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Global Education Through Global Englishes

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Allow us to begin this article by telling you two stories, both that happened to two of us. The first, as relayed by the late father of one of us, took place back in the 70's, when he was sent to Germany for a stint involving his work. One morning, as he was waiting for a bus, a friendly German chap approached him and said to him 'How are you going?' My father found this odd- simply because both he and the German chap were at a bus stop- there was only one obvious mode of transportation. And so, despite feeling confused, my father answered, full of gusto, 'by bus', much to the amusement of the German man.

One of us made a similar faux pas many years later, when she first arrived in Heathrow airport, London. What was even more ironic was that at that time, she was about to pursue an education degree, specializing in the Teaching of English as Second Language (TESL). Little did she know that she would be receiving her very first lesson in English just minutes after landing. She was actually in the midst of deliberately huffing out air in the crisp August morning while watching smoke form in full awe, when a burly British airport support staff walked up to her and asked. 'Have you got the time, love?' Panic gripped her and she took three steps back and eyed the man full of suspicion, and shot back to him, 'For what?'

In the first incident, the Malaysian man at the bus stop was unaware that 'How are you going?' is another version of "How are you"? in the wide, wide world of English. The same can be said for incident number two. The poor TESL trainee thought that she was about to be kidnapped by some mad man, when all he wanted was to know the time. Sadly, there remains still, very little effort to initiate Malaysians with varieties of world English.

In both incidents, the man and the TESL trainee were unfamiliar with the terms used by the non Malaysians, simply because, even up to this day, the most common way we are taught to converse is a very sanitized, standard version of English. These two incidents highlight how English, being a global language, is truly international as it contains varieties that are spoken by the English Speaking World, most of which vary to a certain degree because just like all other languages, it is deeply rooted in culture and tradition that is unique to its country of origin.



Global education permeates quite prominently through Global Englishes as the underlying tones and nuances of a language are embedded in its cultural history and origins. Very often, if one were to study a language closely, interesting facts about the history that is intertwined with its existence will emerge.



There are many categories that highlight the differences between one type of English and another or the reasons behind the origins of words that make them globally distinctive. Amongst them are the use of idioms, grammatical variations, sociolinguistic expressions, and vocabulary.

Idioms

Idioms are a group of words that make little or no sense if taken literally or word by word. They contain figurative meaning, and the closest equivalent in Bahasa Malaysia is Simpulan Bahasa.

Below are some examples of the origin of some idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Origin
Beat around the bush	To avoid getting to the point of a statement.	From the famous pastime of British aristocrats, which is to hunt birds. Before getting to the real point of killing the birds, they hunters would beat the bushes around them to force some of the birds out of the hiding grounds.
Spill the beans	To leak a secret	The popular belief is that this came from the ancient Greek voting process, in which beans were used. White beans meant yes, while brown/ black ones meant no. Therefore, if one were to drop the bag of beans, the secret votes would accidentally be revealed.
The proof is in the pudding (British) The proof in the pudding is in the eating (American)	Something can only be considered successful/ good if one tries it first.	From the times of old England where pudding was actually a tricky dish to make consisting of meat and spices. So, to really determine its taste, one would first have to taste it.

Grammatical variations

Grammatical variations for this article fall under two categories: (a) the use of the Participle (b) different terminologies in describing Aspects (Tenses). These variations mostly concern American/Canadian and British English.

(a) The use of the participle (particularly for the word 'got')

Word	Grammatical structure	American/ Canadian English	British English
got	Have/had + verb's past participle + noun phrase.	Gotten (I have gotten myself a new car)	Got (I have got myself a new car).
	have + verb's past participle + to + verb phrase.	Got (You've got to get your act together)	The same as American/Canadian English

(b) Grammar Terminology

British	American
Present/ Past Continuous Tense	Present/ Past Progressive Tense
Present/ Past Perfect Tense	Present/ Past Participle Tense
Full stop (.)	Period (.)

Sociolinguistic Expressions

Context / Sentence	Global English	Native Speaker
Offering someone a drink <i>Would you like a drink?</i>	The word 'drink' indicates any type of drink.	The word 'drink' most probably indicates an alcoholic beverage – (such as cocktails, beer or wine), hence the anti-drunk driving campaign – 'Don't drink and drive' and the more social 'Let's go (out) for (some) drinks . Native speakers would use 'Would you like something to drink ?' when offering non-alcoholic beverages.
Asking for the time	<i>What time is it?</i>	<i>Have you got the time?</i>
Asking how someone is	<i>How are you?</i>	<i>How are you going?</i>
Replying to someone asking how you're doing.	<i>I'm fine, thank you.</i>	<i>Couldn't be better. Great!</i>

Vocabulary

Vocabulary for this article also falls under two categories: (a) British English (BrE) versus American English (AmE) and (b) English vocabulary that originated from countries unique in its existence.

(a) BrE vs AmE

British English	American English
Rubber	Eraser (Be warned- Rubber in American English means condom)
Rubbish	Trash
Pavement	Sidewalk
Hoover (colloquial)	Vacuum
Photostat	Xerox (colloquial)
Knackered (tired) - Slang	Beat (tired) - slang

(b) English Vocabulary that exists because of the origin being unique to a country

Word	Definition	Origin
Joey	The young/ baby of a kangaroo	Australia
Batik	A method of printing patterns on cloth, in which wax is put on the cloth before it is put in dye.	Malaysia / Indonesia
Amok (<i>Mengamuk</i> in Bahasa Malaysia)	To (<i>run</i>) amok is to attack furiously.	Malaysia but also traced back to Portuguese Amuco (a murderous tribe)
Dosa (Popularly known as <i>Thosai</i> in Malaysia)	A thin, flat, round cake made from a mixture of flour, milk, and egg, fried on both sides.	India

To conclude, Global Englishes came about because of social phenomena such as mass migration and new communities. Besides making the English Language more interesting, variations of English, if thoroughly studied, help us better understand the world's history and evolving processes, making it one of the best sources of Global Education.

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