English can be accepted by many nationalities. Actually, many educated person can speak three languages: local accent, official language of that province and English.

India English also has its own characteristics of spoken accent. The varieties are influenced by the different local accent. For example, the special stress is widely accepted in South Asia.

In India English, some abstract nouns and collective nouns are used in plural. For example: fruits. They do not use two pieces of bread while using two bread. They also use only or itself to stress. They also misuse transitive verb and intransitive verb. There are still some differences in pragmatics.

Some educated people would like to use English than their local accent. So the specific characteristics of India English are relatively fixed. Although they are not the same with British English, they are accepted widely in India.

In Kenya English, there are also some different use of words and sentence structure.

For example: Sister Maingi was now louder than thunder.

In fact, the voice of Maingi was louder than thunder, not Maingi was now louder than thunder.

Another example: Many women neighbours, wondering what was happening to the beautiful daughter of Kigotho, kept asking her co-wife, daughter of Kuria, what was happening to Waceera.

In this sentence, the structure is so complicated. There are usually not so long sentences in Standard English.

#### **Discussion of Difference in ENL, ESL and EFL**

The different categorizations in the two disciplines highlight different aspects. In the new English perspective, the distinction of ENL, ESL, and EFL has a socio-historical base focusing on the historical role of English language in different societies.

In SLA the main point is that people whose language is studied are learners of the language with different environment of acquisition, that is, the exposure to the target language in daily life differs. From the SLA viewpoint, it does not matter whether someone who studies English as a non-native speaker in an English-spoken environment has lived there for several years or is living there permanently, whereas from the viewpoint of New English studies it is a significant difference, as people belong or do not belong to a certain speech community within the country.

In SLA the major point is that it is not first language but second language acquisition. This may be one reason why some studies on SLA do not openly distinguish between ESL and EFL or do not give much information on the target people whose English is being studied. The lack of recognition in SLA that New Englishes are different from learner English with regard to the goal of learning, the input and motivation is the main cause of the paradigm gap. In New English studies the differences between ESL and ENL are learner’s interest, distinctions tend to be overrated. In SLA, in which the research for a common core of general acquisition processes is at the heart of the investigation, similarities tend to be overestimated.

There are distinctions between ESL and EFL. English in ESL settings is used in a range of scopes, including informal ones. Therefore, in contrast to EFL, a range of different styles is developed. The ESL speaker has a much larger exposure to English than the EFL speaker, who usually may be exposed to English through the media not possibly only uses English actively within the classroom. As a result, English learners in ESL settings are users of English in daily life in many different circumstances with a range of styles at command, whereas EFL learners, if they do not need English at the workplace, may lose their ability as soon as they leave school. ESL speakers do not want to acquire native-like competence in English in the end but pay attention to their own culture and identity. The speakers move away from external norms developing their own varieties. The language the ESL speaker used is largely a mixture of ESL and the native language rather than ENL, whereas the exposure to English in the EFL classroom usually is closer to standard ENL and the norm orientation is external. That is the difference between ESL and EFL. Some errors are fossilized, but in ESL it is systematic.

Similarities between ESL and EFL should not be underestimated. They are both non-native varieties of English. Especially in the early stages of acquisition, both EFL and ESL seem to take similar means of development and similar

stages of acquisition. They are general constraints in the process that hold for ESL and EFL. It is accurately these commonalities that make it not only possible but highly desirable to bring the learner perspective in New English learning into focus.

### **Discussion of Cross-Linguistic Influence**

“New English varieties” is a collective noun for the varieties of English that are used in different countries as official languages or national languages.

Although the first language influence has been a key concept in SLA since 1950s and stimulated a lot of empirical studies, there is still no agreed definition for it. This is motivated by the fact that the definition of the terms is a debated subject in the multilingual environment in which New English varieties have emerged. Empirical studies have shown that cross-linguistic influence can show itself in direct borrowings, or the production of mixed structures. Direct borrowings of structures or words make the example of transfer.

There is an example from Singapore English: The man sell ice-kachang one gone home already.

As we can see that both the choice and the position of the relative pronoun in this utterance with first language influence from Chinese. The order of head and relative clause, by contrast, follows English rules in Chinese.

In this sentence, the relative clause has two relative pronouns, further demonstrating the extent of structural mixing of Chinese and English. The English relative pronoun *who*, emerging at the beginning of the relative clause and thus following English word order rules, is combined with the Chinese relative pronoun *one* in end-position of the relative clause.

It has been shown in research on cross-linguistic influence that it is impossible to predict all learning difficulties and results of cross-linguistic influence.

One reason for this is the high inter-individual variation, even among learners of the same native and second language. Many aspects such as the social context, the learner’s age and gender, motive and the type of instruction combine in myriad ways that make the learning environment of individuals actually unique. Some factors have been identified that have a systematic influence on the frequency and type of cross-linguistic influence. The linguistic subsystem seems not to be one of them. Cross-linguistic influence happens on all linguistic levels including morphology, syntax, phonology, semantics and pragmatics. Factors constrain cross-linguistic influence are

--language similarity

-- universal rules

--proficiency in the second language

There is no systematic study being carried out to investigate the interrelation between particular types of cross-linguistic influence and language similarities.

Studies on cross-linguistic influence show that native language influence is related with linguistic universals. They describe the occurrence, absence or co-occurrence of linguistic structures in any given language. It can be divided into absolute and implicational universals.

Absolute universals are inherent in all languages of the world, whereas implicational universals involve two language properties in a conditional relationship.

Study shows that CLI seems to occur more frequently in language production and perception of beginners than in advanced language learners. Ellis (1985) presents several claims suggest that cross-linguistic influence mainly occurs as a strategy for successful communication when there are still insufficient second language resources and is limited to the early stages of language acquisition. First language influence decreases step by step over the course of language acquisition.

But no systematic studies have been carried out until now about the question of whether learners in the early stages show different patterns of cross-linguistic influence than advanced learners.

The role of the factors influencing cross-linguistic influence is very complex. It is shown in postcolonial countries where both French and English are spoken show more influence from French in their English.

Studies have been carried out in the four categories:

1. Comparisons of a structure in New English variety with the same structure in a standard variety of English.
2. Comparison of the same structure in various New English Varieties.
3. Comparison of the structure in a New English variety with the same structure in one or more of the indigenous languages spoken in the country.
4. Comparison of a structure in a New English variety and in learner’s language.

Mukherjee & Gries (2009) had analyzed the occurrence of intransitive, monotransitive and ditransitive constructions with different verbs in ICE India, ICE Hong Kong, ICE Singapore and ICE GB. They found the similarities of “collostructional” patterns with British English decreased in New English varieties in the sequence of Hong Kong English – Indian English--Singapore English, with the latter showing the greatest divergence from British English. These differences are interpreted as a reflection of the progress of nativization in the respective varieties. These studies show the relevance of corpus-based explorations of structural properties of New English varieties.

The influence of speaker attitudes on the manifestation of innovations was also observed by many scholars. Some structures based on cross-linguistic influence form part of language productions of individual speakers who are learning English. Some of these structures are adopted by speakers by next generations, some of whom might require English as

a first language.

In conclusion, the fundamental difference between English as a second language and English as a foreign language mainly lies in differences in norm-orientation and attitudes, which in turn cause different kinds of cross-linguistic influence.

#### VI. FURTHER STUDY

But the research is still in the first stages. The samples are limited to several countries. So the further study should be focused on different countries and different types of samples. Australia, New Zealand and some other European countries will be concluded in the further study.

This research is confined to the study of vocabularies, and the further research can be focused on the pragmatics, syntax and semantics.

The focus of the paper is on the corpus-based description of ESL and EFL varieties. The descriptions are the basis for the discussion of the theoretical issues. The wide range of varieties is studied as well as the breadth of features which are described. We only have studied a little part of the scope of what is possible to achieve with the corpus-based approach to second –language varieties of English.

It is apparent that corpus-based approach also has its limitations. In the future, studies should combine corpus-based description with sociolinguistic data and psycholinguistic evidence. As far as psycholinguistic processes with the description of structural properties of the resulting varieties leaves a wide scope for further research.

Many scholars appeal that the varieties of language should be paid attention to and studied consistently. It is also a window to see the world and characters of different cultures.

In addition, the corpus-based study should be taken in several ways. The study related to different corpus should be carried out. This study is the application of corpus-based study as well as the study related to “one belt, one road” strategy. It is hoped the related study be carried out continuously.

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