Linguistisches Kolloquium

Varieties of English in the (South) Pacific

Freitag, 01.07.2016, 9 - 16 Uhr, GW2 A 3570

09:00 – 09:15  Begrüßung, Einführung

09:15 – 10:00  Sebastian Hoffmann (Trier): (Standard) Singapore English

10:00 – 10:45  Marivic Lesho (Bremen): Phonetic and sociolinguistic variation in Philippine English

10:45 – 11:00  Kaffeepause

11:00 – 11:45  Lena Zipp (Zürich): Postcolonial Fiji English – status and attitudes

11:45 – 12:30  Christian Langstrof (Münster): New Zealand English - A special variety?

12:30 – 14:00  Mittagspause

14:00 – 14:30  studentische Posterpräsentationen (optional)

14:30 – 15:15  Leonie Wiemeyer (Bremen): Māori lexical items in New Zealand English conversations

15:15 – 16:00  Alexander Onysko (Venedig/Klagenfurt): From Māori English to Aotearoa English: reconceptualizing a variety along cultural-semantic traits
Abstracts aller Vorträge

Sebastian Hoffmann (Trier): (Standard) Singapore English

This talk will start with some general introductory remarks about Singapore English – including the colloquial spoken variant commonly referred to as Singlish. In this context, I will also briefly discuss the success – but also the failure – of language planning on the part of the Singapore government. In the second part, I will then focus exclusively on written Singapore English and ask the question whether corpus data can be used to support the claim that a local standard has developed. For this purpose, I will present the results of a case study of prepositional verbs in a large diachronic corpus of newspaper data, representing language use from 1951 to 2011.

Marivic Lesho (Bremen): Phonetic and sociolinguistic variation in Philippine English

Philippine English (PE) has been recognized as a nativized variety of English, distinct from its parent dialect American English, since at least the late 1960s (Llamzon 1969). It is widely spoken throughout the Philippines as a second language because it is the medium of instruction in schools, along with Filipino (Gonzalez 1998). In addition, it is used in the home as a first language by a small number of Filipinos, especially among the upper class of Metro Manila (Gonzalez 1984, 1989). While the phonological features of PE are well documented, relatively few studies have focused on its phonetic characteristics or sociolinguistic variation in how it is pronounced.

In this talk, I will first provide an overview of how English is used by different social groups in the Philippines, and how the phonological systems of the different sociolects are influenced by local Philippine languages. I will then present some preliminary data from recent fieldwork on sociophonetic variation among bilingual speakers of Filipino and acrolectal PE in Quezon City (Metro Manila). Focusing especially on rhotics and the vowel system, data from reading tasks and interviews will show how the phonology of acrolectal PE has developed in comparison to Filipino and Standard American English, and how it varies due to phonetic and social factors such as gender, place identity, and language attitudes.


Lena Zipp (Zürich): Postcolonial Fiji English – status and attitudes

Fiji English, one of the more recent additions to the list of “New Englishes”, is shaped by the country’s colonial history as well as by events of its postcolonial present. Fiji’s demographic profile consists of two major ethnic groups, Fijians and the descendants of a British-led Indian workforce, which contributes to a complex sociolinguistic setting, influencing language use (including but not limited to English), language policies, and the linguistic structure of the young variety of Fiji English itself.

After a short introduction to Fiji’s sociolinguistic history, I am providing evidence for my claim that Fiji has progressed along Schneider’s (2007) dynamic model of variety evolution towards endonormative stabilization, based on written corpus data from the Fijian and Indo-Fijian sub-varieties. My focus is on lexico-grammar as the locus of structural nativization, with case studies ranging from productivity in the creation of verb-particle combinations to prepositional “gerund-participle” (-ing) sequences on the clause level, e.g. in complementation, adjuncts and adverbial clauses (Zipp 2014a).
For one of its final stages in the evolution of new Eng lens, institutionalization, Schneider’s model draws on attitudinal factors such as acceptance and official recognition of the local variety, which cannot reliably be evaluated on the basis of corpus data. In addition, I am thus presenting results from a survey study conducted at the University of the South Pacific in 2010: Firstly, in order to probe the attitudinal capital of the label Fiji English and assess language usage self-reports (Zipp 2014b). Secondly, to explore local attitudes towards different varieties of English in an attempt to gauge endo- versus exonormative orientation (Hundt et al. 2015).


Christian Langstrof (Münster): New Zealand English - A special variety?

This presentation will provide an overview of the history and the structural properties of New Zealand English. Being the youngest of the (post)colonial varieties of English, it has a somewhat special status due to the fact that it is the only variety of English for which we have direct evidence over its entire history in the shape of speech recordings from the 1940s including samples of speakers who were then in their 90s, i.e. people representing the earliest generations of European settlers in NZ. I will provide an outline of the way in which these recordings have helped inform general models of linguistic evolution; furthermore, I will focus on the development of the short vowel system of New Zealand English, which represents a much stereotyped shibboleth setting off this variety from other Southern Hemisphere Englishes.

Leonie Wiemeyer (Bremen): Māori lexical items in New Zealand English conversations

Loanwords from Māori, the indigenous and official language of New Zealand, are a distinctive feature of New Zealand English (NZE). Many of these words, mostly proper nouns related to flora and fauna such as kiwi and kauri, entered the NZE lexicon in the early stages of colonisation. Due to the political inequality of the languages, the number of Māori speakers declined dramatically in the postcolonisation period and almost no borrowing from Māori into NZE took place between 1860 and 1970 (Hay, Maclagan & Gordon 2008). Māori language revitalisation efforts between the 1970s and today sparked a remarkable increase in the use of Māori words in NZE (Macalister 2000). Evidence for this second wave of borrowing is provided by new additions to dictionaries of NZE (Macalister 2006) as well as an increased presence of Māori lexis in different written registers, e.g. in children’s books (Daly 2007), and even mainstream television news broadcasts (De Bres 2006). Thus far, however, the presence of Māori words in unscripted spoken genres has not been explored.

The present study investigates the use and integration of Māori lexical items in New Zealand English conversations using the New Zealand component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-NZ). It examines the nature of the lexical items as well as where and by whom they were used. Finally, it addresses the question of whether there are differences in the use of Māori loanwords between public and private conversations.


Alexander Onysko (Venedig/Klagenfurt): From Māori English to Aotearoa English: reconceptualizing a variety along cultural-semantic traits

The variety of Māori English was defined for the first time in Benton (1966: 79) as “a set of subdialects, originating in the acquisition of English by earlier generations of Maori speakers and involving semantic, lexical and grammatical features ‘transferred’ from Maori and standardized in adult speech”. With the rise of interest in describing varieties of English from the 1980s onwards, Māori English has become part of the Englishes investigated in New Zealand. Detailed descriptive research, however, has run into difficulties of ascertaining specific features of Māori English that are not also present to varying degrees in New Zealand English at large (see Bell 2000). At the same time, the conception of Māori English changed from an ethnolect towards a sociolect (Bauer 1994; Holmes 2005).

This talk argues that one reason why research on Engllishes in New Zealand has struggled to define a variety called Māori English relates to the fact that studies have had a strong tendency to consider sociophonetic and pragmatic features, apart from some lexical and grammatical evidence. However, in cultures so diverse as expressed in traditional Māori and New Zealand European societies, the rendering of cultural meaning in English offers a further perspective to describe features of an ethnolinguistic repertoire (see Onysko 2015). An ongoing project that investigates small stories told by monolingual and bilingual Māori and non-Māori New Zealanders (see Onysko & Degani 2012) pursues the aim of shedding new light on the description of Engllishes in New Zealand by considering cultural-semantic aspects of language use. Some examples of the data will be discussed that highlight the importance of considering cultural-semantic factors of Engllishes in Aotearoa New Zealand.


