

Is Singapore English becoming American?

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Abstract

This paper seeks to find out if Singapore English currently displays American English features, thus validating the assumption that Singapore English is moving towards American English. This is consistent with a prediction raised recently by Singapore's Emeritus Minister Mentor Mr Lee Kuan Yew (Ramesh, 2011), that Singapore English would be challenged to adopt American English as its standard in the future. This paper will determine if a change in Singapore English from a British English norm to an American English norm has occurred, through the comparison of speech data collected from young adult Singaporeans (20-25 years old) and older adult Singaporeans (40 years old and above). The American English features that this paper investigates are the post-vocalic /r/, taps and vowels commonly found in American English. The results show that American English features are present in Singapore English, with the young adults displaying significantly more American English features than the older adults. The results thus suggest that it is no longer appropriate for Singapore English to be compared solely to its known norm, British English, as evidence from this paper displays influences of American English present in Singapore English today.