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## English in Southeast Asian countries

Phuong Tra Vu

► **To cite this version:**

| Phuong Tra Vu. English in Southeast Asian countries. Literature. 2012. dumas-00931949

**HAL Id: dumas-00931949**

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# ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

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Mémoire de Master 2 - Recherche

Spécialité: Sociolinguistics – World Englishes

Sous la direction de Monsieur le Professeur Mohamed Benrabah

Année universitaire 2011-2012

MOTS-CLÉS : diffusion de l'anglais, l'anglais en Asie du Sud-Est, les nouvelles variétés d'anglais

## RÉSUMÉ

Comme la langue ne cesse de se propager dans le monde entier en tant que la langue mondiale, l'anglais n'est plus une langue limitée aux pays où elle est parlée comme la première langue (langue maternelle). Sa propagation concerne également Asie du Sud-Est, une sous-région de l'Asie qui compte onze pays multiethniques, multiculturels et multilinguistiques. Dans la région, l'anglais est classifié en deux groupes: comme la langue seconde, ou comme la langue étrangère. En particulier, l'anglais se développe en des "nouvelles variétés d'anglais" comme l'anglais singapourien, malais, brunéien, et philippin. Les objectifs de cette étude sont de fournir des aperçus de la diffusion de l'anglais dans le monde entier, du modèle de Braj Kachru qui décrit cette diffusion, et la façon dont les onze pays s'insèrent dans ce modèle. Il se concentre également sur les nouvelles variétés d'anglais et leurs caractéristiques. Enfin, l'avenir de l'anglais en Asie du Sud-Est est prédit en se basant sur la future de la langue dans le monde et sur la situation linguistique actuelle dans la région.

KEYWORDS: spread of English, English in Southeast Asia, New Englishes

## ABSTRACT

As English has constantly been spreading around the world as a global language, it is no longer a language restricted to countries where it is spoken as the first language (mother tongue). Its spread is obviously seen in Southeast Asia, a subregion of Asia which includes eleven multiethnic, multicultural and multilinguistic countries. In the region, English can be classified into two groups: as a second language, or as a foreign language. Particularly, English has developed into new varieties called "New Englishes" such as Singapore English, Brunei English, Philippine English, and Malaysian English. The objectives of this study are to provide overviews of the worldwide spread of English, Braj Kachru's three circle model which describes this spread, and how the eleven countries fit into this model. It also focuses on New Englishes and their characteristics. Finally, the future of English in Southeast Asia is speculated basing on its future in the world and on the current language situation in the region.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>   | 5  |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  | 8  |
| <b>PART I: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>  | 13 |
| <b>Chapter 1: World Englishes: Braj Kachru’s “Three Circles” of English Model and English in Ten Southeast Asian Countries</b> | 13 |
| 1.1 Worldwide Spread of English  | 14 |
| 1.2 Braj Kachru’s Three-Circle Model of World Englishes  | 16 |
| 1.3 English in Ten Southeast Asian Countries   | 18 |
| <b>Chapter 2: English as a Second Language and New Englishes in the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries</b>                 | 20 |
| 2.1 Perception of New Englishes  | 20 |
| 2.2 Historical and Socio-Political Aspects of English in the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries                            | 24 |
| 2.2.1 Singapore  | 25 |
| 2.2.2 Malaysia   | 30 |
| 2.2.3 Brunei   | 33 |
| 2.2.4 The Philippines  | 35 |
| 2.3 Linguistic Features of New Varieties of English in the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries                              | 41 |

|                   |  |           |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| 2.3.1             | Phonology  | 41        |
| 2.3.2             | Lexis  | 45        |
| 2.3.3             | Grammar  | 48        |
| 2.3.4             | Discourse  | 51        |
| <b>Chapter 3:</b> | <b>English as a Foreign Language in the Southeast Asian Expanding Circle Countries</b> | <b>54</b> |
| 3.1               | Thailand   | 54        |
| 3.2               | Vietnam  | 56        |
| 3.3               | Indonesia  | 58        |
| 3.4               | The Remaining Four Countries: Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor                  | 59        |
| <b>Chapter 4:</b> | <b>The Future of English</b>   | <b>62</b> |
| 4.1               | The Future of English in the World   | 62        |
| 4.2               | The Future of English in Southeast Asia  | 66        |
| <b>PART II:</b>   | <b>EMPIRICAL WORK</b>  | <b>70</b> |
| 1.                | Rationale Behind Choosing an Online Questionnaire Based Survey                         | 70        |
| 2.                | Designing the Questionnaire  | 73        |
| 2.1               | The Aims of the Survey   | 73        |
| 2.2               | Designing the Questionnaires   | 74        |
| 2.3               | The Respondents  | 75        |

|                   |                        |     |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----|
| 2.3.1             | Age                    | 76  |
| 2.3.2             | Occupations            | 77  |
| 2.3.3             | Gender                 | 77  |
| 2.3.4             | Places of Residence    | 77  |
| 2.4               | The Survey Approach    | 78  |
| 3.                | Results and Discussion | 79  |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b> |                        | 109 |
| <b>APPENDIX</b>   |                        | 112 |
| <b>REFERENCE</b>  |                        | 124 |

# LIST OF FIGURES

|             |  |    |
|-------------|--|----|
| Figure 1    | Map of Southeast Asia  | 8  |
| Figure 2    | Kachru's model: three concentric circles of English                                  | 16 |
| Figure 3    | The present-day world language hierarchy   | 64 |
| Figure 4    | The world language hierarchy in 2050   | 64 |
| Figure 5.1  | Age of Singaporean respondents   | 75 |
| Figure 5.2  | Age of Vietnamese respondents  | 75 |
| Figure 6.1  | The time at which Singaporean respondents start learning English                     | 78 |
| Figure 6.2  | The time at which Vietnamese respondents start learning English                      | 79 |
| Figure 7.1  | The time at which Singaporean respondents think people should start learning English | 81 |
| Figure 7.2  | The time at which Vietnamese respondents think people should start learning English  | 81 |
| Figure 8.1  | Places where Singaporean respondents see or hear English                             | 83 |
| Figure 8.2  | Places where Vietnamese respondents see or hear English                              | 84 |
| Figure 9.1  | The frequency at which Singaporean respondents use English                           | 86 |
| Figure 9.2  | The frequency at which Vietnamese respondents use English                            | 86 |
| Figure 10.1 | The reasons for which Singaporean respondents use English                            | 88 |
| Figure 10.2 | The reasons for which Vietnamese respondents use English                             | 89 |

|             |   |    |
|-------------|---|----|
| Figure 11.1 | Singaporean respondents' opinion on the media of instruction at schools   | 91 |
| Figure 11.2 | Singaporean respondents' opinion on the level of education at which English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction | 92 |
| Figure 11.3 | Vietnamese respondents' opinion on the use of English as the medium of instruction at schools   | 93 |
| Figure 11.4 | Vietnamese respondents' opinion on the number of subjects which should be taught in English   | 94 |
| Figure 11.5 | Vietnamese respondents' opinion on the level of education at which English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction  | 95 |
| Figure 12.1 | Singaporean respondents' preferences for English teachers   | 95 |
| Figure 12.2 | Vietnamese respondents' preferences for English teachers  | 96 |
| Figure 13.1 | Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether English is a threat to the national or local languages                                    | 97 |
| Figure 13.2 | Vietnamese respondents' opinion on whether English is a threat to the national or local languages                                     | 97 |
| Figure 13.3 | Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the local culture  | 98 |
| Figure 13.4 | Vietnamese respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the local culture   | 98 |
| Figure 13.5 | Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the national identity  | 98 |



|             |   |     |
|-------------|---|-----|
| Figure 13.6 | Vietnamese respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the national identity   | 99  |
| Figure 14.1 | Code-switching/ code-mixing among Singaporean respondents   | 100 |
| Figure 14.2 | The use of borrowing words in conversations among Vietnamese respondents  | 101 |
| Figure 15   | English as a link language among Singaporean respondents who do not use the same mother tongue  | 101 |
| Figure 16   | Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether their English should be improved so that it is more and more like British English or American English | 103 |
| Figure 17.1 | Vietnamese respondents' level of success in learning English  | 104 |
| Figure 17.2 | The reasons for not succeeding in learning English  | 104 |
| Figure 18.1 | Singaporean respondents' prediction about the future of English in their country  | 106 |
| Figure 18.2 | Vietnamese respondents' prediction about the future of English in their country   | 107 |

# INTRODUCTION

As English has constantly been spreading around the world as a global language, it is no longer a language restricted to countries where it is spoken as the first language (mother tongue). According to Bolton (2006b: 380) “English is no longer the possession of the British, or even the British and the Americans”, and in Kachru’s (1988: 1) opinion “The English language now belongs to all those who use it”. Its increasingly widespread use has resulted in the fact that there are now more non-native speakers of English than native ones (Siregar, 2010). Its spread is obviously seen in Southeast Asia, a subregion of Asia which includes eleven multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual countries. In the region, English can be classified into two groups: as a second language in the countries that were once colonies or protectorates of an English-speaking power (Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Philippines); or as a foreign language in the rest of the region. Particularly, English has developed into new varieties called “New Englishes” (Kachru, 1984; Mc Arthur, 1987) such as Singapore English, Brunei English, Philippine English, and Malaysian English.

Southeast Asia, a term used since World War II, is an area geographically situated east of the Indian subcontinent, south of China, west of New Guinea and north of Australia, between the Indian Ocean in the west and the Pacific Ocean in the east (see *Figure 1* below). The region spreads over 4,506,600 km<sup>2</sup>, which is made up of two distinct regions, the mainland peninsula, and an island or maritime zone. The mainland which is an extension of the Asian continent includes Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Island or maritime Southeast Asia comprises Malaysia,

Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, and the new nation of East Timor, formerly part of Indonesia. (Harme, 2009).



Figure 1: Map of Southeast Asia

(Source: [http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map\\_of\\_southeast\\_asia.htm](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map_of_southeast_asia.htm))

Around 620 million inhabitants make Southeast Asia one of the most populated regions in the world. A 2005 survey shows that among the 11 countries, Brunei had the smallest population with 0.4 million people, followed by East Timor with 0.9 million while Indonesia had the biggest population, with 221.9 million (Hamre, 2009).

In addition to its ethnic, cultural and political diversity with an extremely rich ancient and contemporary history, Southeast Asia has a large variety of languages. It is home for thousands of languages which come from four major different indigenous language

families: Sino-Tibetan (e.g. Burmese, Tai languages: Thai, Lao); Austro-Asiatic (e.g. Mon, Khmer, Vietnamese); Austronesian (e.g. Malay, Indonesian, Philippine languages); and Papuan (Timor). For example, the Philippines alone, with a population of a little over 81 million, has around 150 languages (Bolton: 2006a). Malaysia's 26 million people speak around 140 languages (David *et al.*, 2009). Of these, according to Lee, only the major national and regional languages have writing systems and literary traditions while many local languages:

“have no system of writing and some have never been recorded. They may claim only a few hundred speakers, and are doomed to extinction as small, isolated communities are gradually absorbed into modern nation states and the young turn their backs on their traditional culture”. (Lee, 1997: 1)

Bilingualism, perhaps in the national language and a regional language or dialect, is extremely common in the region. In rural areas, it is not surprising to see many people speaking anything from three to seven languages with little difficulty.

Among the foreign languages, Chinese and Indian languages are the Asian languages the most widely spoken while European languages like Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English and French have in turn had the predominant status in Southeast Asia. While the former is the result of the immigration of the Chinese and Indians into the region for 1,000 years or more (Hirschman, 1995: 30), the latter is a legacy of the colonial past. English entered this network in the 17th century and although it was not the first European language to be introduced into Southeast Asia as a contact language, it became the most influential in the colonial history of the region.

Despite its status as a second language (in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines), or as a foreign language (in the remaining countries), in a region with ethnic and linguistic diversity like Southeast Asia, English is gradually acquiring the status of the most dominant language. It has indeed a presence in the most vital aspects of life, in “our cultures, our languages, our interactional patterns, our discourse, our economies and indeed in our politics” (Kachru, 1997: 91). In ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), English functions as an Asian and international lingua franca. That is to say, it is used as a medium of communication among groups of people who do not speak the same first language. According to McArthur (1998: 3), ASEAN has since its creation in 1967 used English as its working language, and currently also uses it in increasingly important discussions with China, Japan, and other territories. The idea of using English as the common language even “came out automatically [ ... ] there has been no regulation for the use of English but it has been used in all the actual situations”, and the members of the Association “took it for granted” (Okudaira, cited in Kirkpatrick, 2008: 27). What is more, Ministries of Education throughout Southeast Asia have considered English a vital skill to be learned by their citizens from as early an age as possible, if their respective countries are to modernize and to participate in today’s globalised world.

In former colonized countries like Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and Singapore, the position of English as lingua franca is revealed at all social levels. The most remarkable development is found in Singapore where English is co-official with Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil, but is the only language known to all young Singaporeans. In Indochina countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos), English is considered the first

foreign language. It is the language of trade and tourism which “thrives alongside an ‘elite’ usage” and which “has largely taken the place of French” (McArthur, 1998: 4).

## **PART I: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Chapter 1: World Englishes: Braj Kachru's "Three Circles" of English Model and English in Ten Southeast Asian Countries**

“English is a global language”, “English is an international language”, or “English is a world language” – these are headlines which have appeared in thousands of newspapers, magazines and books in recent years. English has become the language of the planet, the first truly global language which is more and more widely scattered, spoken and written than any other language in the history of the world. The rise of English is a remarkable success story. According to McCrum *et al.* (1992: 1), when Julius Caesar landed in Britain over two thousand years ago, English did not exist. Five hundred years later, Englisc, incomprehensible to modern ears, was probably spoken by an insignificant number of people. Nearly a thousand years later, at the end of the sixteenth century, when William Shakespeare was in his prime, English was the native speech of between five and seven million Englishmen. Four hundred years later, the contrast is extraordinary. Between 1600 and the present, it has been used in armies, navies, companies, and expeditions. The speakers of English – including Scots, Irish, Welsh, American, and many more – traveled into every corner of the globe, carrying their language and culture with them. Today, the number of English users is estimated to be approximately 1.4 billion people, of which only about 350 million speak it as a mother tongue.

## 1.1. Worldwide Spread of English

It is widely accepted that the spread and decline of a language is causally linked to the power and the fortunes of their speakers rather than to any properties of the language code. Crystal (2003: 59) argues that the present-day world status of English is primarily the result of two key factors: the expansion of British colonial power, which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century; and the growing economic, military and political dominance of the United States in the twentieth century. It is the latter factor which lies behind the world position of the English language today.

The British colonial empire is seen as creating the necessary initial conditions for the emergence of English as a global language in two main ways. The first was through the migration of speakers to territories in North America (in the late sixteenth century), and Australia (in the late eighteenth century). Brutt-Griffler (2002: 138) termed this process “spread by speaker migration”. They established permanent settlements and subjugated indigenous populations, forming in due course new communities of native speakers. The second one was through the colonization of territories in Asia, Africa and Oceania, where indigenous populations – or at least an elite sector of them – learnt English not so much because they were compelled but mainly because they perceived its acquisition as socially and economically advantageous. In so doing, they became bilingual speakers of English, maintaining the use of indigenous languages in informal domains but resorting to English for inter-ethnic and for public, more formal communication. Brutt-Griffler (2002:138) refers to this as “spread by macro-acquisition”.



The decline of the British Empire after the Second World War should have spelled the slow decline of English as a world language, in the way that French has declined. Yet, the English language was saved by the rise of the United States to a position of global dominance – economically, militarily, culturally and politically. The symbolic moment of transition, as described by McCrum *et al.* (1992: 14), was on 8 May 1945, a few hours after announcing to the world the surrender of Hitler's Third Reich to the combined allied armies, with Winston Churchill appearing on the balcony of Buckingham Palace with King and Queen to acknowledge the cheers of the British people. Among the millions who witnessed the scene was the distinguished American radio commentator Edward R. Murrow, reporting on the event for his audience back home. For the next generation and more, the enormous strategic, economic and cultural interests of the United States – expressed through international English-speaking institutions like UNESCO and NATO; and corporations like Exxon, Ford, IBM, McDonald's, Microsoft, Disney – ensured that the English language would survive and flourish.

Today, English has an undeniable global status which is used either as a mother tongue, or as a second language, or as a foreign language in every continent of the world. Crystal (2003) reports that more and more users of English today are either bilingual or multilingual. Apart from communities in which English is the dominant or single language, English functions as an additional or link-language in many countries that had colonial ties to Great Britain or the United States in the past. In those countries English is not the native language of the majority of its speakers, but plays an important role in many international and intranational functions.

## **1.2. Braj Kachru's Three-Circle Model of World Englishes**

In order to describe the worldwide spread of English and the consequent emergence of new varieties of English (New Englishes), a number of conceptual models have been proposed by linguists since 1980. The most influential model is known as “the three circles of English. The US-Indian linguist Braj Kachru has conceptualised the spread of English around the world as three concentric circles, representing different ways in which the language has been propagated, acquired and used (1985: 5) (see *Figure 2* below). The three circles model was first published in a 1985 book chapter that came out of a conference held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the British Council. The model consists of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. It represents the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts (Kachru, 1992: 356)

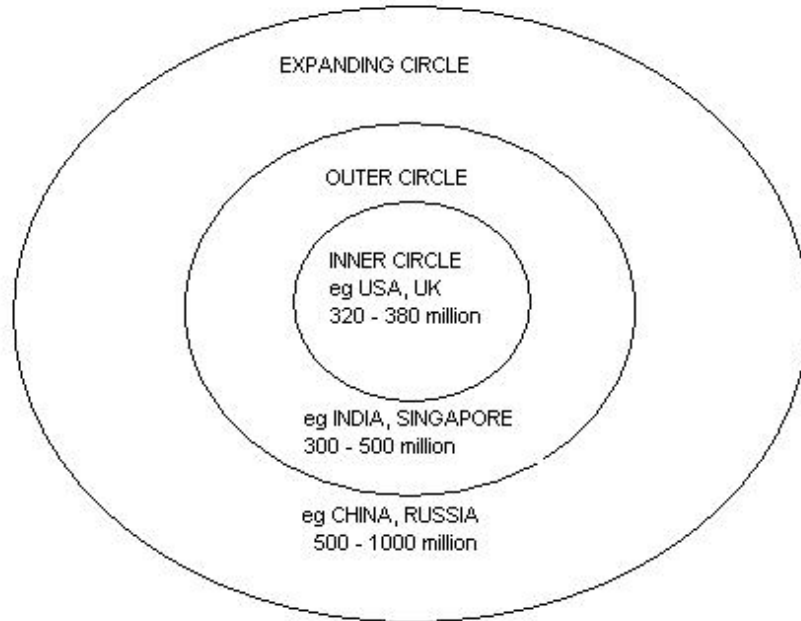


Figure 2: Kachru's Model: three concentric circles of English

Source: David Crystal (2003: 61)

The *Inner Circle* refers to the traditional historical and sociolinguistic bases of Englishes. It comprises the countries where English is used as an official language, such as the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and some Caribbean territories. English is the native language or mother tongue of most people in these countries.

The *Outer* or *Extended Circle* involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings through colonization, where the language has become part of a country's chief institutions, and plays an important "second language" role in a multilingual setting. In this circle, English has an official or co-official status. It includes Singapore, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Malawi and over fifty other territories.

The *Expanding* or *Extending Circle* comprises those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, though they do not have a history of colonization by members of the inner circle, nor have they given English any institutional status. It includes China, Japan, Greece, Poland and (as the name of this circle suggests) a steadily increasing number of other states. In these areas, English is taught as a foreign language.

Kachru's "Three circle model of World Englishes" (1985) is considered to be the most useful and influential one to describe the diffusion of English (see Chapter 2 for another model proposed by Edgar Schneider). Today, even though not all countries fit neatly into this model (some Scandinavian nations, for example, are more part of the Outer Circle than the Expanding Circle), it has been widely regarded as a helpful approach.

### **1.3. English in Ten Southeast Asian Countries**

It is important to note that the majority of English speakers in the world are not native speakers of English (i.e. not members of the "Inner Circle"), but use the language either as a second language (in the "Outer Circle") or as a foreign language (in the "Expanding Circle") (Kachru, 1985). Kachru went on to point out that English was spreading rapidly in non-Western countries as an "additional language" and "alternative language" in such multilingual societies as Southeast Asian countries, in response to the demands of modernization and technology, as well as by other sociopolitical and sociolinguistic dynamics.

According to Kachru's "three-circle model" classification, Southeast Asian countries fall into two distinct categories. Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei can be classified as "Outer Circle" countries, where, because of their colonial past, English continues to play a major role. In this respect, it is possible to talk about "the Brunei, Philippine, Malaysian and Singaporean varieties of English" (Kirkpatrick, 2008: 28). On the other hand, the seven remaining countries belong to the Expanding Circle where English is gradually acquiring the dominant position as the first foreign language used by their people.

## **Chapter 2: English as a Second Language and New Englishes in the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries**

### **2.1. Perception of New Englishes**

Bolton (2006a) has pointed out that the concept of varieties of English lies at the heart of the world Englishes enterprise. It is because many researchers in this field have identified their interests as the study of “new varieties of English”, “localized varieties of English”, “non-native varieties of English”, or “second-language varieties of English”.

Though the concept of “new varieties of English”, or “New Englishes” started to develop in the 1980s, earlier in the mid 1960s, linguists had predicted the diffusion and adaptation of English. Halliday *et al.* (1964), or Greenberg (1966) (cited in Patil, 2006: 90) had anticipated two trends: first, the ownership of the so-called native English countries and native English speakers would come to an end; second, English would diversify, and consequently local varieties of the language would develop. English would set into new habitations, and re-orientate itself to serve other cultures and, as a result, would acquire new names such as Indian English, Filipino English, Singapore English, South African English, and so on. Kachru (1984) suggests that the English language now belongs to all those who use it, and that there is no single “right” English, no such things as one “native speaker norm”. Bolton (2006: 380) also points out that “English is no longer the possession of the British, or even the British and the Americans”, and that “it is no longer accepted by the majority that the English of England, with RP as its accent, is the only

possible model of English”, but the language exists in an increasingly large number of different varieties. The language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard form or in its localized forms. Similarly, Ferguson (2006) argues that English is less and less being regarded as a purely Western language. Its development is less and less determined by the usage of its native speakers. Therefore, both native English and new emergent varieties of English have their proper place in the scheme of things and both are of crucial concern in English education. Honna (2003, cited in Patil, 2006: 27), summarizes the process of development of New Englishes: “when English migrates to foreign countries, it diffuses and internationalizes, acculturates and indigenizes, and adapts and diversifies. The new users absorb, re-orient, appropriate and transform it. They liberate it to embody the energies of their respective sensibilities”

In short, “New Englishes”, as defined by McArthur (1992: 688), refers to “recently emerging and increasingly autonomous varieties of English, especially in a non-western setting, such as India, Nigeria, or Singapore”. Such varieties of English developed from an English, traditionally recognized as standard, to become distinctly individual; they retain some cultural and linguistic characteristics of the standard English but additionally represent and include many aspects of the culture and language of the country in which the New English functions, hence they carry “repertoires of sociocultural identities” (Kachru, 1992). English, as Pakir (2008) states, has been planted and transplanted several times. As a result, these New Englishes are lexico-grammatically sophisticated and as viable as any of the traditionally recognized standard Englishes.

New Englishes, according to Kirkpatrick (2012: 4), follow a fundamentally uniform developmental process. Schneider (2007), in his Dynamic Model, underlines the five distinct phases of the evolution of New Englishes worldwide as follows:

***Phase 1 - Foundation:*** This is when English first arrives. In this initial stage, two linguistic processes are operative (a) language contact between English and indigenous languages; (b) contact between different dialects of English of the settlers which eventually results in a new stable dialect. At this stage, the language norms of the home country are strictly applied.

***Phase 2 - Exonormative stabilization:*** There is still a close link between the settlers and their home countries and so there is adherence to exonormative standards of English. Local vocabulary begins to enter the English language. More indigenous people begin to use English because it is the language of power, education and commerce in colonized territories.

***Phase 3 - Nativisation:*** During this stage, a transition occurs as the settlers start to accept a new identity based on present and local realities, rather than sole allegiance to their home countries. A local variety of English emerges with distinctive lexicogrammatical features. Neologisms stabilize as English is made to adapt to local sociopolitical and cultural practices.

***Phase 4 - Endonormative stabilization:*** This stage is characterized by the gradual acceptance of local norms, supported by a new locally rooted linguistic self-confidence. Acceptance of local English(es) expresses the new identity. There is no longer a desire or



a need to be orientated towards the home countries. The New English begins to be codified in dictionaries, at least for new lexis (and not always for localized grammar). Literary creativity in local English begins to flourish.

***Phase 5 - Differentiation:*** At this stage there is a change in the dynamics of identity as the young nation sees itself as less defined by its differences from the former colonial power as a composite of subgroups defined on regional, social and ethnic lines. The national identity is now stable and thus internal diversification is possible. As a result, new dialects of the New English begin to develop.

To illustrate his points, Schneider takes the cases of Hong Kong, Malaysia, and the Philippines as examples of phase 3. Importantly, Singapore is considered to belong to phase 4. In this country of Southeast Asia, the evolution of English, as explained by Mesthrie *et al.* (2008), is a product of a language policy specifically espousing ‘English-based bilingualism’ (English plus Mandarin, Malay or Tamil) which is meant to enhance the Asian-Western blend. English is thus the common bond, but it has acquired a distinct local identity. This variety of English is beginning to be codified with dictionaries of Singapore English. English in this country is replete with not only local vocabulary but also a syntax that owes much to the home languages. Though Schneider does not mention Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines, one can think of these countries to match phase 4 like their neighboring country Singapore as they share the similar historical and linguistic characteristics which will be discussed later.

To Kirkpatrick (2012), the varieties of English in these countries have linguistically reached the final stage. He gives the example of Malaysian English of which the linguistic features may differ depending on whether the speaker is a Malaysian Chinese or Malaysian Indian. In addition, there is a “dialect” continuum of English varieties in these countries, typically ranging from an informal colloquial variety (often called Singlish, Manglish, or Taglish – a blend of Tagalog (Filipino) and English) to a formal, educated variety. However, Kirkpatrick also adds that linguistically, these varieties of English can reach Schneider’s final stage of differentiation, but sociolinguistically, they remain somewhere between phase 2 and phase 3.

## **2.2. Historical and Socio-Political Aspects of English in the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries**

The varieties of English used in Outer Circle countries have been called by linguists “New Englishes”. The varieties of English in Southeast Asia like Singapore English, Malaysian English, Brunei English and Philippine English have been well-documented and have attracted many scholars as they share interesting historical and linguistic characteristics. It is widely accepted that there is always a strong link between a language and political history, so it is better to look back to how English was diffused to these countries. As explained by Kachru, the spread of English in the Outer Circle countries occurred largely as a result of colonization by English-speaking nations. While the spread of English to Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore was caused by the British colonization, its spread to the Philippines resulted from US colonization.

## 2.2.1 Singapore

Singapore, together with Penang and Malacca constituted the Straits Settlements in 1826 and were used as trading centers for the British Empire's East India Company. Eventually Singapore fell totally under British rule. In 1957, the Straits Settlements became independent from Britain and formed the Federation of Malaya (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006: 130). Recognizing that the Federation was not advantageous, Singapore seceded from it and constituted itself into a city-state.

Despite its small surface area of just over 700 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of around 5 million, Singapore is known as a country with an indigenous population so diverse that its diversity was made official policy. According to David *et al.* (2009: 163), the majority of Singaporean residents are ethnically Chinese (75.6%). The Indians, Malays and other smaller ethnic groups are comparatively smaller communities (13.6 %, 8.7 % and 2.1% respectively). A census conducted in 1957 showed that Singaporeans spoke 33 different mother tongues. For Singaporean government, in such a diverse multi-racial society, language policies have been very important to make a social and political stability, which facilitates rapid economic growth. The objective of the language policies is not only to “promote the use of mother tongues so as to ensure identification with and maintenance of traditional cultures and their values”, but also to “access scientific and technological knowledge as well as Western values” (David *et al.*, 2009: 164).

After Singapore had gained independence from Britain, the leaders of the country decided that there would be four official languages: Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil

represented three ethnic-cultural traditions, and English because of its international status and Singapore's colonial background. The multilingual policy ensured that all four official languages were equally treated (Kuo, 1983). Among the four, English has evolved to become a *de facto* working language, functioning as a unifying working language at the national level.

On the one hand, the use of English promotes economic progress for both society as a whole and for its individual speakers. Since Singapore lives by trade and that the language of that trade is English, the use of English in the country thus greatly aids the attraction of overseas capital, trade and industrial investment. In other words, it is the language related to economic development and modernization. On the other hand, English is a non-native language in which none of the major ethnic groups is at an advantage over the others. The use of this "neutral" language helps rule out any substantial inter-ethnic conflict based on the language issue in Singapore (Kuo, 1983; David *et al*, 2009).

At the time of independence, the policy stated that the four official languages were also designated as the media of instruction. According to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006: 11), ethnic schools for the Chinese, Tamils, and Malays were supported in Singapore, where primary school curricula were taught in the ethnic language and English taught as a second language. Pupils learned mathematics and science in English; and history and civics (moral education) in the respective ethnic language. It was believed that the learning of the ethnic language from early age could lead to an appreciation and hence retention of ethnic cultural values and traditions, and satisfy the need for sentimental

attachments to the ethnic culture (Kuo, 1983). In secondary school and university, English-taught education became the prevailing mode; Malay, Tamil, and Chinese at the secondary level became marginal, while higher education was totally in English.

However, because of the fear of the spread of communism, the government closed all Chinese-medium schools in 1987. Around the same time, due to falling numbers, the Malay-medium schools were also closed. This reduced the Mandarin Chinese and Malay to being taught as second languages in primary and secondary schools, and English has since dominated the country's education system (David *et al.*, 2009: 163).

In present Singaporean bilingual education system, English is the only medium of instruction at all levels (David *et al.*, 2009). The other three official languages are promoted as “mother tongues” and taught as second languages. To emphasize the importance of bilingualism, David *et al.* (209: 164) cited the speech made in Parliament by Lee Hsien Loong, Deputy Prime Minister:

“English is and will remain our common working language. It is the language of global business, commerce and technology. But the mother tongue gives us a crucial part of our values, roots and identity. It gives us direct access to our cultural heritage, and a world-view that complements the perspective of the English-speaking world”.

Being only one of the four official languages, English has enjoyed a privileged position in Singapore. It is the main language employed in government and administration, the sole medium of instruction in schools; government publications (legal texts, online services, and so on) are often in English only. Unlike in India, where English is official but is mostly spoken by the elite, in Singapore, English is used in all strata of the

community, from university professors to taxi drivers or street hawkers. It plays a major role not only in the public sphere but also in private life of Singaporeans. According to David *et al.* (2009), the 2010 census, which was conducted to find out commonly spoken languages at home for resident population aged 15 and above, shows that 29.8% of the population indicated English as their most frequent household language. Another census (General Household Survey) conducted earlier in 2005 reveals that 42, 8% of population aged from 5 to 9 used English as their most frequent home language. The Straits Times of 2009 provides a more remarkable figure: 60% of Singaporean Primary 1 children spoke English as their home language. These figures are significant because English arguably represents a first language rather than a second language, and the younger generations are more likely to have English as their dominant home language.

David *et al.* (2009: 165) also argue that rapid economic growth since the 1980s seems to have helped convince the majority that knowledge of English provides better opportunities for Singaporeans as individuals, as well as for the country as a whole. Therefore, despite the emphasis placed on the teaching of 'mother tongues' many Singaporeans are moving towards English as a home language. Data from the 2005 census confirms that there was a shift to English among the Chinese and Indian communities. For example, Tamil parents and their children only used Tamil in prayers and in communicating with relatives, but during family activities, they tended to use English. In general, as more and more young generation Singaporeans are going through the formal educational system, the trend toward the increasing use of English in all domains seems to continue.

Among “New Englishes” (McArthur, 1998), Outer Circle Englishes (Kachru, 1985), Singapore English is probably “one of the better-studied varieties” (Leimgruber, 2011). It is a nativised variety of English which includes two forms: Standard Singapore English and Colloquial Singapore English. The former does not exhibit major differences from other versions of Standard English around the globe except a small number of lexical items that are locally restricted. People use it when speaking with superiors, or most foreigners. By contrast, the latter, which is often called “Singlish” by speakers, government language planners, or linguists, is very different from Standard English. This variety is spoken by a large number of Singaporeans when communicating with intimate persons. Although some people have appreciated Singlish for its potential in expressing a Singaporean identity, some others have criticized it for, as Leimgruber (2011: 16) puts it, a number of ills, which “reduce employability, and threaten the nation’s competitive edge in a global economy where English is very much the lingua franca”.

Being aware of the crucial role of English in the country’s service economy, Singaporean government launched in 2000 a Speak Good English Movement (SGEM) directed against Singlish (viewed as “bad English”). The purpose of the campaign is to help its people use an “internationally acceptable form of English” (standard form) (Young, 2008). The Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong, stated in 2000 that it is important to gain the ability to speak good English for doing business and communicating with the world especially for a hub city and an open economy like Singapore. If Singaporean people kept on speaking poor English, they would look less intelligent and less competent (Harada, cited in Siregar, 2010: 68). According to David et al. (2009), the movement has been quite effective, and in spite of continuing opposition from academic and literary corners,

the public is still voting for "Standard English" in an ongoing survey on the SGEM home page.

### **2.2.2 Malaysia**

Being the neighboring country of Singapore, Malaysia shares substantial political, cultural and linguistic history with this small island country. As mentioned earlier, Penang, Malacca and Singapore constituted the Straits Settlement in 1826. More than a century later, in 1957, the Straits Settlements became independent from Britain and formed the Federation of Malaya. Singapore, finding no advantages in the Federation, seceded from it and constituted itself into a city-state. The Federation of Malaya is now Malaysia and has a constitutional monarch with a Prime Minister and a Parliament (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006: 130).

With the population of just 26 million people in which Malays make up the majority (65.1%), the Chinese 26.0%, the Indians 7.7% and other indigenous groups 1.2%, around 140 languages are spoken in Malaysia. This makes Malaysia a truly multilingual society. Although sharing cultural and historical similarities with Singapore, soon after the independence in 1957, Malaysia presented “an altogether different trajectory” (Bautista and Gonzalez’s, 2006: 131). With the purpose of fostering national unity, Malay, the language of the majority of Malaysian population and also known to a large number of non-Malays, was established as the national language. In a speech made in 1969, Tunku Abdul Rahman (the first Prime Minister of Malaysia) stressed the necessity of having a national language: “It is only right that as a developing nation, we want to have a language of our own. If the National Language is not introduced, our country will be



devoid of a unified character and personality - as I would put it, a nation without a soul and without a life” (cited in Jeyathurai, 2009: 66).

Malay became the medium of instruction at all levels of Malaysian education. However, the shift to Malay, according to David *et al.* (2009: 159), was implemented in an “orderly fashion to avoid disruption and a drop in standards”. The conversion of the English medium schools to Malay medium began in 1968. Initially Malay was used to teach physical education, art and craft, local studies and music in Grades 1, 2 and 3. More of the arts subjects had been taught in Malay before the shift to Malay occurred for the science subjects. In 1976 all English medium primary schools were completely Malaysianized with Malay used as the medium of instruction. 1976 was also the year when the National Language Act was introduced. Malay became the official and only language of government, with future civil servants and university students having to pass advanced examinations in Malay to qualify. The Malaysianization of the medium of instruction was completed by 1983, when all the former English medium secondary schools were taught in the National Language and it also reached university level. English continued to be taught as a subject from Grade 1 to 12 (Bautista and Gonzalez: 2006).

It took nearly thirty years (from 1968 to 1996) to convert the medium of instruction for all subjects at school from English to Malay. Thanks to this conversion and the use of Malay as the National Language, the Malaysian national unity was realized. On the contrary, the role and position of English were radically reduced. It was no longer the medium of instruction as during the colonial times but the language taught in schools as a

second language. In rural areas, English was virtually a foreign language as there was little environment for the language to be used among local people.

In recent years, however, the situation has changed. English is more and more widely used as the medium of instruction in private universities. Students at national universities (which teach in Malay and therefore attract mostly Malay students) have gradually lost out in the job market to graduates of private universities (which teach in English and cater to the Chinese and Indian population). In public schools and universities, English is considered a crucial reference language due to the lack of resource in Malay. In addition, it is a language of business (in private sectors), social interaction (mainly among non-Malays and Malay elite intellectuals and socialites) and an international language in the country (Subramaniam: 2007). Furthermore, there are more and more parents of the Malay elite who financially support their children to study abroad. Partnerships with British, American, and Australian universities have also been started, so that some foreign universities now have campuses in Malaysia or have joint programs with local Malaysian universities (Bautista and Gonzalez: 2006; David *et al.*, 2009). English continues to be used in many domains of Malaysian society.

Hence, the significance of English in Malaysia has been re-asserted. Malaysian government views it “as vital for the nation’s growth”. In other words, it is “an important means for gaining information and industrialization and also for existing in the international world” (Sirega, 2010: 66), or a “necessity for economic power and global respect” (David *et al.*, 2009: 160), or “a language of science and technology in the modernization process of the country” (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006: 131). In order to

adapt to the new situation, and also to suit their political, economic and cultural demands, Malaysian leaders issued Education Act of 1996, which reintroduced English as a medium of instruction for technical subjects (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006: 131). Seven years later, in 2003, a new policy made it mandatory for mathematics and science to be taught in English. As explained by the government, when implemented, these policies would help to “ensure that Malaysia would not be left behind in a world that was rapidly becoming globalized” (David *et al.*, 2009: 160). This change in priorities towards English is also made for the vision to make Malaysia “a significant player in world economy, the centre for regional education, and a multi-media super-corridor by the year 2020” (Subramaniam, 2007: 13).

The concept of nationalism is therefore re-defined in a post modern world. Nationalism means doing everything possible for the nation, even if it means learning English. David *et al.* (2009) cited then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed’s speech made in September 1999: “Learning the English language will reinforce the spirit of nationalism when it is used to bring about development and progress for the country. By learning English, Malaysians do not dilute their sense of identity but enhance the nation’s image. The true nationalist is pragmatic in using English”. Thus, now the government stresses the need to improve the teaching and learning of English in its education system.

### **2.2.3 Brunei**

Brunei is the third and also the last Outer Circle country in Southeast Asia colonized by the British. After the British had established the colony of the Straits Settlements in three major trading posts as mentioned earlier, they gradually expanded their area of control to

Malaya itself. In 1874, the Treaty of Pangkor was signed between the British and the Sultan of Perak, which resulted in the installation of the first “British Resident” working as the official advisor to the Sultan. Fourteen years after the Treaty of Pangkor, Brunei became a British Protectorate (Kirkpatrick, 2012: 2)

In the context of Southeast Asia, Brunei has very strong historical and cultural ties with Singapore and Malaysia not only because the three countries shared a similar colonial past but also because they have an ethnic mix which is predominantly Malay and Chinese (though in differing proportions). Like Singapore with respect to the small area (5,765 km<sup>2</sup>) and small population (391,450 habitants) (David *et al.*, 2009), Brunei is ethnically similar to Malaysia as the majority of the population are Malays (67%), followed by the Chinese and other indigenous groups. Like both countries, Brunei is a linguistically diverse country in which Malay is the national language while English is officially regarded as an important language and is spoken and understood by the majority of the population. Beside English and Malay, there are Chinese languages, Indian languages, Arabic, Nepali languages and minority languages. While Malay, Mandarin Chinese and particularly English are considered to be safe, other languages are endangered, and some on the verge of extinction. According to David *et al.* (2009), even though recognizing the importance of maintaining these languages, Brunei government has done almost nothing. At present minority languages do not have any space in public education, whereas Malay and English have been used as the media of instruction in all government schools since Brunei gained independence from Britain in 1984.

Being one of the two languages used as the media of instruction in education, and the second important language, English coexists peaceably with Malay in their respective domains. This is in marked contrast to the neighboring and surrounding country of Malaysia where language issues, particularly in relation to the domains of the Malay and English languages, are regularly the cause for heated debate (Jones, 1997).

Brunei English is considered a non-standard variety of English. Some recent studies have suggested that it is still at an early stage of development, and that there is still little awareness among its speakers of some of the differences between it and Standard British English. However, Brunei English is predicted, in all likelihood, to expand and stabilize over time (Davies, 2010).

#### **2.2.4 The Philippines**

To many scholars, several factors make the Philippines one of the most significant and most interesting English-using societies in Asia. First, the country has a geography that covers a geologically unstable area and extends 7,107 islands which were home for some 120 to 180 languages (Bolton and Bautista, 2008; David *et al.*, 2009). Second, with the population of 81 million, it is well-known for its large English-speaking population; in fact, it is the third largest English-speaking country in the world (Bolton and Bautista, 2008). Third, the Philippines presents a scenario quite different from the other three Outer Circle countries in Southeast Asia. While the British were responsible for the spread of English to Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei, the story of Philippine English has its historical origin in the US intervention. Before the United States took over the Philippines, the Philippines had been under control of Spain for more than 300 years. It

was in 1898 that Spain ceded control of the Philippines to the United States under the Treaty of Paris. The United States had maintained colonial control over the Philippines until 1946 at which time the Philippines became an independent nation.

Unlike Spain's strategy, America's means of attack and assimilation was not religion but mass education. Right after the Americans had taken over the Philippines, they established a public schooling system in which English was used as the main language of instruction. The reason was that, according to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006: 131), "no local language was discovered widespread and acceptable enough to be the language of instruction. Moreover, there was a Whorfian faith that the English language would better instruct Filipinos in the way of democracy". English was used as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 on. Initially, American teachers were recruited from all over the United States to serve in the new system. These teachers had an important impact, not only as instructors, but also as teacher-trainers, so that by 1921, 91% of all teachers were native-born Filipinos who sowed, to use Bolton and Bautista's (2008: 4) words, "the seeds of what we now call Philippine English"

For a period of twenty years from 1898 to 1918, the extent to which English had been adopted within the Philippine society was remarkable: around 47% of the population claimed to speak English, and 55.6% claimed the ability to read and write the language (Bolton and Bautista, 2008: 4). This result was unprecedented in colonial history. For a short period of time, the Americans, as Gonzalez (1997) claims, "had done more to spread English than the Spanish government did in 333 years (1565-1898) of

colonization, for at the end of the Spanish Period, only 2% spoke Spanish” (cited in Bolton and Bautista, 2008: 4).

The bilingual education policy in 1939 put an end to the monolingual English policy. With this policy, English continued to be a medium of instruction; however, primary school teachers were allowed to use the local languages as a supplementary tool for instruction. Two years later, Tagalog-based national language, which was then called Filipino, was proclaimed to be another official language. Its teaching was propagated as a subject in all grades from Grade 1 to Fourth Year and subsequently for two semesters in college (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006: 132). It was first used as a medium of instruction for social studies and social sciences in 1974 under the bilingual education policy of the Department of Education. All other subjects continued to be taught in English. This policy also claims that English and Filipino are both the languages of education and the official languages of literacy for the nation and that the goal of the policy is to make the population bilingual in English and Filipino, with Filipino as the national language (David *et al.* 2009: 171).

Like other Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines struggled to find the ideal language choice that would be the suitable mediator between a large variety of languages so that it did not marginalize any significant linguistic community. The issue of English in relation to the national language had therefore been regularly debated. Philippine official policy, according to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006), had an ambivalent attitude toward English. From 1974 to 1986, the emphasis was on the use of Filipino as a medium of instruction at all levels even in college, at least for some subjects. However, because of the need for an

international language in the age of globalization, English has once more taken center stage and is now being emphasized, so much so that there is a return to the use of English even in the social sciences, supposedly the domain of the national language. To many Filipino students, English improves the status of those who speak it including respectability and marketability; it is the language of power and a tool for upward social and economic movement and therefore, they show more favorable attitudes towards the language than Filipino. Today English is indeed the major language in public and personal life of Filipino people: it is not only used in various sectors such as government, law and education, but it also plays a major role in religious affairs, print and broadcast media, creative writing, and business (Bolton and Bautista, 2008; Siregar, 2010).

Despite the popularity of English in the Philippine society in recent years, one witnesses widespread erosion in the Filipino's ability to speak, read and write in English which jeopardizes the prestige of this third largest English-speaking country (Lazaro and Medalla, 2004: 15). This decline in English proficiency, as Bolton and Bautista (2008: 5) puts it, has come at a time when the utility of English and the demand for the language are probably at an all-time high. The reason lies in not only insufficient investment and poor management of the education system but also shortages of facilities like classrooms, textbooks, computer and internet access, and particularly qualified teachers.

In summary, a high priority placed by Southeast Asian governments on the teaching and learning of English stems from the necessity of English for the development and modernization of their countries. They have accepted three tenets (Kirkpatrick, 2012: 14):



first, the best way to learn a second language is to use it as a medium of instruction; second, to learn a second language one must start as early as possible; and third, the home language gets in the way of learning a second language. With English as a medium of instruction, their people are hoped to master the language which facilitates the development and modernization of their countries.

A general overview of the language policy in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines can be shown in the following table:

|                     | <b>Singapore</b>  | <b>Malaysia</b>   | <b>Brunei</b>  | <b>The Philippines</b>   |
|---------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Official Languages: | English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil   | Malay, English  | Malay, English   | Filipino, English  |
| Bilingual Policy    | English: the only medium of instruction at all levels.<br><br>Mandarin, Malay, Tamil: the mother tongues and taught at schools as second languages. | Malay: the national language and the medium of instruction for social and art subjects.<br><br>English: the second language and the medium of instruction for scientific and technical subjects | Malay: the national language.<br><br>English: the second language<br><br>Both languages: the media of instruction in all government schools. | English and Filipino: the media of instruction at different school levels. |

## **2.3. Linguistic Features of New Varieties of English in the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries**

It is widely accepted that living languages change over time and space. English used in environments different from its origin, as discussed earlier, adjusts and changes to suit its new environments. Looking back at the history of English, it is important to note that the contact with other languages has always been the major cause of linguistic change in English. Kirkpatrick (2012: 6) claims that, it has never been “untouched” by other languages. For example, Classical Greek, Latin, French, and many other languages have left their mark on English. The language has, as stated by Crystal (2004: 128), “married with other local languages: living in new houses, wearing new clothes, eating exotic foods”. The New Englishes in Southeast Asia is not an exception. In the region, English is often used in two forms: standard English and colloquial English. While the former is not much different from British English or American English and therefore is not the subject discussed in this thesis, the latter (called Singlish, Manglish, Taglish, and Colloquial Brunei English) is distinctly different with respect to phonology, lexis, syntax, and discourse.

### **2.3.1 Phonology**

Like almost all other new varieties of English in the world, New Englishes in Southeast Asia are best identified through their phonological features.

Bao (1998, cited in Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006), and Leimgruber (2010) note the following phonological features of Colloquial Singapore English:

- 1 Stops are unaspirated in all positions.
- 2 /θ/ becomes /t/ and /ð/ becomes /d/ before a vowel (*thin* → /tin/; *then* → /den/); /θ/ and /ð/ become /f/ in word-final position (*breath* → /brɛf/; *breathe* → /brif/).
- 3 There is a lack of length contrast and tenseness contrast in vowels (*bit/ beat* → /bit/).
- 4 There are no syllabic laterals and nasals.
- 5 In word-final position, voiced stops become voiceless (*leg* → /lɛk/).
- 6 Diphthongs are often absent (/ei/ and /əʊ/ in *face* and *goat* → /e:/ and /o:/)
- 7 It has syllable-timed, rather than stress-timed, rhythm (every syllable is given equal stress, or when one syllable is stressed, the stress may be on a different syllable from that stressed in RP).

Zuraidah and Schneider (2000/ 2004, cited in Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006) describe the characteristics of Malaysian English phonology as follows:

- 1 merger of /i:/ and /ɪ/: *feel* – *fill*, *bead* – *bid* all have /i/.
- 2 merger of /u:/ and /ʊ/: *pool* – *pull*, *Luke* – *look* all have /u/.
- 3 merger of /ɛ/ and /æ/: *set* – *sat*, *man* – *men* all have /ɛ/.
- 4 merger of /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/: *pot* – *port*, *cot* – *caught* all have /ɔ/.
- 5 variant realizations of /ə/: schwa tends to get replaced by a full vowel, the quality of which frequently depends upon orthography.

- 6 monophthongization of diphthongs: e.g. *coat, load* with /o/, *make, steak* with /e/.
- 7 shift in the placement of accents.
- 8 omission of final voiceless stop or its replacement by a glottal stop in monosyllabic words with a CVC structure.
- 9 reduction of word-final consonant clusters, usually dropping the alveolar stop.
- 10 replacement of dental fricatives by stops.

Gonzalez (1978, cited in Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006), and McArthur (1998) characterize the following phonological features of Philippine English:

- 1 absence of schwa
- 2 absence of aspiration of stops in all positions.
- 3 substitution of /a/ for /æ/, /ɔ/ for /o/, /ɪ/ for /i/, /ɛ/ for /e/.
- 4 substitution of /s/ for /z/, /ʃ/ for /ʒ/, /t/ for /θ/, /d/ for /ð/, /p/ for /f/, /b/ for /v/.
- 5 simplification of consonant clusters in final position.
- 6 syllable-timed, rather than stress-timed, rhythm.
- 7 shift in placement of accents.
- 8 rhotic (/r/ is pronounced in nearly all positions of a word).
- 9 intonation widely characterized as ‘singsong’.

Mossop (1996) and Sharbawi(2010) offer a description of Brunei English phonology as follows:

- 1 reduction of final consonant clusters by means of plosive deletion, so *first* is /fɜs/.
- 2 use of alveolar plosives for initial TH sounds, so *three* is /tri/ and *the* is /də/.
- 3 omission of final stops /t, d/ and use of a glottal stop in place of final /k/, so *hand* is /hen/
- 4 monophthongization of diphthongs, so *face*, *square*, and *goat* are pronounced as monophthongs
- 5 shortening of long vowels, so *shirt* is /ʃɜt/ and *cream* is /krim/
- 6 the occurrence of rhoticity, so /r/ in nonprevocalic positions such as in *far* and *whatever* is pronounced.
- 7 tendency not to differentiate between the TRAP and DRESS vowels, so words such as *bat* and *mat* are often pronounced like *bet* and *met* respectively
- 8 l-vocalisation, i.e.the lateral is realised with a back vowel quality such as *sell* is /seo/ or /seʌ/

In brief, it seems that Southeast Asian varieties of English share several outstanding phonological features (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2012) such as the substitution of alveolar plosives /t, d/ for interdental /θ, ð/, the absence of the schwa vowel, the monophthongization of diphthongs, the shortening of long vowels, the reduction of final consonant clusters, the shift in stress placement, and syllable-timed rather than stress-timed rhythm.

### 2.3.2 Lexis

According to Leimgruber (2011), most adaptations in New Englishes in Southeast Asia, concerns vocabulary, which shows substantial creativity among their users. Since English arrived in the region, new cultures and new needs have led to the creation of a wide range of new words that represent the required meanings more adequately. Local places, things and objects for which terms are absent in English also have to be created. As a result, large-scale borrowing has happened. Bautista and Gonzalez (2006) suggest that adaptation is the most obviously apparent in loanwords, which can be seen in the following examples:

| <b>Singapore English</b> | <b>Meaning</b>                 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Abang                    | elder brother; male cousin     |
| Bodoh                    | dull, unintelligent            |
| Hanram                   | Prohibited                     |
| Mabok                    | intoxicated, drunk             |
| tang hoon                | rice flour, any kind of powder |

| <b>Brunei English</b> | <b>Meaning</b>             |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| makan                 | Food                       |
| kecil makan           | little food, thus a snack  |
| adat                  | Traditional law            |
| kampong               | Traditional village        |
| bomoh                 | a traditional medicine man |

| <b>Philippine English</b> | <b>Meaning</b>           |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| amok                      | Crazy                    |
| barang                    | luggage, bits and pieces |
| boondock                  | Mountain                 |
| carabao                   | a water buffalo          |
| kundiman                  | a love song              |

Loan translation, a form of borrowing from one language to another whereby the semantic components of a given term are literally translated into their equivalents in the borrowing language, is also a very common feature in Southeast Asian Englishes. For example:

| <b>Malaysian English</b> | <b>Loan Translation</b>   |
|--------------------------|---|
| red packet               | a sum of money folded inside red paper and given at the Chinese New Year to unmarried younger relatives |
| spring roll              | dish consisting of a savoury mixture of vegetables and meat rolled up in a thin pancake and fried       |

| <b>Philippine English</b> | <b>Loan Translation</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| open the light/radio      | turn on the light/radio |
| since before yet          | for a long time         |



|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| joke only           | I'm teasing you  |
| you don't only know | you just don't realize   |
| I am ashamed to you | I am embarrassed because I have been asking you so many favours. |
| making foolishness  | Misbehaving  |

Another important feature of Southeast Asian English lexis is changes in the meaning of words. Bautista and Gonzalez (2006) provide two examples from Singapore English: *stay* is used for permanent or long-term residence (cf. British English, in which *live* is used for permanent residence and *stay* for temporary or short-term residence) and *keep* describes an activity – *I'm going to keep these photos in that drawer* (cf. British English, where *keep* describes a state – *The tools are kept in the shed*). Kirkpatrick (2007) also takes *confident* and *proud* as examples of meaning shift in Brunei English: *confident* has only negative connotations and means *over-confident* or *arrogant*. In the same way, *proud* has only negative connotations and is a translation equivalent of the Malay word *sombong*, which means *haughty*.

In addition, hybrids – where a compound is formed of words from different languages – are common in the new varieties of English of the region. Examples are, *buco juice* (the juice of a young coconut), *pulot boy* (a tennis ball boy), *common tao* (an ordinary Filipino) in Philippine English, or *ice kachang* (dessert of ice with syrup and jelly), *mama shop* (convenience stores), *sarong partygirl* (a local, solely Asian woman, who usually

dresses and behaves in a provocative manner, and who exclusively dates and prefers white men) in Singapore English (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

The lexical innovations as well as new collocations are so many that, according to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006), they have now been gathered in the multi-sourced Macquarie junior dictionaries of Asian English for Singapore, Malaysian, and Brunei English, and *Anvil-Macquarie Dictionary of Philippine English for High School* (2000) for Philippine English.

### **2.3.3 Grammar**

The grammar of standard Southeast Asian English is not different from that of other versions of Standard English around the world. Whereas, the grammar of informal varieties in the region differs from the standard form quite markedly so it is of more central concern of extensive studies.

Alsagoff and Ho (1998, cited in Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006) present the following features of Colloquial Singapore English grammar:

• Features connected with the verb:

- 1 past tense and present tense not morphologically marked;
- 2 copula dropped to describe states;
- 3 adverbials preferred to morphological marking of aspect;
- 4 progressive aspect marked with *-ing*, sometimes with *still*;

5 habitual aspect marked with *always*.

• Features connected with the noun:

6 non-count nouns treated as count;

7 indefinite article dropped;

8 relative clause with different word order and *one*.

• Features of sentence structure:

9 subject and sometimes object dropping (PRO-drop);

10 conjunction dropping;

11 use of *or not*;

12 use of tag question *is it?*.

Concerning informal Malaysian English, the grammatical features have been characterized (McArthur, 1998; Schneider, 2003/2004, cited in Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006) as follows:

1 missing noun inflectional endings (mostly the plural *-s* and sometimes the genitive *-s*);

2 missing sentence constituents (object, subject, auxiliary verb, copula, preposition) giving the impression of phrasal “telegraphic” speech;

3 variant complementation patterns following verbs;

4 wrong concord in noun phrases;

- 5 innovations in phrasal verbs;
- 6 the use of reflexive pronouns to form emphatic pronouns.

McArthur (1998) and Bautista and Gonzalez (2006) have pointed out the following characteristics of Philippine English grammar:

- 1 lack of subject-verb agreement, especially in the presence of an intervening prepositional phrase or expression;
- 2 faulty tense-aspect usage including unusual use of verb forms and tenses, especially use of the past perfect tense for the simple past or present perfect, use of the continuous tenses for habitual aspect;
- 3 lack of tense harmony;
- 4 modals *would* and *could* used for *will* and *can*;
- 5 adverbial placed at the end of the clause, not between auxiliary and main verb;
- 6 non-idiomatic two- or three-word verbs;
- 7 variable article usage – missing article where an article is required; an article where no article is required;
- 8 faulty noun subcategorization, including non-pluralization of count nouns and pluralization of mass nouns;
- 9 lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent;
- 10 *one of the* followed by singular noun;
- 11 Verbs that are generally transitive used intransitively.

### 2.3.4 Discourse

According to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006), analysis of discourse features of Southeast Asian English is just starting. One important feature found in the recent studies is the wide use of particles. Speakers tend to use a large number of clause-final discourse particles in their communication. Leimgruber (2011) provides a list of such particles used in Singapore English:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>ah</i>       | tentative marker, continuation marker          |
| <i>hah</i>      | question marker                                |
| <i>hor</i>      | attempts to garner support for a proposition   |
| <i>lah</i>      | mood marker, appeals for accommodation         |
| <i>leh</i>      | marks a tentative suggestion/request           |
| <i>lor</i>      | indicates obviousness or resignation           |
| <i>mah</i>      | marks information as obvious                   |
| <i>what/wot</i> | marks obviousness and contradiction            |
| <i>meh</i>      | indicates scepticism                           |
| <i>ya</i>       | conveys (weak) emphasis and uncontroversiality |

These particles often stand at the end of sentences and are added to the utterance in order to derive speakers' different meanings. Take "lah" for example, in Malay, 'lah' is used to change a verb into a command or to soften its tone, particularly when usage of the verb may seem impolite. Similarly, 'lah' is frequently used with imperatives in Singlish:

Ex: Drink **lah!** – Just drink!

Code-switching, the case in which people may change between two or even three languages within a speech act, is another common and natural feature in multilingual communities like those of Southeast Asia. In such multilingual societies where English has a place alongside other local languages, according to Graddol (1997: 12), speakers often code-switch. While the first language may be a sign of solidarity or intimacy, English carries overtones of social distance, formality, or officialdom. Where two people know two languages, they may switch-code as part of a negotiation of their relationship. Such change in language is necessitated also by the lack of appropriate vocabulary or other expressions in local languages, or because the topic under discussion belongs to a domain that is better suited to a particular language, or even merely because speakers feel comfortable when communicating in two or more languages.

In the Philippines, for example, code-switching is extensively used not only in daily life conversations, but also in motion pictures, on television and radio, or in certain types of informal writing in daily newspapers and weekly magazines (McArthur, 1998: 82). McArthur cited the following utterance from a Philippine movie in which the character Donna reveals that since she turned producer in 1986, her dream was to produce a movie for children:

*“Kaya, nang mabasa ko ang Tuklaw sa Aliwan Komiks, sabi ko, this is it. And I had the festival in mind when finally I decided to produce it. Pambata talaga kasi ang Pasko,”*  
*(‘That is why when I read the story “Snake-Bite” in the Aliwan Comic Book, I told myself, this is it .... Because Christmas is really for children)*

According to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006: 137), code-switching in Malaysia happens between English and Malay or Tamil or Chinese among accomplished bilinguals for rhetorical and accommodation purposes. But among speakers not highly competent in English, code switching is used as a repair strategy.

## **Chapter 3: English as a Foreign Language in the Southeast Asian Expanding Circle countries**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Expanding Circle comprises the countries where English plays no historical or governmental role, but where it is nevertheless widely used as a foreign language or lingua franca. In Southeast Asia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor belong to this circle.

### **3.1. Thailand**

Among these Southeast Asian Expanding Circle countries, Thailand seems to have the longest record of using English. It has been present in Thailand for nearly two centuries, and has always been viewed as the most significant foreign language. Unlike all other countries in the region, Thailand is the only country which was never colonized by a Western power. Very early in Thailand's history, English was recognized by the Thai nobility not just as an intellectual interest but as a vehicle for communicating with potential colonizing nations – Thai people considered it a tool to protect their independence (Buripakdi, 2008: 19). During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, English, the language of the British, the most powerful colonizer, was politically introduced to the royal palace and restricted to only the nobility. Ultimately, the language became accessible to middle-class Thais in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent decades, English has been used by people at all levels of Thai society, from government leaders to bar girls, to fulfill their own objectives (Masavisut *et al.*, 1986, cited in Buripakdi, 2008).



There have been proposals to make English another official language of the country, together with Thai, but this has never materialized due to reasons of national identity and national stability. English, though owning no official status, is the first foreign language in Thailand. According to Lazaro and Medalla (2004: 13), in order to equip the students for the new economy, the Royal Thai Government enacted in 2002 an Education Reform Act, by which a new curriculum was enforced. English is a compulsory foreign language subject starting from level 1 in primary education (6 years of age). It is one of the eight compulsory strands that students have to take in the core and elective courses. The teaching and learning of the language are divided into four levels: level 1 (Preparatory Level) and 2 (Beginning Level) are in primary education; level 3 (Expanding Level) is in lower secondary education and level 4 (Expanding Level) is in upper – secondary education. At tertiary level, all students have to take a National English Proficiency Test before leaving the university.

Bautista and Gonzalez (2006: 138) note that about 99% of Thai students study English at school but it appears that not very many of them succeed in acquiring much English proficiency. The reasons are many and include teachers' insufficient English language teaching skills, large numbers of students in a class (45 – 60), heavy teaching loads, lack of adequately equipped classrooms and educational technology, lack of opportunity for students to use English in their daily lives, or their passive learning style, and so on.

### **3.2. Vietnam**

Different from Thailand which was never colonized, foreign language policy in Vietnam has always had a close relationship with the country's history. Vietnam experienced the rise and fall of a number of dominant foreign languages in its own history. Chinese, French and Russian respectively once enjoyed the dominant language status in Vietnam. More than a thousand-years of Chinese occupation resulted in the adoption of Han script as the official written language. It was in the late 1850s that the French started colonizing Vietnam. Consequently, French was made the official language of administration. The period 1954-1986 witnessed the dominance of Russian as the first foreign language as the result of the Soviet Union's support to the North in the Vietnam War. English had not replaced Russian until the Vietnamese government introduced economic liberalization called "open-door policy" or "Doi Moi policy" in 1986. The collapse of the Former Soviet Union five years later contributed to the rise of English and the decline of Russian in Vietnam. Since then, English has been widely used in almost every domain of social life. It has been learnt by taxi drivers, barmen, waiters, hotel receptionists, public servants, employers in international or non-international companies/organizations, government officers, students who plan to study in English-speaking countries, singers who hope to release their albums in English or to perform abroad, even girls who want to get married to foreigners. The significant position of English in Vietnam, as Kachru (1990: 5) observes, "reflects what has been happening elsewhere. Globally, English has been on the ascendancy, and this ascendancy now includes Vietnam".

To satisfy the increasingly high demand for English, English classes have mushroomed not only in big cities but also in rural areas. English learners have many opportunities to improve their proficiency: beside English classes provided at schools, at universities, they can learn English in private schools run by foreigners or Vietnamese people, or from English classes opened by individuals such as foreigners who come from England, America, Canada, Australia and so on; by Vietnamese teachers who have studied English in English-speaking countries, or by Vietnamese teachers of English who offer classes at any time during the day. It is hard to imagine how many public and private schools, and how many centers are running English training courses throughout Vietnam today. This has created what Denham (1992) calls “English fever”.

The emergence of English as the chief foreign language is considered a remarkable phenomenon because it has been present in Vietnam for only a short period of time. Just before 1986 (the year Vietnam started its open-door policy), the targets were set for foreign language education at high school as follows: 60% of the total population of students studied Russian, 25% English and 15% French (Denham: 1992). The next twenty years witnessed an unprecedented development of English in Vietnam. According to the 2006 statistics of Ministry of Education and Training, 67% of students in lower secondary schools and 86% in upper secondary schools studied English for at least three hours a week. At the tertiary level, the number is more substantial: 90% of students chose to study English among the foreign languages offered (Do, 1996).

The status of English was strengthened with Decree No. 3321/QĐ-BGDĐT enacted by the Ministry of Education and Training (August 2010), under which 100% students from Grade 3 of primary schools would study English as a mandatory subject. Furthermore, within the Vietnamese specialized secondary school system, English has become the medium of instruction for other subjects like mathematics, computer science, physics, chemistry and biology since “*Project on the development of specialized secondary schools during the 2010-2020 period*” (the Ministry of Education and Training, 2010) started to be implemented in the 2011-2012 school year.

### **3.3. Indonesia**

Indonesia is a former Dutch colony, and the teaching of Dutch therefore used to be emphasized in schools. The independence in 1949 witnessed the decline in the use of this language and the emergence of English as a chief foreign language (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006; Lie, 2007). English is now used as the medium of instruction in some schools and universities; it is the only compulsory foreign language taught in public schools (Siregar, 2010). According to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006), it is taught for eight or nine years from primary school (from Grade 4 or 5) through high school. There has also been a growing tendency in many big cities to teach English beginning even from kindergarten. This serves three main objectives. First, students need to be prepared to read English texts in their college years. Second, competence in the English language is still used as a determining factor in securing a favorable position and remuneration in the job market. Third, it provides Indonesians with reading skills to enable them to read

science-related materials in English. There are institutes (IKIPs) where the teaching of English is systematically taught to future teachers. However, as Bautista and Gonzalez (2006) states, the general consensus is that – for a variety of sociolinguistic and pedagogical reasons – the teaching of English in Indonesian schools has not been successful. And despite the growing number of speakers of English in the country especially among the young, urban middle class segment, outside the academic and professional worlds, it has never been widely used as the lingua franca among the majority of the population (Lie, 2007).

### **3.4. The Remaining Four Countries: Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor**

Of the seven Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor seem to be less well-documented on the use of English despite of the fact that in these countries, there is an interest in spreading the language similar to Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia. According to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006), it is because the educational systems in these countries are in slow revival, and consequently they cannot really make a realistic plan for foreign-language teaching.

Myanmar was colonized by the British from 1824 to 1948. English had been used as the primary language of instruction in higher education from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1964 when the government introduced “the Politics of Burmanization”, a policy which aimed at reducing Western influence. As a result, the role of English was reduced. The country

now, as stated by Bautista and Gonzalez (2006), wants to revive English, but this task is difficult as the educational system in this country is in a process of restoration.

In Laos and Cambodia, which are former French colonies, English is competing with French because the government of France considers the spread of French as part of its *mission civilizatrice* (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006; Young, 2008). The same situation is taking place in East Timor except that the competitor of English is Portuguese, the language of the country's former colonizer, Portugal.

In summary, the status of English as the first foreign language (in Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia), or the competitive foreign language (in Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor) is the result of globalization. As Bamgbose (2006: 647) says "What has accelerated the use of English in Expanding-Circle countries is the impact of globalization". The importance of English in the globalization process has "considerable impact on policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region" (Nunan, 2003: 589), which includes the Southeast Asian countries. To these countries, English plays a critical role in wider business and diplomatic links with the West; it is also the language of science and technology which facilitates industrialization and modernization. To individuals, they are motivated to learn English because of several reasons: it helps to find good jobs and get promoted to a higher position in the workplace; it helps to do business with foreign partners, it is a bridge to link them with the huge source of knowledge; and the knowledge of English becomes the symbol of modern identity and the mark of an educated person, and so on and so forth (Do, 1996; Lazaro and Medalla, 2004; Siregar,

2010). Governments in the region have put the priority and much effort on the teaching and learning of English in their countries. Nevertheless, they have not gained much success (Do, 1996; Lazaro and Medalla, 2004; Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006).

## **Chapter 4: The Future of English**

The fact that English in Southeast Asia has a significant status as the second language, or the chief foreign language depends on the worldwide spread of English, and on linguistic, economic and political factors. It is therefore important to review its future in accordance with the future of English in the world and in Southeast Asian contexts.

### **4.1. The Future of English in the World**

English is widely regarded as having become the global language. But will it retain its pre-eminence in the future? Discussing the future of English in the world, Graddol (1997: 2) states that the world in which it is used today is in its early stages of major social, economic and demographic transition. Although English is unlikely to be displaced as the world's most important language, the future is more complex and less certain than some assume.

Linguistic history has demonstrated that there has always been a close link between languages and power. Crystal (2003: 9) is of the opinion that "a language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people". Over 2,000 years ago, Greek was a language of international communication in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean because of the power of Alexander the Great's armies. Thanks to the legions of the Roman Empire, Latin became known throughout



Europe. Arabic came to be spoken so widely across northern Africa and the Middle East – the spread of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, carried along by the force of the Moorish armies from the 8<sup>th</sup> century accounted for that. That Spanish, Portuguese, and French found their way into the Americas, Africa and the Far East is attributed to the colonial policies of the Renaissance kings and queens, and the way these policies were ruthlessly implemented by armies and navies all over the known world. The rise of English as the global language relied on the expansion of British colonial power and the growing economic, military and political dominance of the United States (see Chapter 1).

The USA has come to be the dominant force in so many domains and this has helped English maintain its global status to this day. Graddol (1997: 2) predicts the apparently “unstoppable” trend toward global English usage, but he also points out that this could change suddenly and unexpectedly due to some relatively minor change in the world events. If anything was to weaken the military, economic and cultural power of the USA, there would be inevitable consequences for the global status of the language. The millions of people learning English in order to have access to this power would begin to look elsewhere, and they would quickly acquire new language loyalties.

English has spread around the world for centuries and might retain its global position in the foreseeable future. However, “a week may be a long time in politics”, as Crystal (2003: 123) puts it “but a century is a short time in linguistics”. It will not be surprising if one day, English goes the same way Latin and French did, with a decline in its global role. Graddol conceptualized the present and future “weight” of languages in the world.

*Figure 3* presents the current world linguistic hierarchy. The next languages to rise – the potential of Spanish, Chinese, Arabic and Hindi/ Urdu as highlighted by Graddol (1997: 59) – will doubtless be subject to the same governing factors. *Figure 4* shows what the future language hierarchy might look in the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, taking into account economic and demographic developments as well as potential language shift.

According to Graddol, the changing status of languages will create a new language hierarchy for the world. In the present-day hierarchy, English and French are the languages at the apex, with the position of French declining and English becoming more clearly the global lingua franca. In this hierarchy, English is also steadily, to use Graddol's (1997: 13) word, "colonizing" lower layers (see *Figure 4*). In comparison with the present-day hierarchy – in which English is hegemonic – in the 2050 world language hierarchy (see *Figure 4*), there will be more languages on the top layer. Chinese, Hindu/Urdu, Spanish and Arabic may join English. French and some other OECD languages (the languages of the countries in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development like German and Japanese) are likely to decline in status. But the biggest difference between the present-day language hierarchy and that of the future is the loss of several thousands of the world's languages. Thus, according to Graddol, there may be a group of languages at the apex, but there will be less linguistic variety at the base, and "the shift from linguistic monopoly to oligopoly brings pluralism in one sense, but huge loss of diversity in another. This will be offset only in part by an increasing number of new hybrid language varieties, many arising from contact with English in urban centers in particular" (Graddol, 1997: 59).

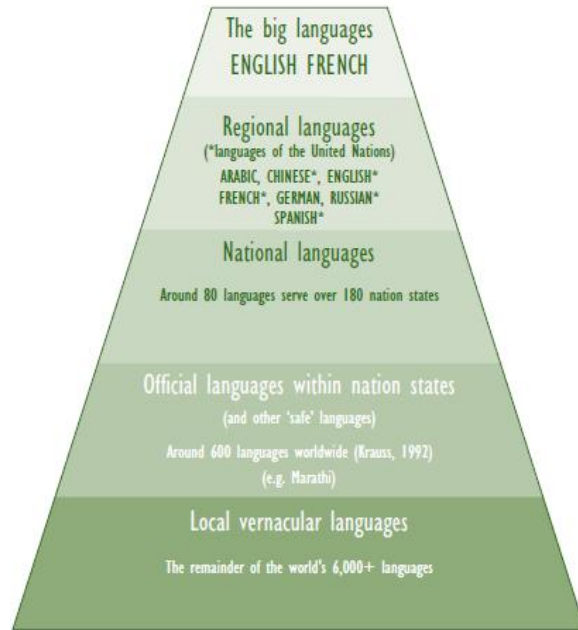


Figure 3: The present-day world language hierarchy

(Source: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-elt-future.pdf>)

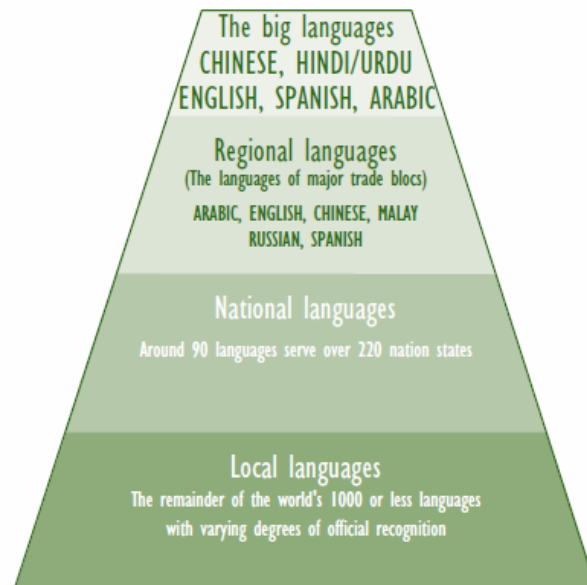


Figure 4: The world language hierarchy in 2050

(Source: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-elt-future.pdf>)

## 4.2. The Future of English in Southeast Asia

Graddol (1997: 9) makes a prediction that any substantial shift in the US role in the world and the subsequent change in the global status of English are “likely to have an impact on the use and the attractiveness of the English language amongst those for whom it is not the first language”. That the use and the attractiveness of English in Southeast Asia increase or diminish depend, first and foremost, on the future influence of English in the world.

Nonetheless, in the context of Southeast Asia, the status of English will continue to increase, at least in a foreseeable future. Bautista and Gonzalez (2006 : 139) make the following predictions for the future of the English language in the region :

- (1) The use of English as a language of education, especially at the tertiary level, and its spread as an international language of commerce, trade, and international relations, will expand.
- (2) In Singapore, the position of English will be secure, because official language policy and practice are overtly pro-English, and because English is perceived to have an equalizing and unifying function.
- (3) In Malaysia, after a long time of not being paid much attention for the reason of national unification and national building, it is now in a state of revival.
- (4) In the Philippines, competence in English is perceived to be diminishing, at least in the impressions of many people; however, the demand for English continues, and

(5) In Expanding Circle countries, English continues to dominate as a foreign language, even in socialist countries such as Burma and Cambodia.

Bautista and Gonzalez also suggest that concerning English in the region, there will be forces of standardizing the language in the interests of international communication and mutual intelligibility, with the aid of the mass media, the Internet, the mobile phone, and the education system. Their opinion is to some extent similar to Yano's (2001:126) when she states that "a loose league of acrolect-level local varieties of English" will develop. She points out that the World Englishes movement has paved its way as various ESL varieties of English gain acceptance, power, prestige and codification, and already, such varieties of English as Singapore English, Philippine English, or Malaysian English are well on their way along this path.

New varieties of English in Southeast Asia will not only be standardized, but they will also diverge. Graddol (1997) claims that people in the Outer Circle countries will be increasingly conscious that they do not have to always use English in the way people in the Inner Circle use it. They will use English in the way they want it, in other words, they will master English and submit it to their will, rather than be mastered by the language; it is speakers who determine the future of global English. They will speak English with their local accent, local style and local meaning which will express their local identities. This phenomenon of English in Southeast Asia, like other Asian and African English

varieties, will make English a “GLOCAL language”, to use Pakir’s (2000) terms (cited in Rohmah, 2005). That is a hybrid linguistic form that integrates the “global” and the “local”.

Some scholars claims that English is likely replaced as the lingua franca in Southeast Asia by some regional languages. Its first competitor is Malay, the national language of Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia and also the language commonly spoken in the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia (Rajandran, 2011: 29). It may be Mandarin, the language spoken by a large number of speakers in the region. Nevertheless, being the lingua franca of not only the Outer Circle countries but also of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the position of English will be strengthened, as stated by Yano (2001: 121) “because the multilateral nature of international trade brings with it a greater reliance on lingua franca, international trading among Asian countries is expected to increasingly rely on Asian varieties of English, rather than on Asian languages themselves.” Graddol (1997) also believes that English will continue to be used as the transnational and transregional language while native languages like Malay will still be used for national and regional purposes.

It is, however, very difficult to foresee precisely what will occur to the status of English language in Southeast Asia. Linguistic history shows us repeatedly that it is wise to be cautious when making predictions about the future of a language (Crystal, 2003: 123). The language will grow in usage and variety, yet simultaneously diminish in relative global importance. The pattern in which English, as a global language, has spread and been used in Southeast Asia can be seen in many other areas of the world. But the closer

one examines the historical cause and current trends, the more it becomes apparent that the future of English – not only in the world, but also in Southeast Asia – will be more complex, more demanding of understanding and more challenging.

# **PART II: EMPIRICAL WORK**

## **1. Rationale Behind Choosing an Online Questionnaire Based Survey**

Among various data collection methods in research, I chose to use a questionnaire based survey as this method appeared to be the most suitable for the purpose of my study. According to Molly (2012: 97), a survey is a useful research instrument if the researcher's goal is "to characterize a small number of behaviors or a much smaller number of attitudes, beliefs, or similar constructs of a large group of people". In applied linguistics and in any other field concerned with measuring a few things common to large groups of people, a survey is a popular technique to gather information.

While some researchers prefer to use face-to-face, telephone, or postal survey, I am much interested in using electronic questionnaires. It is a method of delivering the questionnaire entirely electronically via the Internet: respondents access the web page, read the questionnaire and enter their responses directly on to the page.

Like other evaluation methods, online surveys have some weaknesses that should be considered by researchers. For example, since people are not always honest, some participants can lie about their information which creates inaccuracy in the data. In addition, those who are less confident users of electronic services may be less willing to



complete an online questionnaire. Researchers and participants can also encounter technical problems.

However, the benefits of conducting online surveys far outweigh the drawbacks. Many researchers choose this method because of the following advantages:

1. **Shorter time:** While traditional survey methods are time-consuming to conduct, the biggest advantage of online survey method is that it helps to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time. The time spent for distributing and collecting data is much shortened. Respondents can fill out the questionnaire within a few days and researchers do not have to spend time entering the data as all responses are automatically inserted into a database. The sooner researchers get responses, the sooner they can analyze the data and put the information to work. In addition, this method allows researchers to work on other tasks while waiting for the data, for example, they can conduct preliminary analyses on collected data while waiting for the desired number of responses to accumulate.
2. **Lower expense:** Online surveys are much cheaper to prepare and administer. The cost for this method is much lower than for conducting paper, mail and telephone surveys. Online surveys help to eliminate the costs for paper and other costs, such as those incurred through postage, printing, and data entry which are needed in paper and mail surveys. Similarly, conducting online surveys avoids costs for

3. **Availability of online survey softwares and tools:** Recently, online survey softwares and tools have made survey research much easier and faster. Researchers can easily find online survey softwares with the guidance available on the Internet. With these softwares and tools, the data is automatically entered and processed, and this reduces researchers' time and effort.
4. **Easy access to informants in distant locations:** Online surveys enable researchers to reach informants in distant areas. A researcher can send the online questionnaire via the Internet to various informants in different areas of a country or in other countries.
5. **Transcription accuracy:** If traditional methods rely on the attentiveness of researchers to enter all details which can easily lead to natural human errors, online surveys eliminate this problem as respondents enter their responses directly into the system. It means the results are available as the data is entered, and transcription errors and the chore of manual data entry into separate analysis software are avoided.

6. **Convenience for informants:** Instead of being annoyed at an inconvenient time with a face-to-face or telephone survey, a respondent can take an online survey whenever she or he feels it is convenient. She or he may also take as much time as needed to answer individual questions.

Working on English in Southeast Asia in which my empirical work is concerning English in Singapore and Vietnam, the two countries which are geographically distant from France where I live and study, I have found online questionnaires the most effective and suitable method. With this method, I saved a great amount of time, expense and effort. To create an online questionnaire, I used Google Docs, a free online survey tool, which took me only some hours to complete. The result was amazing: I received a large number of responses the day I sent out the email and message invitations, and within only ten days I reached the desired number of respondents; I could also easily get data from people of various ages, sexes, occupations and places of living even in remote mountainous areas of Vietnam; with the data already in the database, I could start analyzing task instantaneously.

## **2. Designing the Questionnaire**

### **2.1. The Aims of the Survey**

The purposes of the survey are to find out the use of English, its users' motivations for learning or speaking English, their attitudes towards it, and their prediction about its

future. The survey aims at the users of English in two countries: Singapore, where English is used as the second language and representative of the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries, and Vietnam, where English is used as the dominant foreign language and representative of Expanding Circle countries in the region.

## **2.2. Designing the Questionnaires**

To make the data collection, result analysis and comparison easier, I designed two separate questionnaires for the users of English in Singapore and in Vietnam although most of the questions were similar. Some other questions were added to each questionnaire in order to find out more information related to the study. Among various types of questions, I opted mainly for multiple choice questions and checkbox questions as they make the control and analysis of responses easier. They are also faster and easier for the respondents to complete. However, I sometimes added the option “other” to the checkbox questions so that I could discover the issues that I might miss in a specific question.

Concerning the content of the questionnaires, they include two parts. First, the respondents were asked to provide some personal information such as age, occupation, sex; in the questionnaire for the Vietnamese, they were required to offer the information concerning the place of residence for the sake of analysis. Then, the respondents were asked to answer the questions (13 for the Vietnamese and 14 for the Singaporeans).

A pilot study was then done with the purpose of discovering any problems in understanding the questionnaires. Four Singaporeans and six Vietnamese were asked to trial the questionnaires by (1) attempting to answer the questions, and (2) providing a commentary on the problems they had in doing so and any issues that occurred to them as they did so. Two Singaporeans involved at this stage had problems with the term “code-switch” and two felt that there should be another option “other” in each checkbox question. Almost all Vietnamese respondents encountered the difficulty in understanding the term “medium of instruction”. Thanks to their commentary, I made some corrections to make the questions clearer and easier to understand: the option “other” was added to questions 3, 5 (in both the questionnaires), 12 (in the questionnaire for the Vietnamese); some explanations were also added to the terms “code-switch” and “medium of instruction”. The original ten participants were then asked to comment on the revised versions; no further issues were raised at this stage and the final versions were then officially posted on the Internet.

### **2.3. Respondents**

The respondents were those who were located in Singapore, and those who were located in different areas of Vietnam: Hanoi city (the urban area), Bacninh (the rural area) and Sonla (the remote mountainous area). The reason why I classified the respondents in Vietnam into three geographically different groups was that there was a big gap in the standard of living as well as the educational quality especially English learning and teaching quality in these three areas. The respondents were either males or females

belonging to different age groups (under 13, between 13 and 18, between 19 and 30, between 31 and 40, and over 40) and working in different fields in society. It is worth noting that the respondents included Vietnamese who did not know English. They were encouraged to take the questionnaire with my online translation into Vietnamese.

### 2.3.1. Age

Information about the age of the respondents is provided in *Figures 5.1* and *5.2*.

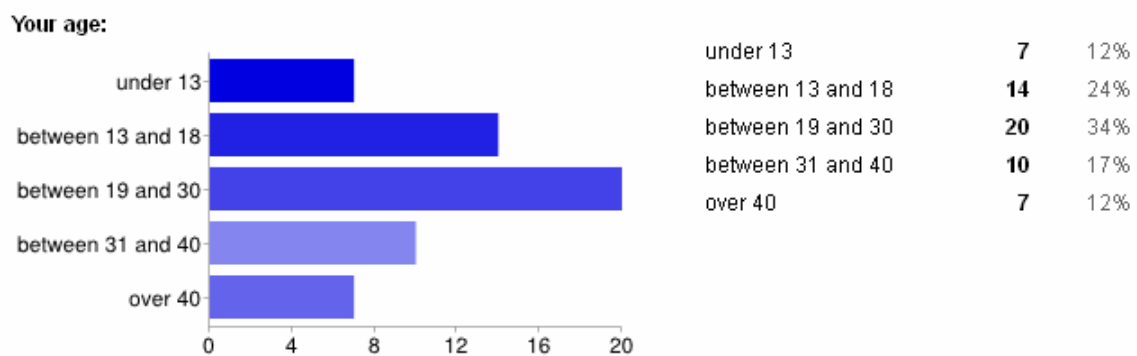


Figure 5.1: Age of Singaporean respondents

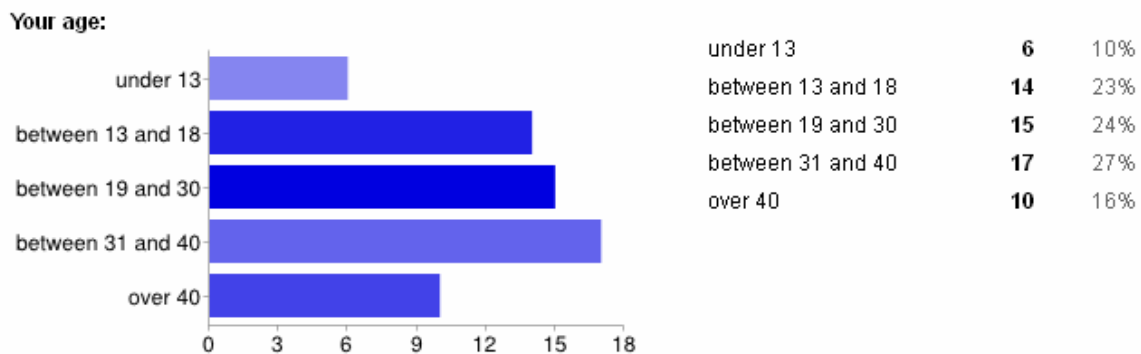


Figure 5.2: Age of Vietnamese respondents

As can be seen in *Figures 5.1* and *5.2*, the vast majority of respondents (approximately 75%) in both Singapore and Vietnam were aged between 13 and 40, with only 7 (12%) in Singapore and 6 (10%) in Vietnam being under 13 years old, and 7 (12%) in Singapore and 10 (16%) in Vietnam being above 40 years old.

### **2.3.2. Occupations**

The respondents' jobs were varied, but a large proportion of the respondents were students and those who worked in office and customer service sectors. They were followed by those who worked as teachers, engineers, doctors, manual workers, and so on.

### **2.3.3. Gender**

There was an almost equal distribution of gender in both countries, in which 53% of the respondents were females and 47% were males in Singapore; and 48% were females and 52% were males in Vietnam.

### **2.3.4. Places of Residence**

As Singapore is a city-state, there was no need to classify the respondents into different places of residence. This information was provided by Vietnamese participants only.

Nearly a half of the respondents (47%) lived in the city, 32% lived in the countryside and the rest (21%) lived in the mountainous area.

## **2.4 Survey Approach**

Because I was located in France for all the time during which I conducted this research project while the subjects of the research were the Singaporeans and the Vietnamese, it was very difficult for me to conduct paper, face-to-face, or telephone surveys as they are time-consuming and expensive. I therefore chose an online questionnaire-based survey because of the benefits I discussed earlier.

After creating the questionnaires with the tool Google Docs, I sent the page link to the respondents via emails, Yahoo Messenger, and Facebook. In order to get the responses from the Singaporeans, I asked for help from my old classmate at Stendhal University, who comes from Singapore, and my friends who work and study in this country. They sent the questionnaire to their relatives, their friends and their colleagues so that they could directly fill them out. The task of gathering the information from the Vietnamese was much easier as most of respondents are my friends, my former colleagues and students. They are from Sonla (a remote mountainous province), where I was born and grew up; from Bacninh (a rural province), where my closest friend works as a teacher so that she could help me with the task, and from Hanoi (the capital of Vietnam), where I had lived and worked before coming to France. As the Internet is now available in both Singapore and Vietnam even in remote areas, the respondents' access to this online



questionnaire was quick and easy so that, as I said earlier, I could get all the information needed within a short period of time.

### 3. Results and Discussion

120 responses were collected in which 58 were from Singapore and 62 were from Vietnam. The main contents of the questionnaires for the users of English in Singapore and in Vietnam consist of 14 and 13 questions respectively, most of which had the same contents so that I could make a comparison between the two countries.

#### Question 1

The first question deals with the time at which individuals start to learn English. The information is shown in *Figure 6.1* and 6.2.

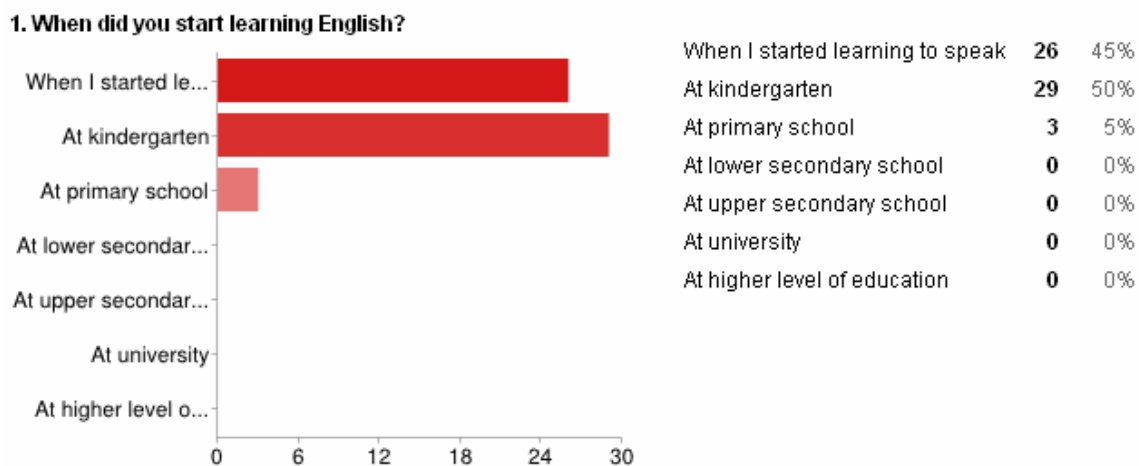


Figure 6.1: The time at which Singaporean respondents start learning English

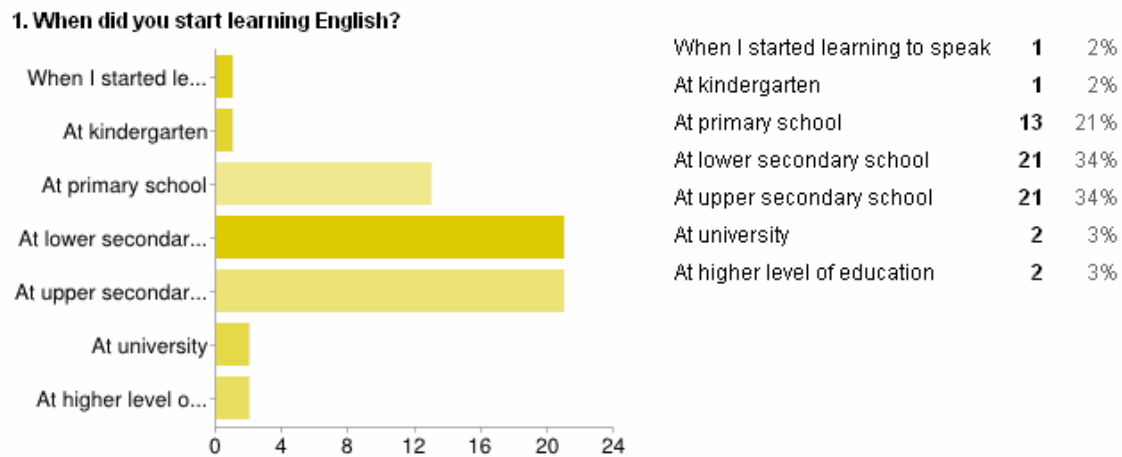


Figure 6.2: The time at which Vietnamese respondents start learning English

It is clear from *Figure 6.1* that in Singapore where English is one of the four official languages, people start to learn English at much earlier age: half of the respondents (50%) begin to study the language at kindergarten and only 5% begin their English learning at primary school. It is important to note that up to 45% of the respondents start to learn the language when they start learning to speak. Particularly, this percentage among young people is much higher: about 71% of the respondents under 13 and more than 64% aged between 13 and 18 use English when they start learning to speak. These figures are remarkable because English represents a first language rather than a second language, and the younger generations are more likely to have English as their dominant home language.

In Vietnam, where English is used as a foreign language, the majority of the respondents (68%) start to learn the language at secondary school, followed by those at primary

school (21%) (see *Figure 6.2*). Respondents' age and their places of residence seem to determine the time at which they start to learn English. With respect to age, the older they are, the later they study the language. 7 out of 13 respondents (more than a half) aged between 13 and 18 start to learn English at primary school while no one aged over 30 start the learning of the language at this level of education. Besides, all the respondents who start to learn English at university or at higher level of education are over 40 years old. This can be explained by the fact that English has been emerged as the first foreign language learned and used by Vietnamese people for only more than twenty years and so those at the age of over 40 have probably studied other foreign languages such as Russian, Chinese or French before shifting to English. Places of residence also do pattern with the time of individuals starting to learn English. The better the standard of living and education quality are, the sooner the individuals can start learning the English language. Of 15 people start to learn English at primary school or sooner, 9 live in the city and no one lives in the remote mountainous area, where is often known as the poorest area of the country.

## **Question 2**

The second question asks for the respondents' opinions on the time people should start to learn English. Up to 74% of the respondents in Singapore think that people should start to learn the language when they start learning to speak (see *Figure 7.1*). This result is not so surprising as in Singapore, English is the official language, and more and more people start to use English as early as they can speak as discussed earlier.

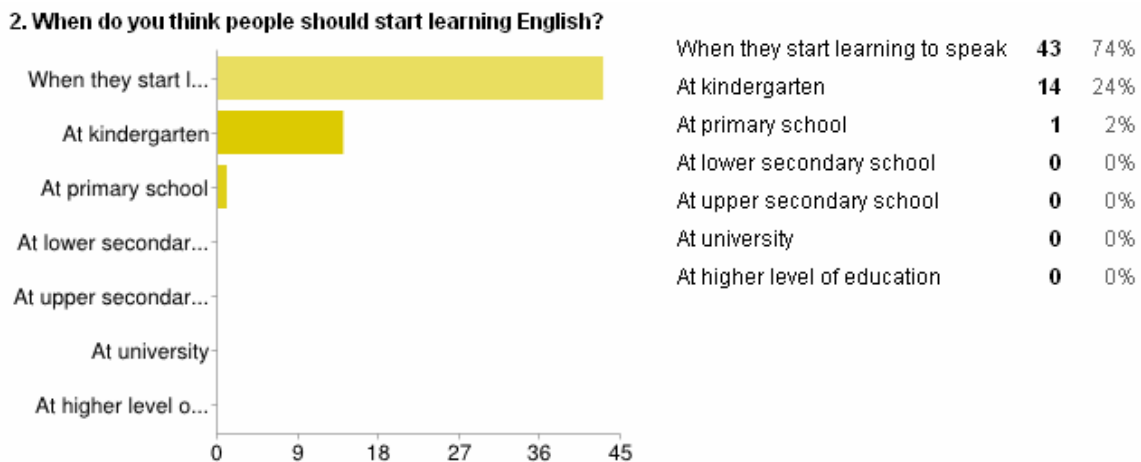


Figure 7.1: The time at which Singaporean respondents think people should start learning English

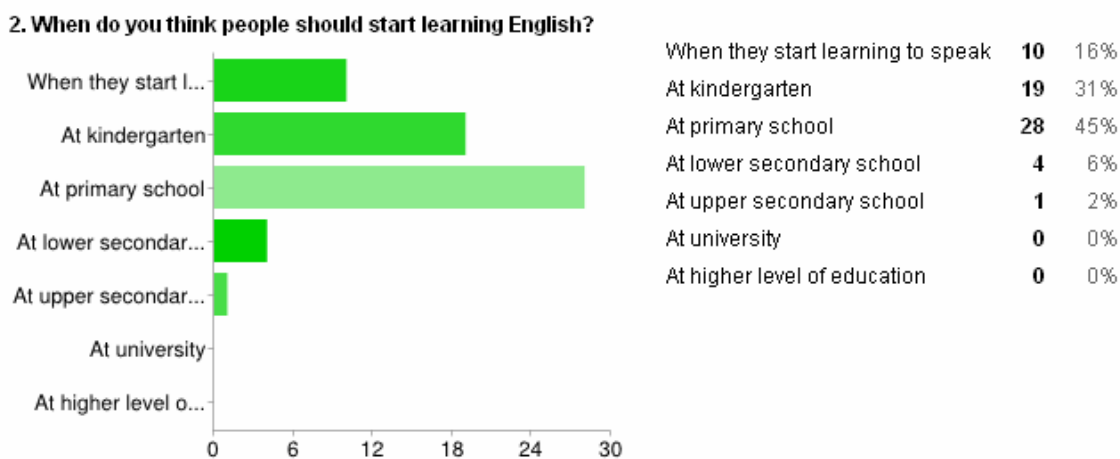


Figure 7.2: The time at which Vietnamese respondents think people should start learning English

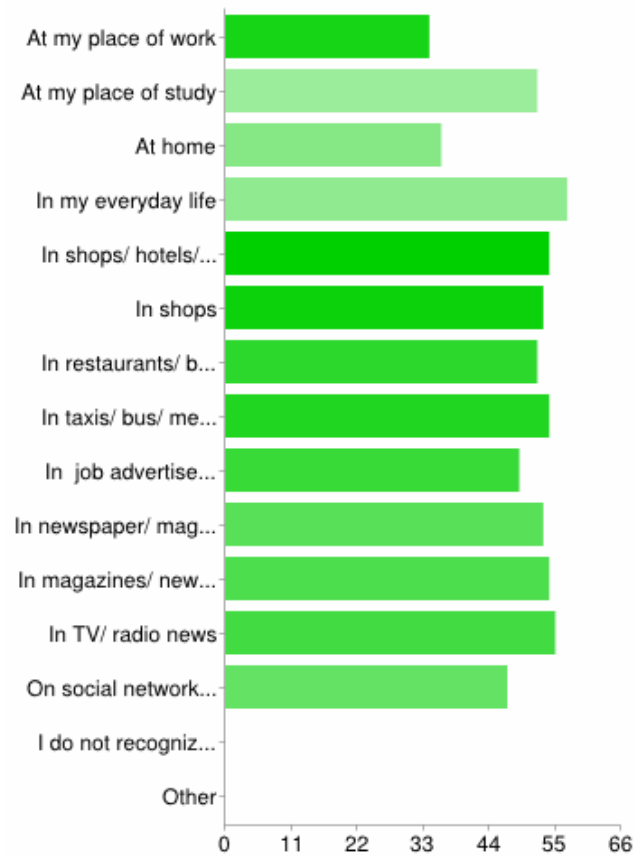
In Vietnam, this percentage is 16% (see *Figure 6.2*). Although small, this figure is remarkable in view of the fact that English is used in this country as a foreign language.

31% and 45% of the respondents state that people should begin to learn English at kindergarten and at primary school respectively. In general, the majority of the respondents in both countries think that people should start to learn English as early as possible, maybe because they recognize the advantages of learning the language at an early age.

### **Question 3**

To find out how English is present in people's lives even when they are not actively using it, question 3 asks the respondents to indicate whether they see or hear English in different settings of the Singaporean and Vietnamese linguistic environment. The results are represented in *Figure 8.1* and *8.2*.

**3. Where do you see or hear English? (You can choose more than one option)**

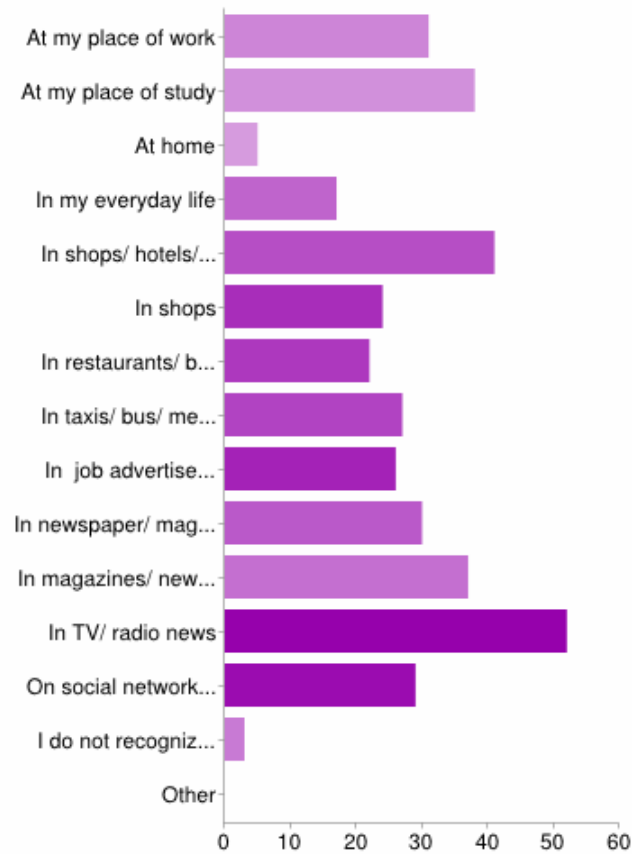


|  |           |     |
|--|-----------|-----|
| At my place of work  | <b>34</b> | 59% |
| At my place of study   | <b>52</b> | 90% |
| At home  | <b>36</b> | 62% |
| In my everyday life  | <b>57</b> | 98% |
| In shops/ hotels/ restaurants/ bars/ clubs' names  | <b>54</b> | 93% |
| In shops   | <b>53</b> | 91% |
| In restaurants/ bars/ clubs  | <b>52</b> | 90% |
| In taxis/ bus/ metros/trams/ planes  | <b>54</b> | 93% |
| In job advertisements  | <b>49</b> | 84% |
| In newspaper/ magazine/ television advertisements  | <b>53</b> | 91% |
| In magazines/ newspapers   | <b>54</b> | 93% |
| In TV/ radio news  | <b>55</b> | 95% |
| On social networking sites of mine and of my friends such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Plus + | <b>47</b> | 81% |
| I do not recognize English   | <b>0</b>  | 0%  |
| Other  | <b>0</b>  | 0%  |

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Figure 8.1: Places where Singaporean respondents see or hear English

**3. Where do you see or hear English? (You can choose more than one option)**



|  |           |     |
|--|-----------|-----|
| At my place of work  | <b>31</b> | 51% |
| At my place of study   | <b>38</b> | 62% |
| At home  | <b>5</b>  | 8%  |
| In my everyday life  | <b>17</b> | 28% |
| In shops/ hotels/ restaurants/ bars/ clubs' names  | <b>41</b> | 67% |
| In shops   | <b>24</b> | 39% |
| In restaurants/ bars/ clubs  | <b>22</b> | 36% |
| In taxis/ bus/ metros/trams/ planes  | <b>27</b> | 44% |
| In job advertisements  | <b>26</b> | 43% |
| In newspaper/ magazine/ television advertisements  | <b>30</b> | 49% |
| In magazines/ newspapers   | <b>37</b> | 61% |
| In TV/ radio news  | <b>52</b> | 85% |
| On social networking sites of mine and of my friends such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Plus + | <b>29</b> | 48% |
| I do not recognize English   | <b>3</b>  | 5%  |
| Other  | <b>0</b>  | 0%  |

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Figure 8.2: Places where Vietnamese respondents see or hear English

As can be shown in *Figure 8.1*, English is present in every field of social life in Singapore with very high percentages (often over 90%), from public places to private lives. The biggest figures are seen in “in my everyday life” (98%), and in “in TV/ radio news” (95%). 36 respondents (62%) claim that English appear at home, which confirms the wide use of English as the home language. It may be surprising to see only 59% of the people asked answer that they see or hear English at their place of work. This figure is however reasonable because 36% of the respondents are students who are not working.

In Vietnam, English is most found in the respondents’ place of work as more than 90% of the respondents in their working age (over 18) see or hear English there. The remarkable figures are also seen in the media (with 85% in TV/ radio news and 61% in magazines/ newspapers) (see *Figure 8.2*). There seems to be a tendency of using English to name shops, hotels, restaurants, bars, or clubs when this phenomenon is seen by 67% of the respondents. Approximately half of the respondents see or hear English in means of public transport, in different types of advertisements, and on popular social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Plus +. Only 3 people (5%) do not recognize the presence of English, in which two people live in the remote mountainous area and one person lives in the rural area. Places of residence pattern with the presence of English: the language is much more seen or heard in the city than in the rural area or in the mountainous area.



## Question 4

This question helps to investigate the frequency at which people use English. The results are provided in *Figure 9.1* and *9.2*

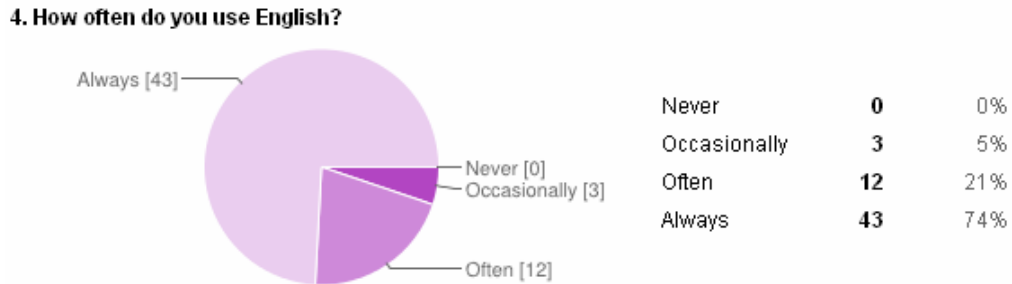


Figure 9.1: The frequency at which Singaporean respondents use English

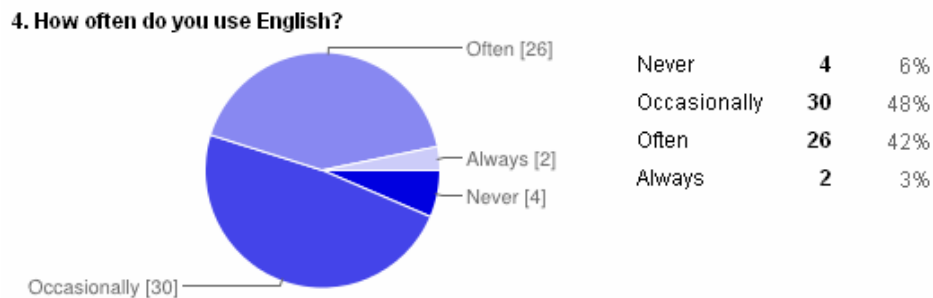


Figure 9.2: The frequency at which Vietnamese respondents use English

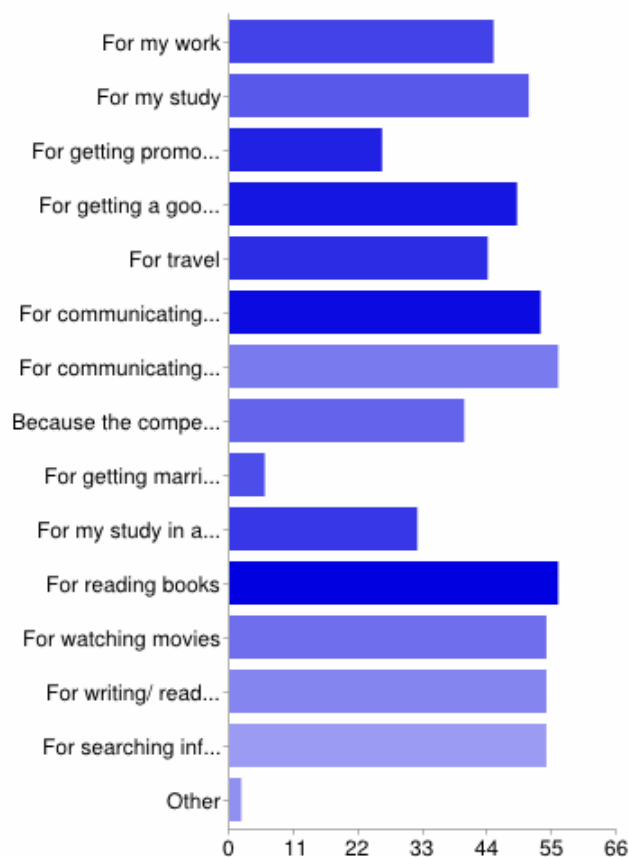
What is clear from the pie charts is that while the proportion of the respondents who always use English in Singapore is the highest (74%), the proportion of those in Vietnam is the lowest (3%). On the other hand, while the respondents who occasionally use English in Singapore get the second smallest percentage (5%), those in Vietnam take up the biggest percentage (48%). The number of respondents often using English in

Vietnam is also considerable (26, which accounts for 42%). Among 26 people who often use English, 20 people live in the city, 5 live in the rural area and only one lives in the mountainous area. Perhaps because of the lack of environment for learning and using English, 9 out of 13 respondents living in the mountainous area occasionally use this foreign language and even 3 respondents never use the language. The oldest respondents are those who do not often use English as 8 out of 10 people (80%) never or occasionally use the language. It seems that professions do not affect the frequency of using English in Singapore, but they do in Vietnam. In the latter, the respondents who work in economic and service sectors use English the most often, followed by government officials; manual workers are the people who do not often use the language.

### **Question 5**

Question 5 is designed to discover the reasons why people use English. As shown in *Figure 10.1*, the most important reasons for using English of most respondents in Singapore are for entertainment such as reading books or watching movies (97% and 93% respectively); for communicating with friends or with foreigners (97% and 91% respectively); for emails (93%), and for searching information (93%). A large number of respondents answer that English is significant for their job (78%), for getting a good job (84%), or for their study (88%).

**5. What are your reasons for using English? (You can choose more than one option)**

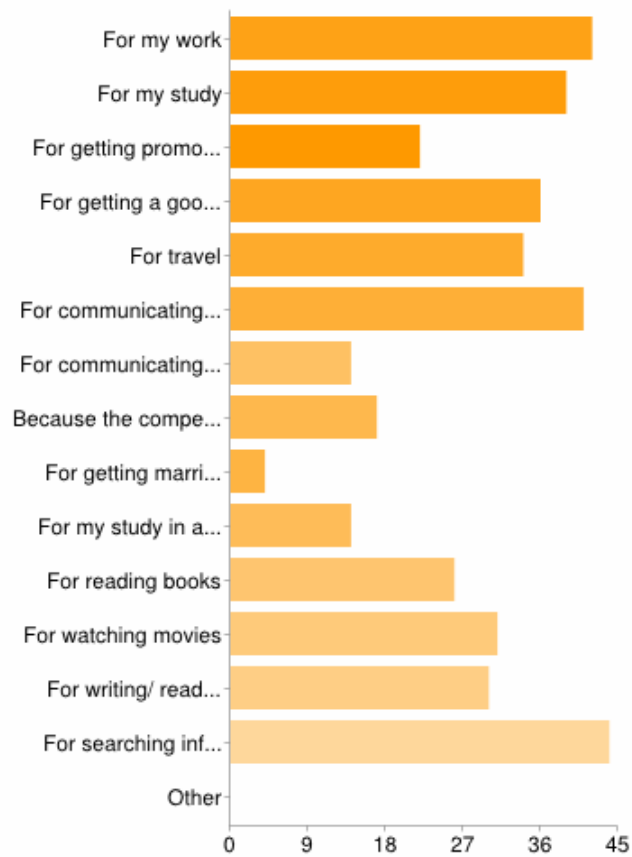


|   |           |     |
|---|-----------|-----|
| For my work   | <b>45</b> | 78% |
| For my study  | <b>51</b> | 88% |
| For getting promoted to a higher position in the workplace  | <b>26</b> | 45% |
| For getting a good job  | <b>49</b> | 84% |
| For travel  | <b>44</b> | 76% |
| For communicating with foreigners   | <b>53</b> | 91% |
| For communicating with friends  | <b>56</b> | 97% |
| Because the competence of English is a symbol of modern identity and the mark of an educated person | <b>40</b> | 69% |
| For getting marriage to a foreigner   | <b>6</b>  | 10% |
| For my study in an English speaking country   | <b>32</b> | 55% |
| For reading books   | <b>56</b> | 97% |
| For watching movies   | <b>54</b> | 93% |
| For writing/ reading emails   | <b>54</b> | 93% |
| For searching information   | <b>54</b> | 93% |
| Other   | <b>2</b>  | 3%  |

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Figure 10.1: The reasons for which Singaporean respondents use English

**5. What are your reasons for using English?(You can choose more than one option)**



|   |           |     |
|---|-----------|-----|
| For my work   | <b>42</b> | 70% |
| For my study  | <b>39</b> | 65% |
| For getting promoted to a higher position in the workplace  | <b>22</b> | 37% |
| For getting a good job  | <b>36</b> | 60% |
| For travel  | <b>34</b> | 57% |
| For communicating with foreigners   | <b>41</b> | 68% |
| For communicating with friends  | <b>14</b> | 23% |
| Because the competence of English is a symbol of modern identity and the mark of an educated person | <b>17</b> | 28% |
| For getting marriage to a foreigner   | <b>4</b>  | 7%  |
| For my study in an English speaking country   | <b>14</b> | 23% |
| For reading books   | <b>26</b> | 43% |
| For watching movies   | <b>31</b> | 52% |
| For writing/ reading emails   | <b>30</b> | 50% |
| For searching information   | <b>44</b> | 73% |
| Other   | <b>0</b>  | 0%  |

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Figure 10.2: The reasons for which Vietnamese respondents use English

Although the figures are much lower, Vietnam basically has the same pattern as in Singapore in terms of reasons for using English. *Figure 10.2* indicates that the most important motivations for using English of Vietnamese respondents are for: searching information (73%), work (70%), communicating with foreigners (68%), study (65%), and getting a good job (60%). Around half of the respondents answer that they use English to travel, read books, watch movies, or exchange email.

It can be seen from the data that there is a close relation between the respondents' age, sex, place of living and their use of English. The younger the respondents are, and the better the standard of living (mostly in the city) they have, the more reasons for which they use English. Most young respondents in both countries and those who live in the city of Vietnam use English for their study, work, communication, and entertainment. For the Vietnamese respondents who live in the city, nearly half of them aged from 13 to 30 use English for their study in an English speaking country while this percentage in the mountainous area is very small (3%). The majority of the respondents in this age group in both countries (78%) also list "because the competence of English is a symbol of modern identity and the mark of an educated person" as the reason for using the language. Interestingly, some of the respondents (6 in Singapore and 4 in Vietnam, 7 of which were males) consider English as a language that can help them get married to a foreigner.

## Question 6

Question 6 concerns people's opinion on the use of English as the medium of instruction in education. In Singapore, English has been the only medium of instruction for around twenty years. The question raised here is if people think another national language, instead of being taught only as a second language, should now take an equally important position in the educational system. More than half of the respondents (60%) answer "No" as *Figure 11.1* below shows.

**6. Do you think that the media of instruction at schools in Singapore should be both English and another national language?**

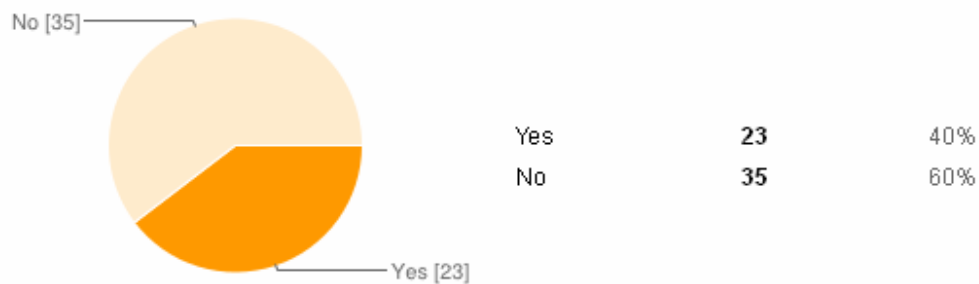


Figure 11.1: Singaporean respondents' opinion on the media of instruction at schools

The result perhaps indicates that Singaporeans have become familiar with the current situation of using English as the only medium of instruction; they find that it makes the learning and teaching more convenient. What is more, English has increasingly been used as the first language by many people so that the teaching at school in the language is taken for granted. The teenagers seem to be those who most prefer English as the only medium of instruction (81% of the respondents aged under 18 say "No"). By contrast, only one out of seven (14%) of the respondents at the age of 40 prefer the use of another

national language as the medium of instruction. It is likely that the extensive use of English among young Singaporeans at home raises concerns among older generations. They probably fear that the standards and command of the mother tongues will decline among the young, which is perceived to be a threat to local culture and heritage. Among the respondents who answer “Yes” (40%), most of them indicate that the language to be used (together with English) as the medium of instruction should be one of the three national languages with Mandarin (Chinese) ranking first, followed by Malays and Tamil.

When asked at what level of education English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction, almost all respondents choose “at primary school” except one chooses “at lower secondary school”, and another “at upper secondary school” (see *Figure 11.2*). This result reflects quite exactly the fact of using English as the medium of instruction at all levels of education in Singapore.

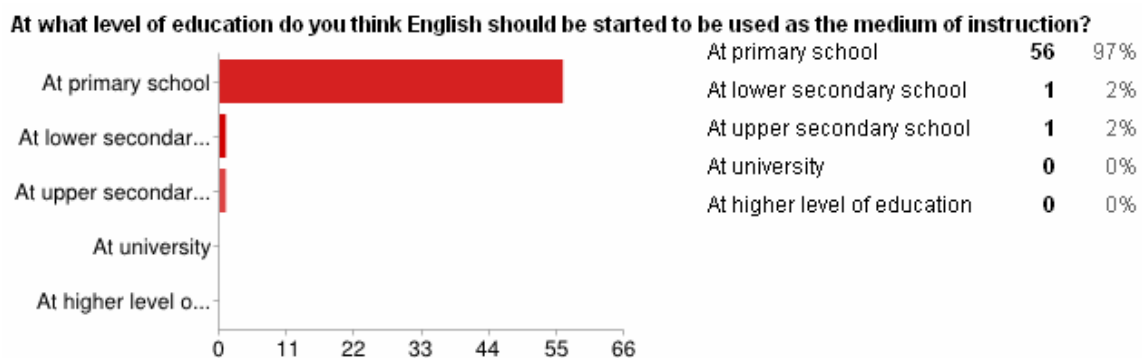


Figure 11.2: Singaporean respondents’ opinion on the level of education at which English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction

In Vietnam, where English is used as the most important foreign language, the questions raised here are (1) whether English should be used as the medium of instruction; (2) whether all subjects or several subjects should be taught in English; and (3) at what level of education English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction.

Concerning the first question, *Figure 11.3* shows that a large percentage of responses (73%) are “Yes” and 27% “No”. It is important to note that 27 out of 29 urban respondents (93%) support the use of English as the medium of instruction while this proportion in the other two areas is approximately 54%. In relation to age, although there is a big difference in the use of English among different age groups as discussed earlier for Question 4 and 5, the majority of respondents in all age groups are of the opinion that English should be used as the medium of instruction. These include the oldest ones who never or only occasionally use the language (80% of them answer “Yes”).

**6. Do you think that English should be used as the medium of instruction (used to teach other subjects) at schools?**

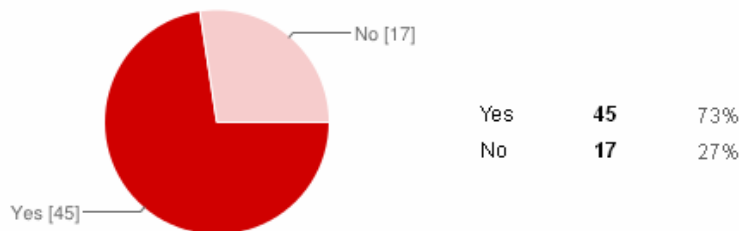


Figure 11.3: Vietnamese respondents’ opinion on the use of English as the medium of instruction at schools

Concerning the second question which asks whether English should be used to teach all subjects or several subjects only, the choice for these two options is almost equal with 23



people answer “all subjects” and 22 answer “several subjects only” (see *Figure 11.4*). The considerable number of respondents who support English to be used to teach all other subjects is a surprising result in a country where the learning and teaching of English itself are not very successful. The vast majority of those who opt for “several subjects only” propose natural science subjects to be taught in English such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and computer science. Some others suggest culture or economics.

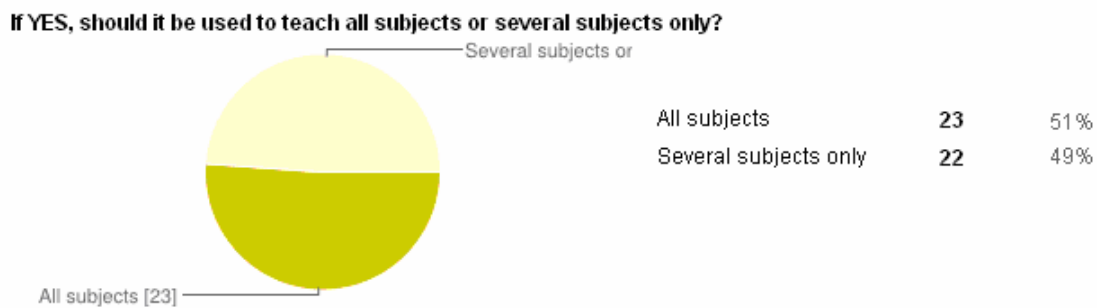


Figure 11.4: Vietnamese respondents’ opinion on the number of subjects which should be taught in English

When asked for their opinion on the level of education at which English should be started as the medium of instruction, more than half of the respondents (25 out of 45) prefer primary school. Nearly one third of the respondents choose “at lower secondary school”, while only six choose “at upper secondary school” and one chooses “at university” (see *Figure 11.5*). It is clear from the data that the participants support the use of English as the medium of instruction as early as possible. The respondents who live in the city are those who most enthusiastically support English as the medium of instruction at primary

school (with 18 out of 25 responses), while those who live in the two remaining areas seem to hesitate to support this (six responses from the rural area and one response from the remote mountainous area).

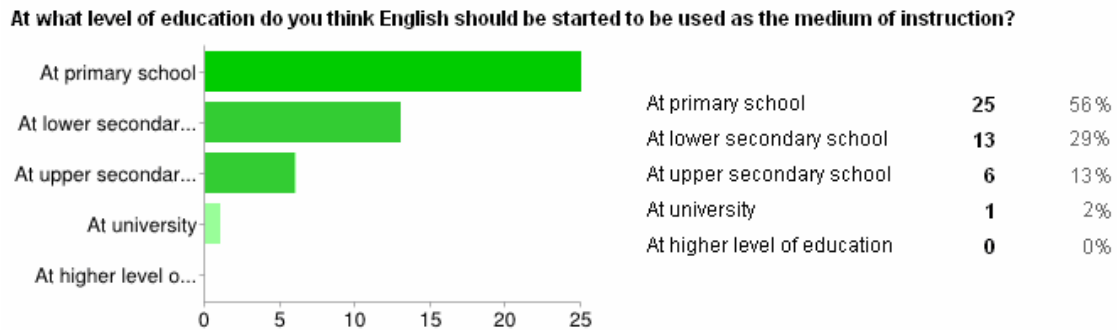


Figure 11.5: Vietnamese respondents' opinion on the level of education at which English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction

### Question 7

Question 7 is designed with the purpose of finding out the respondents' preferences for English teachers. In Singapore, the participants are asked to choose British/ American or Singaporean teachers of English. The result is presented in *Figure 12.1* below:

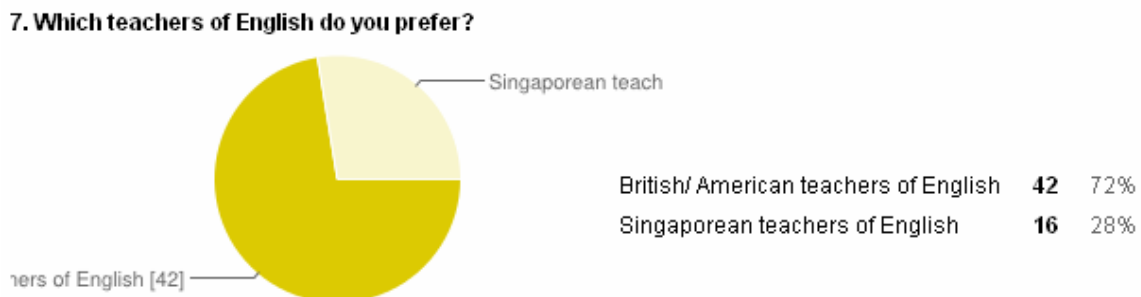


Figure 12.1: Singaporean respondents' preferences for English teachers

As shown in the pie chart, 72% of the Singaporean respondents prefer British/ American teachers of English while only 28% prefer teachers of the same nationality. The same pattern is seen among the Vietnamese participants: 71% prefer native English teachers, 27% teachers of the same nationality. One option added for Vietnamese participants to choose is “Singaporean/ Malaysian/ Bruneian/ Philippine teachers of English”, and only one of them (2%) chooses it (see *Figure 12.2* below).



Figure 11.2: Vietnamese respondents’ preferences for English teachers

What can be inferred from this result? It seems that learners of English in both countries still highly appreciate English teachers who come from Inner Circle countries, especially in Vietnam. Although culturally and geographically close to their Southeast Asian neighboring countries, the teachers of English coming from the Outer Circle are not very much welcomed.

### Questions 8, 9, 10

These three questions relate to the negative effects which English may have on national or local languages, local culture and individuals' national identity. The participants' opinions are indicated in *Figures 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.6*.

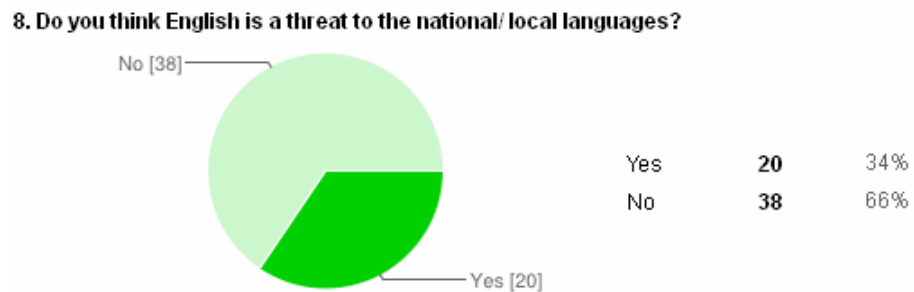


Figure 13.1: Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether English is a threat to the national or local languages

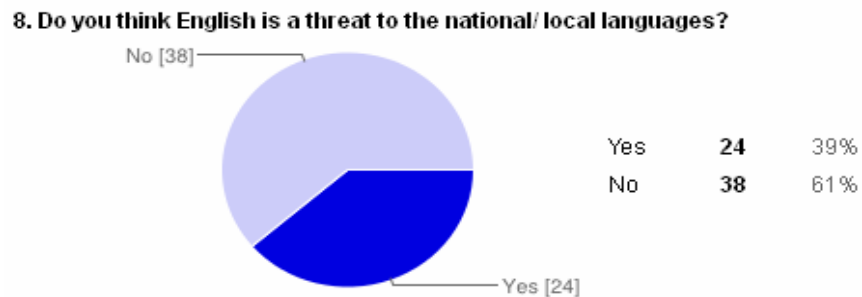


Figure 13.2: Vietnamese respondents' opinion on whether English is a threat to the national or local languages

**9. Do you think English affects negatively the local culture?**

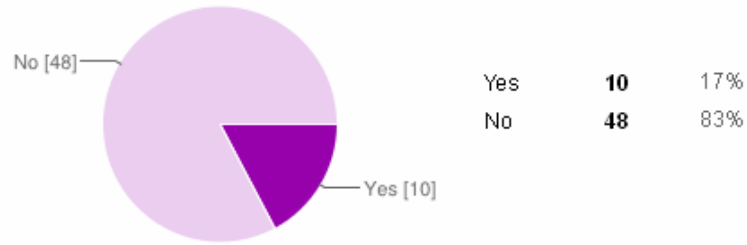


Figure 13.3: Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the local culture

**9. Do you think English affects negatively the local culture?**

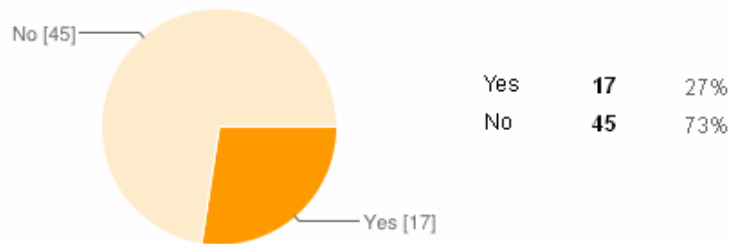


Figure 13.4: Vietnamese respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the local culture

**10. Do you think that English affects negatively your national identity?**

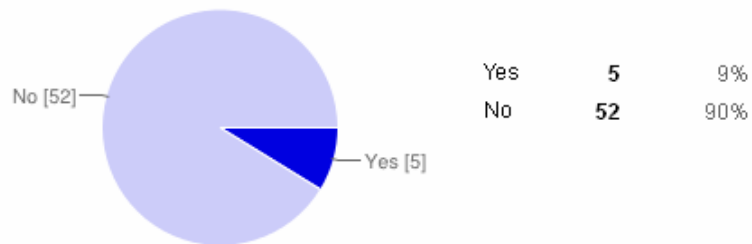


Figure 13.5: Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the national identity

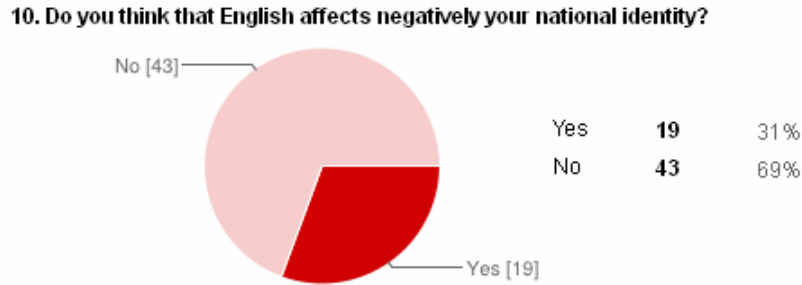


Figure 13.6: Vietnamese respondents' opinion on whether English affects negatively the national identity

In general, the majority of participants in both countries do not think English negatively affect these aspects. For Singaporean respondents, a high proportion does not believe that English has a bad effect on the local culture or individuals' national identity (80% and 90% respectively). In Vietnam, this proportion is a little smaller (73 and 69% respectively). Approximately one third of the respondents in both Singapore and Vietnam think that English is a threat to the national or local languages. This fear may be explained by two reasons. First, English has contributed to a decline in the demand for and the quality of the national or local languages. Second, the increasingly wide use of English can even lead to the extinction of some ethnic languages. It is worth noting that 86% of the Singaporean and 60% of the Vietnamese oldest respondents think that English is a threat to the national or local languages, while no Singaporean respondents and only two out of six Vietnamese respondents in the youngest age groups think so. In Vietnam, places of residence also influence the respondents' opinions. In the city, only 6 out of 29 respondents believe that English threatens the local or national languages. In the mountainous area where is inhabited by many ethnic minority groups, 9 out of 13 respondents shows concern about the threat of English to the local languages.

## Question 11

The question deals with a common phenomenon among speakers of English in the context of the globalization. In countries where it is used as the second language, speakers often code-switch or mix English with another language (often their mother tongues). In EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, speakers often borrow some English words to use in their conversations. The Singaporean participants are asked to say whether they often code-switch or mix English with other local languages. The vast majority (93%) admit that they do as *Figure 14.1* shows. Code-switching or code-mixing is very common in countries where English is used as the second language and this trend is unsurprisingly reported in Singapore.

11. When communicating, do you often code-switch/ mix English with other local languages?

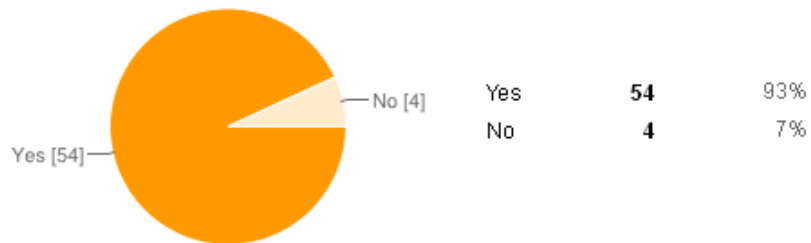


Figure 14.1: Code-switching/ code-mixing among Singaporean respondents

The question for Vietnamese users of English is whether they sometimes use English words in their conversations. Three-fourths of the respondents reply “Yes” (see *Figure 14.2*). The trend of borrowing English words to use in conversations is particularly common in young age groups (under 30) with the percentage of 89%. This percentage for the respondents of over 40 is only 40%.

**11. Do you sometimes use English words in your conversations?**

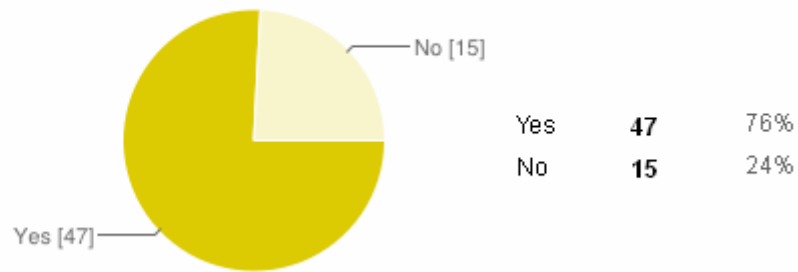


Figure 14.2: The use of borrowing words in conversations among Vietnamese respondents

**Questions 12, 13** (in the questionnaire for the Singaporean users of English)

Question 12 concerns the use of English as a link language among speakers who do not have the same mother tongue. The information is provided in *Figure 15*.

**12. Do you use English in communication with someone who does not speak the same mother tongue as you?**

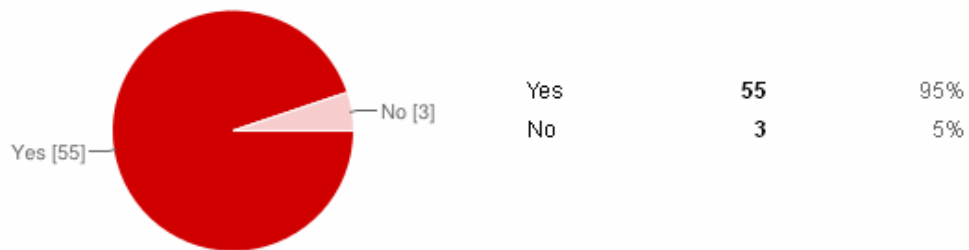


Figure 15: English as a link language among Singaporean respondents who do not use the same mother tongue

As *Figure 15* shows, the vast majority of the Singaporean respondents (95%) claim that when communicating with someone who do not speak the same mother tongue, they use



English. In a small but linguistically and ethnically diverse country like Singapore, English appears to be the lingua franca, a language which is used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages. This tendency, like code-switching or code-mixing, is widely found in African and Asian Outer Circle countries.

Question 13 asks the Singaporean participants whether their English should be improved so that it is more and more like British English or American English. The result almost coincides with that in Question 7 (which asks the respondents whether they prefer British/ American or Singaporean teachers of English) when 71% responses are “Yes” (see *Figure 16*). It seems that the majority of respondents are not satisfied with their English (which is often considered “bad English”). Therefore, they regard British English or American English as a standard English which they should follow. It is important to note that among the respondents who support the use of standard British or American English, teachers, those who work in the economic sector, and pupils account for 100%, 95% and 86% respectively. In terms of age, children and teenagers are found to be the most unsatisfied with their English. 100% of the respondents aged under 13 and 79% aged between 13 and 18 want their English to be like British English or American English.

**13. Do you think that your English should be improved so that it is more and more like British English or American English?**

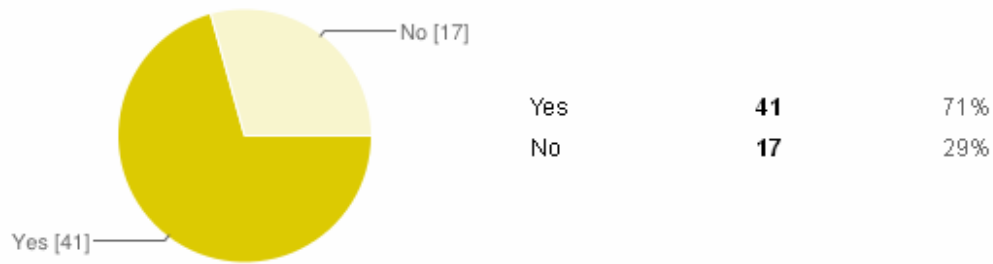


Figure 16: Singaporean respondents' opinion on whether their English should be improved so that it is more and more like British English or American English

There are also a number of respondents who are satisfied with their English and do not want it to be like British English or American English (29%). One of the important reasons might be that they appreciate Singlish as an expression of a Singaporean identity.

**Question 12** (in the questionnaire for the Vietnamese users of English)

One of the problems often faced by English learners in Southeast Asian Expanding Circle countries is that they are not very successful in learning the language. This question relates to that problem encountered by Vietnamese learners of English. As shown in *Figure 17.1*, only 26 out of 62 respondents (42%) succeed in learning English. More than half are not successful due to many reasons. The most important one is the lack of appropriate environments for practising English (83% of the respondents meet this problem). Other difficulties include overcrowded classes (67%), lack of teaching communication skills (67%), unqualified teachers (64%), and lack of classrooms well equipped with radios, videos, computers, projectors ( 56%) (see *Figure 17.2*).

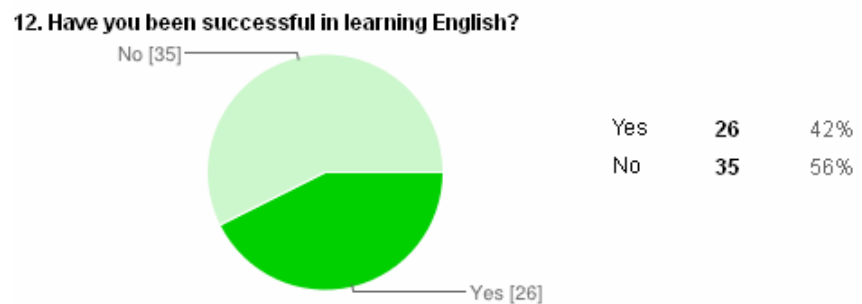
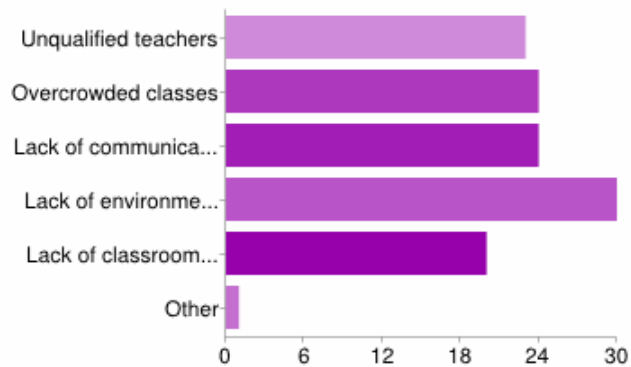


Figure 17.1: Vietnamese respondents' level of success in learning English

**If NO, what are the reasons?(You can choose more than one option)**



| Reason  | Count | Percentage |
|---|-------|------------|
| Unqualified teachers  | 23    | 64%        |
| Overcrowded classes   | 24    | 67%        |
| Lack of communication skill teaching  | 24    | 67%        |
| Lack of environments for practising English                                       | 30    | 83%        |
| Lack of classrooms well equipped with radios, videos, computers, projectors, etc. | 20    | 56%        |
| Other   | 1     | 3%         |

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Figure 17.2: Their reasons for not succeeding in learning English

Places of residence seem to be the most influential factor to the respondents' level of success. The majority of respondents who are successful in learning English live in the

city (77%); only 6 out of 20 respondents (23%) in the rural areas and particularly no one in the remote mountainous area succeeds in this task. Almost all respondents living in the remote mountainous area give all difficulties mentioned as the reasons for the failure in learning the language.

**Question 14** (in the questionnaire for Singaporean users of English), and **question 13** (in the questionnaire for Vietnamese users of English)

The final question in both questionnaires asks the participants to make a prediction about the future of English in their countries. The vast majority of respondents in both Singapore and Vietnam have the same opinion: the use of English will increase (95% and 87% respectively) (see *Figure 18.1* and *18.2*). 89% of the Singaporean respondents predict that more and more people will speak English as their mother tongue. 61% think that English will be the only language in which pupils are literate. 40% think that instead of having four official languages like the present, Singapore will make English the only official language in the future. Finally, the role of English is thought to be still crucial in the future educational system when only 26% of the respondents think that English will no longer be the only medium of instruction.

The position of English as the dominant foreign language in Vietnam seems to be strengthened when 85% of the Vietnamese respondents predict that this language will be used in more fields than now. In fact, English is now used as the medium of instruction for a limited number of subjects (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and computer

science) in only specialized secondary schools and some private schools. However, a large proportion of respondents believe that it will be used as the medium of instruction for more subjects, and also in normal public schools (69% and 60% respectively). Only a small group of respondents (9 out of 62) think that English will have to compete with other foreign languages, in which 8 of them propose Chinese as the biggest competitor to English, two propose French, one proposes Spanish and another one proposes Japanese.

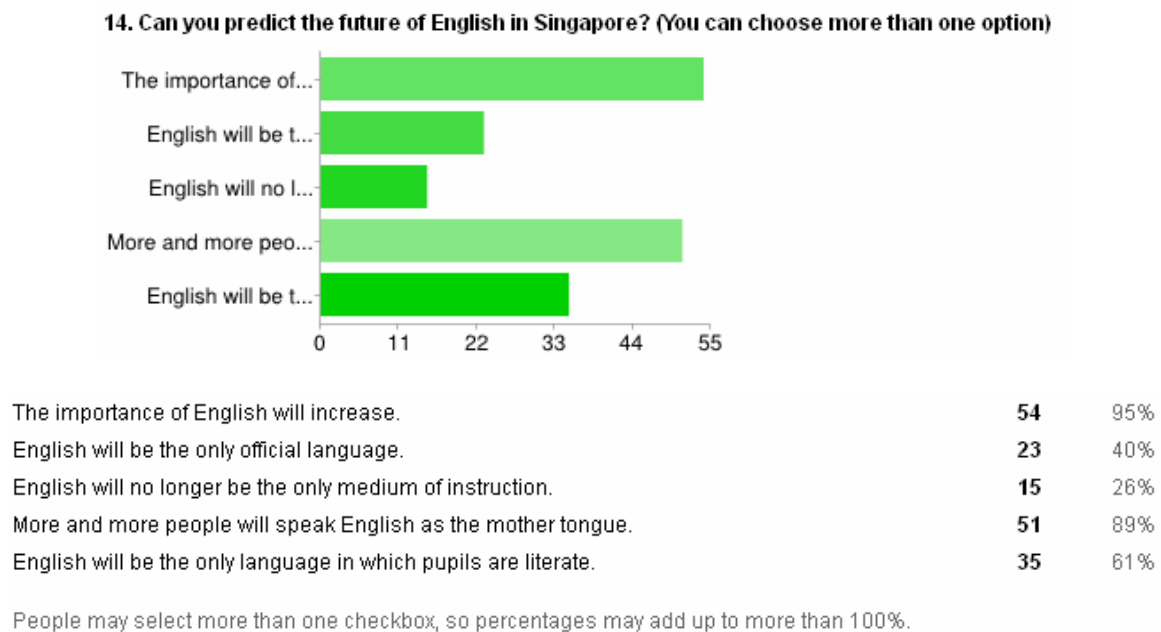
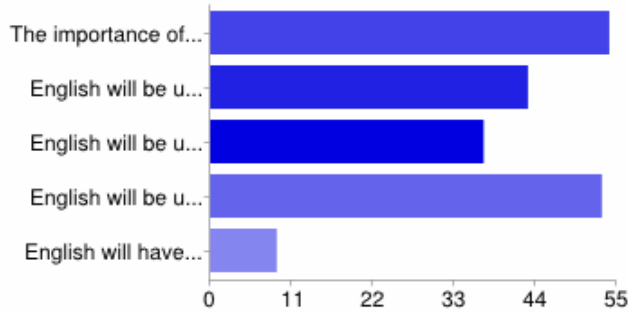


Figure 18.1: Singaporean respondents’ prediction about the future of English in their country

**13. Can you predict the future of English in Vietnam? (You can choose more than one option)**



|  |           |     |
|--|-----------|-----|
| The importance of English will increase.   | <b>54</b> | 87% |
| English will be used as the medium of instruction for more subjects than now.    | <b>43</b> | 69% |
| English will be used as the medium of instruction even in normal public schools. | <b>37</b> | 60% |
| English will be used in more fields than now.                                    | <b>53</b> | 85% |
| English will have to compete with other foreign languages.                       | <b>9</b>  | 15% |

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Figure 18.2: Vietnamese respondents' prediction about the future of English in their country

To sum up, as a language coming from the West, English is a very significant language in two Southeast Asian countries, either as the official language in Singapore or the dominant foreign language in Vietnam. It is present in almost every field of social life, and spoken by people of different ages and professions. Most of the respondents in the survey have a very optimistic look at the future of the language. The respondents' answers are closely related to their age, occupations and places of residence; sex, however, is not an influential variable.

# CONCLUSION

Crystal (2003) once stated that “A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country”. This global status of English lies in the special and diverse role: it serves as the native language in Inner Circle nations, as the official language in Outer Circle nations, and as a foreign language in Expanding Circle nations. In multilingual societies like Southeast Asian countries, English serves, as Kachru (1985) puts it, as an “additional language” and “alternative language”, in response to the demands of modernization and technology, as well as by other sociopolitical and sociolinguistic dynamics.

The spread of English to Southeast Asia is an excellent illustration of Kachru’s “Three Circles of English Model”. The language has become part of chief institutions, has an official or co-official status, and plays an important “second language” role in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines – the countries which had colonial ties to Great Britain or the United States in the past. In the remaining countries of the region, the importance of English as an international language is recognized, either as the first foreign language (in Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia), or the competitive foreign language (in Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and East Timor).

Nearly half a century has passed since Halliday *et al.* (1964), or Greenberg (1966) anticipated two trends of English development: first, the ownership of the so-called native English countries and native English speakers would come to an end; second,

English would diversify, and consequently local varieties of the language would develop. Their predictions have gradually come true. English in the Southeast Asian Outer Circle countries, especially Singaporean English and Malaysian English, has been widely studied and accepted as New Englishes by scholars and linguists. These New Englishes contain the characteristics which are much different from “standard English” or English in the Inner Circle countries. They have truly “married with other local languages: living in new houses, wearing new clothes, eating exotic foods” as stated by Crystal (2004: 128).

Although the empirical work was not done in all eleven countries in Southeast Asia, the result from Singapore – representative of the Outer Circle countries, and Vietnam – representative of the Expanding Circle countries reflects quite exactly the picture of using English in the whole region. It is present in almost every field of society from the public to private life, and spoken by people of different ages, professions and places of residence. It also becomes an Asian and international lingua franca, a link language in a multilingual setting. Its use is so common that most of the respondents do not consider it a threat to their national/ local languages, their culture, or their national identity.

While being familiar with the idea of English as “an international language”, or “a global language”, its users in Southeast Asia do not seem to welcome “New Englishes”. The notion “New Englishes” is even new to the majority of them, although it has widely been studied and accepted by scholars and linguists. It is important to keep in mind that language variation and change are common characteristics of linguistic life; thus, to be



aware of the multiplicity of English is to be tolerant of such changes. It is probably better if learners, as argued by Crystal (2003), get familiar with this notion and learn both kinds of English varieties (standard varieties and new varieties) in order to “maintain international intelligibility and local identities”.

# APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRE

(For Singaporean users of English)

This questionnaire is designed as a part of a master dissertation on linguistics. The purposes are to find out the use of English, its users' motivations for learning or speaking English, their attitudes towards it, and their prediction about its future. It is for analysis purposes only and will remain strictly confidential.

*First, please supply a little information about yourself*

Your age:

- under 13
- between 13 and 18
- between 19 and 30
- between 31 and 40
- over 40

Your occupation:

Your sex:

- Female
- Male

*Can you please choose your appropriate answers and give some more information if it is required.*

*1. When did you start learning English?*

- When I started learning to speak
- At kindergarten
- At primary school
- At lower secondary school
- At upper secondary school
- At university
- At higher level of education

*2. When do you think people should start learning English?*

- When they start learning to speak
- At kindergarten
- At primary school
- At lower secondary school
- At upper secondary school
- At university
- At higher level of education

*3. Where do you see or hear English? (You can choose **more than one** option)*

- At my place of work
- At my place of study
- At home

- In my everyday life
- In shops/ hotels/ restaurants/ bars/ clubs' names
- In shops
- In restaurants/ bars/ clubs
- In taxis/ bus/ metros/trams/ planes
- In job advertisements
- In newspaper/ magazine/ television advertisements
- In magazines/ newspapers
- In TV/ radio news
- On social networking sites of mine and of my friends such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Plus +
- In other places:
- I do not recognize English

4. *How often do you use English?*

- Never
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always

5. *What are your reasons for using English? (You can choose **more than one** option)*

- For my work
- For my study
- For getting promoted to a higher position in the workplace

- For getting a good job
- For travel
- For communicating with foreigners
- For communicating with friends
- Because the competence of English is a symbol of modern identity and the mark of an educated person
- For getting marriage to a foreigner
- For my study in an English speaking country
- For reading books
- For watching movies
- For writing/ reading emails
- For searching information
- Other reasons:

6. *Do you think that the media of instruction at schools in Singapore should be both English and another national language?*

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify the other national language

*At what level of education do you think English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction?*

- At primary school
- At lower secondary school

- At upper secondary school
- At university
- At higher level of education

7. *Which teachers of English do you prefer?*

- British/ American teachers of English
- Singaporean teachers of English

8. *Do you think English is a threat to the national/ local languages?*

- Yes
- No

9. *Do you think English affects negatively the local culture?*

- Yes
- No

10. *Do you think that English affects negatively your national identity?*

- Yes
- No

11. *When communicating, do you often code-switch/ mix English with other languages?*

- Yes
- No

12. *Do you use English in communication with someone who does not speak the same mother tongue as you?*

- Yes
- No

13. Do you think that your English should be improved so that it is more and more like British English or American English?

- Yes
- No

14. Can you predict the future of English in Singapore? (You can choose more than one option)

- The importance of English will increase.
- English will be the only official language.
- English will no longer be the only medium of instruction.
- More and more people will speak English as the mother tongue.
- English will be the only language in which pupils are literate.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

# QUESTIONNAIRE

(For Vietnamese users of English)

This questionnaire is designed as a part of a master dissertation on linguistics. The purposes are to find out the use of English, its users' motivations for learning or speaking English, their attitudes towards it, and their prediction about its future. It is for analysis purposes only and will remain strictly confidential.

*First, please supply a little information about yourself*

Your age:

- under 13
- between 13 and 18
- between 19 and 30
- between 31 and 40
- over 40

Your occupation:

Your sex:

- Female
- Male

You live in:

- urban areas
- rural areas
- remote mountainous areas



*Can you please choose your appropriate answers and give some more information if it is required.*

*1. When did you start learning English?*

- When I started learning to speak
- At kindergarten
- At primary school
- At lower secondary school
- At upper secondary school
- At university
- At higher level of education

*2. When do you think people should start learning English?*

- When they start learning to speak
- At kindergarten
- At primary school
- At lower secondary school
- At upper secondary school
- At university
- At higher level of education

*3. Where do you see or hear English? (You can choose **more than one** option)*

- At my place of work
- At my place of study
- At home

- In my everyday life
- In shops/ hotels/ restaurants/ bars/ clubs' names
- In shops
- In restaurants/ bars/ clubs
- In taxis/ bus/ metros/trams/ planes
- In job advertisements
- In newspaper/ magazine/ television advertisements
- In magazines/ newspapers
- In TV/ radio news
- On social networking sites of mine and of my friends such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Plus +
- In other places:
- I do not recognize English

4. *How often do you use English?*

- Never
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always

5. *What are your reasons for using English? (You can choose **more than one** option)*

- For my work
- For my study
- For getting promoted to a higher position in the workplace

- For getting a good job
- For travel
- For communicating with foreigners
- For communicating with friends
- Because the competence of English is a symbol of modern identity and the mark of an educated person
- For getting marriage to a foreigner
- For my study in an English speaking country
- For reading books
- For watching movies
- For writing/ reading emails
- For searching information
- Other reasons:

6. *Do you think that English should be used as the medium of instruction (used to teach other subjects) at schools?*

- Yes
- No

*If yes, should it be used to teach all subjects or several subjects only?*

- All subjects
- Several subjects only

Please specify the subjects:

*At what level of education do you think English should be started to be used as the medium of instruction?*

- At primary school
- At lower secondary school
- At upper secondary school
- At university
- At higher level of education

*7. Which teachers of English do you prefer?*

- British/ American teachers of English
- Singaporean/ Malaysian/ Bruneian/ Philippine teachers of English
- Vietnamese teachers of English

*8. Do you think English is a threat to the national/ local languages?*

- Yes
- No

*9. Do you think English affects negatively the local culture?*

- Yes
- No

*10. Do you think that English affects negatively your national identity?*

- Yes
- No

11. Do you sometimes use English words in your conversations?

- Yes
- No

12. Have you been successful in learning English?

- Yes
- No

If no, what are the reasons? (You can choose more than one option)

- Unqualified teachers
- Overcrowded classes
- Lack of teaching communication skills
- Lack of environments for practising English
- Lack of classrooms well equipped with radios, videos, computers, projectors, etc.
- Others:

13. Can you predict the future of English in Vietnam? (You can choose more than one option)

- The importance of English will increase.
- English will be used as the medium of instruction for more subjects than now.
- English will be used as the medium of instruction even in normal public schools.
- English will be used in more fields than now.
- English will have to compete with other foreign languages.

If you agree, please specify which language(s):

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

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