

World Non-Standard Englishes: reflections on the global spread of (some) vernacular varieties of English

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The general direction ...

- from "**varieties of English**" to the "**sociolinguistics of globalisation**" (e.g. Blommaert 2010)
- from "**English as World Language**" (EWL) to the role of **Englishes in a multilingual global language ecology**

varieties → styles → ideologies

structural features → linguistic resources

monolingual native-speakers → speakers with multilingual and partly truncated repertoires

local / vernacular speech communities → deterritorialised communities of practice

face-to-face interaction → mediated communication

Two working hypotheses

The more dominant English is globally, the more heterogeneous it becomes internally. The farther the language spreads, the more it is affected by the multilingual settings in which it is being used.

"Natural" links between vernaculars and their territories and communities are becoming weaker, as migrations and media encourage the flow of linguistic resources.

Roadmap

1. Communication technology and language change in the age of globalisation
- 2.1 Rethinking authenticity
- 2.2 Rethinking region
- 2.3 Redressing monolingual biases
3. Study example: Caribbean Englishes beyond the Caribbean
4. Conclusion: the "galaxy" of Englishes

1. Communication technology and language change in the age of globalisation

- **older technologies of the word (e.g. printing and the classic audiovisual mass-media):**
generally promote standardisation and ideologies of linguistic correctness
- **new audiovisual and interactive digital media:**
simultaneous standardisation and destandardisation;
global cities and the global "mediascape" (Appadurai 1996) as "super-diverse" spaces (Vertovec 2007)

→ **proliferation of new text types and discourse genres**

1500: letter, with optional accompanying messenger

2000: letters, telephone conversations, e-mail, text messages, tweets, video-conferences, etc.

→ **changing expectations of politeness and formality**

"E-mail, by its nature, encourages off-the-cuff inconsequential communication." (Dixon 2011: 349)

→ **occasional structural change by way of sedimentation** (technology-related neologisms, some adaptation and modification of grammatical patterns)

... to chat, to lurk, to flame ...

... wire me some money

... state hate crime victim numbers (N + N + N ...)

2.1 Rethinking authenticity

At least implicitly, sociolinguistics has made strong assumptions about authentic speech and the authentic status of (some) speakers. Sociolinguistics has often assumed it is dealing with ‘real language.’ [...] But ‘real language’ is an increasingly uncertain notion. In late-modern social arrangements and in performance frames for talk, do we have to give up on authenticity?
(Coupland 2007: 179)

I have pointed to several sociolinguistic assumptions that have remained largely unchallenged since the early years of the discipline, particularly assumptions relating to a fixed meaningful class order, operating through a relatively isolated and intact national framework, where linguistic indexicalities are formed and maintained in warm-bodied social exchanges but under the ideological control of dominant social groups. My conclusion is that this is, nowadays, an account in need of revision.
(Coupland 2010: 73)

linguistic/cultural hyper-awareness in post-colonial, diasporic communities?

One of the defining features of globalisation is the increasingly complex and multifaceted interactions of localism and globalism. **The post-colonial contexts present us with a vibrant site where local linguistic forms – inflected by the nexus of activities taking place elsewhere in time and space – are constantly transforming in response to asymmetric exchanges, pluralized histories, power plays, and battles over polysemous signs. The transformation makes available a semiotic space where a repertoire of identities evolves in the inter-animation of the colonial-global and of the indigenous local. (Bhatt 2010: 520)**

<http://www.nairaland.com> ("CCN")

- 'I am proud to be what I am. I'm Nigerian, Bahamian and British. When people ask me where I'm from, I don't say 'Nigeria', I say 'Nigeria and the Bahamas'. That is the truth. I'm not fully Nigerian so why claim to be one? When people on the internet ask me where I'm from, I say 'I'm originally from Nigeria and the Bahamas but I'm currently living in Belgium'. Again, it's the truth. (CCN [6986], Retro)
- [Thread "How many of you speak Pidgin to your parents?"]: the little i kno i learnt on niaraland[sic!]. lol!" (CCN [7635], Kadeejah)

[Name of Poster 1]: ouch. I took a photo put it on the computer, resized it so that 5 fitted on a 6x4 photo and got a couple of copies printed in boots. total cost = 98p (+50p for the cd)

[Name of Poster 2]: oh well, couldnt be bothered with the **wahala**. So jus got some woman to do mine

(source: <http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?p=2609468&highlight=wahala#post2609468>)

– two unrelated and complementary channels of diffusion:

post-colonial literary (cf. OED entry) and multiethnic vernaculars (see Kerswill, Torgersen and Fox 2008, for London)

2.2 Rethinking region

- **language and space in nomadic pre-history:**

"The anthropologist and linguist Alan Rumsey suggests that, in Australia, a language is linked to a tract of land, and a person is associated with a place, and hence to the language of that place." (Dixon 2011: 246f.)

- **mapping of traditional rural dialects in the 19th century European tradition of dialectology:**

- **present-day élite and non-hegemonic diasporas, circular migrations, return migrations, etc.:**

"The increasing population mobility brought about by European colonization and associated especially with today's patterns of economic globalization and war refugeeism have also produced non-hegemonic diasporas, in which languages of the politically and/or economically under-privileged have spread (far) beyond their homelands, making traditional, static geolinguistics clearly out of date." (Mufwene, in Blommaert 2010: xi-xii)

- **the media and "global linguistic flows [...] and the politics of language" (Alim, Ibrahim & Pennycook, eds. 2009)**

• [11208] Toluwalomo

Nigerians are something else when it comes to adopting accents. I have no problems, **if you naturally pick up a UK or US accent via schooling or upbringing in these areas.** But when an adult whose speech patterns are well formed goes to the US/UK for 3 months to a year and comes back with an accent, **haba na wah o! [excl. + "how awful"]** People who have not even gone anywhere, end up having these exasperating accents. Since they are **fake**, geographically you cannot even pinpoint who they are **mimicking**. I have heard half American half British accents as if that is possible! All these **phoney fanatics** include some so-called broadcasters who are supposed to set the pace and differentiate between fluent English and phoney English. **African China born and bred in Ajegunle went to the UK and came back not only with a rape charge but funny accent.** Eedris the rapper may not be able to string a grammatical sentence together but what really makes it hard is the accent he picked up. There is this woman on STV with a CNN accent and Barong Eta at Channels Television **who switches on accents like a bulb.** British, Canadian, American whatever side of the bed I get up from, I think it is a sorry state of our English. We don't need **to talk through our noses or drawl** before we make sense. Other parts of Africa take pride in their accents. And even though accents in Nigeria are often subjects of mediocrity and **rasness** [rashness?]. We can still afford to tow [toe] that fluent English line. Like Olu Jacobs, Joke Silva and Wole Soyinka. **Why are Nigerians obsessed with foreign accents?**

- [...]
- **[5411] Dis Guy**
- 90% of those AIT presenters are like that, really horrible!
- **[5463] chiogo**
- Lol, nice topic. I see this in most **naija** movies, esp. the females. can't even begin to mention their names 'cause it seems almost all of them do it. It gets me so mad. That's d reason i don't watch **naija** movies like that. How can You sit down to watch **naija** movies when i have lots of american movies **waitin'** for me, just 'cause i love my country and instead of **watchin' smthin'** real, all You see is total BS. it's so **aggravatin'.**
- [...]
- **[8333] tEsLim**
- sup porster? **ain't reelly diggin whatcha callin' fake ass accent fakin'. Ya'll know I watch ameriken movies most of the time and ain't gorra be lookin at dose borin nigg'z imposin Genevieve on me.** Did I fake it well enough
- **[5461] Zandra1**
- Now this is damn hilarious. .
- **[6945] dafman**
- Half British Half American accent - Nigerians have many talents

- **[13203] AckeeEater**
- Not just Naijans, Jamaicans too! The ones I especially love **are the less educated sole speaker** of Patois (similar to Naijan Patois) **who emigrate** to America, assimilate by emulating the inner-city black accent, and return to show off. Comedy Central! Then there's the more educated who **can speak English but thinks** that to sound Jamaican is still not good enough. They tend **to emulate white people, going nasal and all. He! He! He!**
- [...]
- **[7681] soulpatrol**
- yes o omoge. some just over do it to fit in. you'll hear of one emeka person **(jjc)** that just landed in yankee and within 1 month, he has changed his name to micky or mekhi and starts speaking **yeye english** like gerrout, mothafu\$ka, shit men, wharabout, yels etc. pitiful. **no be by force o. naija peeps to dey overmurder English**
- **[5336] MP007**
- **na waoo, how You go go yankee return no go fit represent , people wan make You show say You travel ["how awful, how would you travel to America and you're not able to demonstrate to the people that you travelled?"]**

- **[7440] OgaMadam**
- Hilarious
- [...]
- **[7681] soulpatrol**
- at least changing accent **better sef**. what about the ones that change their whole identity? like changing the name your papa gave you. **you go dey hear person wey dey bear jamiu [Yoruba name] from oshogbo [city in Western Nigeria] go come yankee come change am to jamie or mutiu [Yoruba name] to mathew etc. i mean like WTF?** if **oyinbo** can't pronounce your full name, then teach them. its part of your identity. makes me mad when people think they have to conform to the **oyinbo** english names just becasue. my name is the easiest to pronounce, yet some **oyinbo** people make subtle suggestions for me to change it so they can remember easily. i tell em to **go shove it where the sun don't shine**. if you allow me to call you **ojuju calabar [Calabar mask]** then i'll allow you to change my name. **shio!** ["isn't that so?" – Niger Delta]

- **[5463] chiogo**
- lol, iice @ that story. **I understand what You sayin'** but what if he was born here? **just 'cause he's naija doesn't mean he can speak pidgin.** Lol, am just sayin' but if he wasn't born here, then he def. forced it. Like i have cousins who are born here, even though their parents speak igbo to them, they understand but they can't speak it. And **they all got igbo names, no english name and they say it with this accent,** makin' their names sound funny. **I just be crackin' up when** they call eachother 'cause they can't really pronounce their names in d real way **a naija** would pronounce it. But You can't blame them, they call themselves Nigerian-americans and they are 'cause they're all grown and have only been to naija once. What am sayin' is that i find it annoyin' if You're **a real JJC** and then You come out and **be speakin'** like that. uh uh. And all these people in naija who don't even live here and speak like that inside naija. c'mon, that makes no sense. **who You frontin' for?** lol. But do You know whether d guy understands pidgin or not?

2.3. Redressing monolingual biases

French, Pidgin, and English from a web-post in a Cameroonian discussion forum:

Le Pote de Biya: Mévio, Qu'est ce que tu entends par opposant notoire? celui opposé au libéralisme communautaire? à Biya? Le délitement de l'état camerounais? **biya must go** (allez dire)

Dr. T. Gilbert: Hi Mevio, No mek mi a lap oohhh!!!! U di mimba ce some politik go kam hia? A put ma hand fo faya so dem no go kam. Waiti dem go kam chap ouna non? Dem go go fo lege we dem go gi pagne and **mimbo**. Franchement noble Mevio ce serait une tres bonne chose, mais je ne vois pas le premier courageux qui viendra se faire bruler les ailes ici. Qui sait! **kmer na kmer!**

[Hi Mevio, don't make me laugh, will you. Do you think that any politician will ever come here? I'd put my hand into the fire to bet that they won't be coming. Wait, they'll come and eat you, no? They will go for the fools whom they will give native dress and drinks. Frankly noble Mevio, that would be a very good thing, but I don't see the first courageous one who will come to have his wings burned here. Who knows! Cameroon is Cameroon!]

Stephano: MEVIO **how** non? **how** que tu bole tout le monde comme ca? :???

[Mevio, how couldn't it be? How come that you finish off everybody like this?]

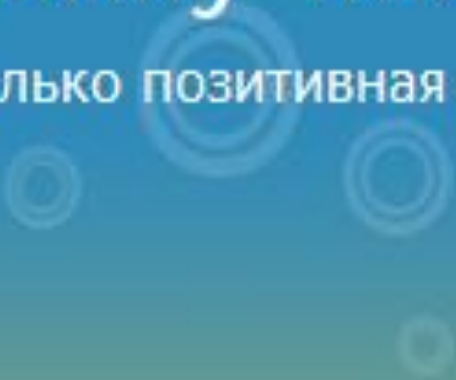
Mévio: **How** que tu **ték** ça au sérieux comme ça mon ami. J'ai parlé comme ça juste pour rire un peu non? Tu as vu l'effet que ça a eu sur le très puissant Stéphanon non? En plus, pour ma pointe d'humour j'ai dit bêt bêt bêt. Sérieux, si par exemple derrière Le Pote de Biya il y a un haya groupe qui prépare un putsch, lâche nous seulement l'info pour que nous on commence à cirer tes bottes dès **tomoro** (lol).

[How come you are taking this so seriously? I have spoken of "us" like this just to have a little laugh, all right? You have seen the effect that this has had on the very powerful Stéphanon, haven't you? What's more, for my humorous point I've said "big-mouth big-mouth." Seriously, if for example behind "Biya's mate" there is a tough group that is preparing a coup, let's just have the info so that we can start polishing your boots from tomorrow]

3. Caribbean Englishes beyond the Caribbean

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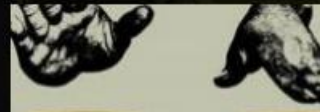
EVENTS

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NEUES



INITY INNA KUDURO STYLE



Die Inity Station probiert sich im Kuduro Style und mischt viele Elemente der sehr neuen Musikbewegung mit Reggae und HiHoP Anteilen. Die Texte sind frech, lebendig und



INITY INNA KUDURO STYLE

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Localising the global: "new quotatives" in ICE-Jamaica

- (1) I don't know what they were thinking some chicken stuff and fish and whatever it is with uhm what's that dressing vegetable dressing on the chicken and Okay well who eat that **I'm like** hello we are black people from the Caribbean please no white people here You know No maybe white people would eat stuff like that 
- (2) You know she knows nothing about these people. Me fraid you know the man a call her she run gon go go take picture So **I'm like** where's the picture we thought it was a instant thing. **She's like** no him have it 

***me say* – the local complicating factor**

(3) We had just bought this new house this new family house all of us come up and buy house So **me say** boy everybody was saying how broke we were and **me say** boy what if somebody should die what would happen who would pay And **I said to them** don't worry if all of you die I can bury you You don't have to worry

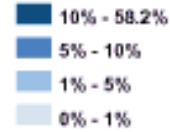


Globalising the local: migration, media and "crossing"

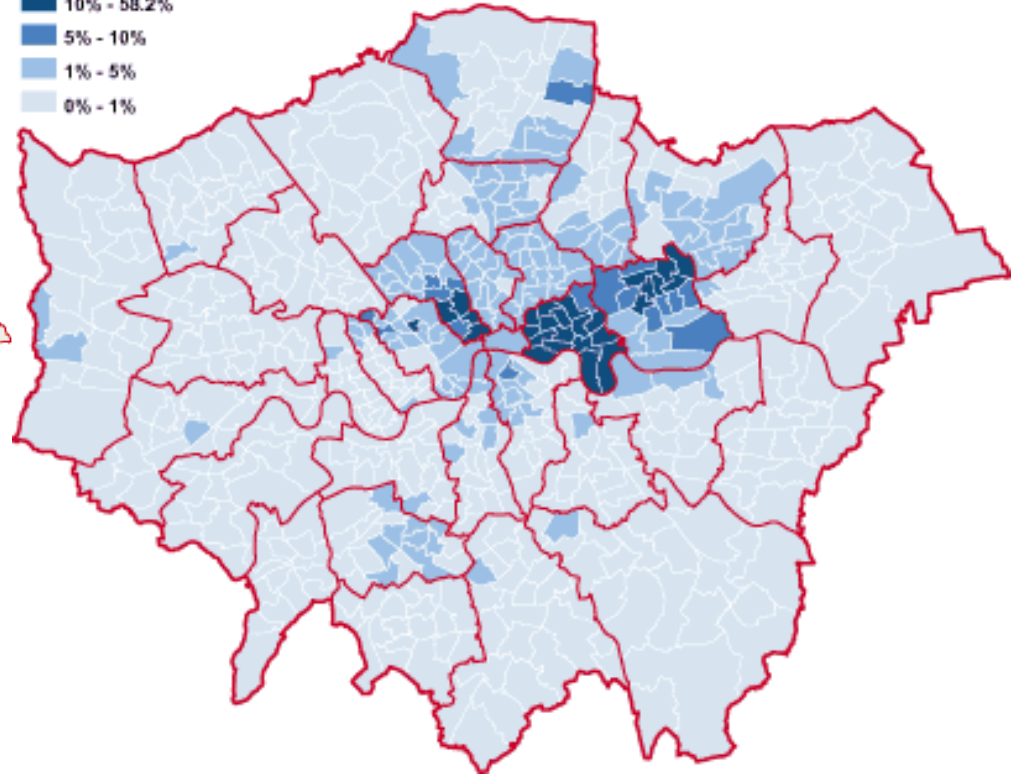
UK 2001 Census, min. ethnic group	population	% total population	% ethnic minority population
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH			
Indian	1,053,411	1.8	22.7
Pakistani	747,285	1.3	16.1
Bangladeshi	283,063	0.5	6.1
Other Asian	247,664	0.4	5.3
BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH			
Black Caribbean	565,876	1.0	12.2
Black African	485,277	0.8	10.5
Black Other	97,585	0.2	2.1
CHINESE	247,403	0.4	5.3
OTHER	230,615	0.4	5.0
MIXED	677,117	1.2	14.6

Minorities in the Greater London area (1)

Bangladeshi

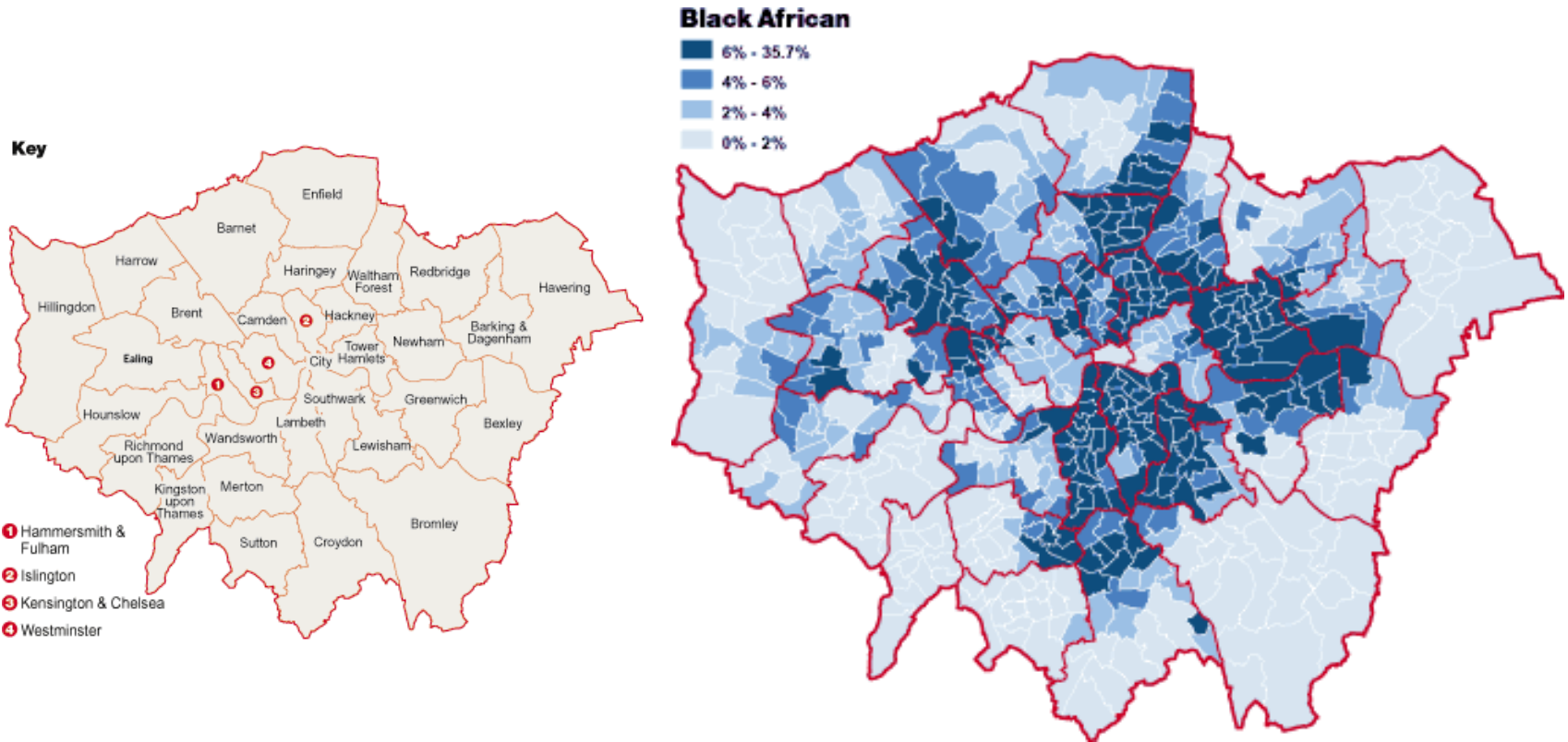


Key



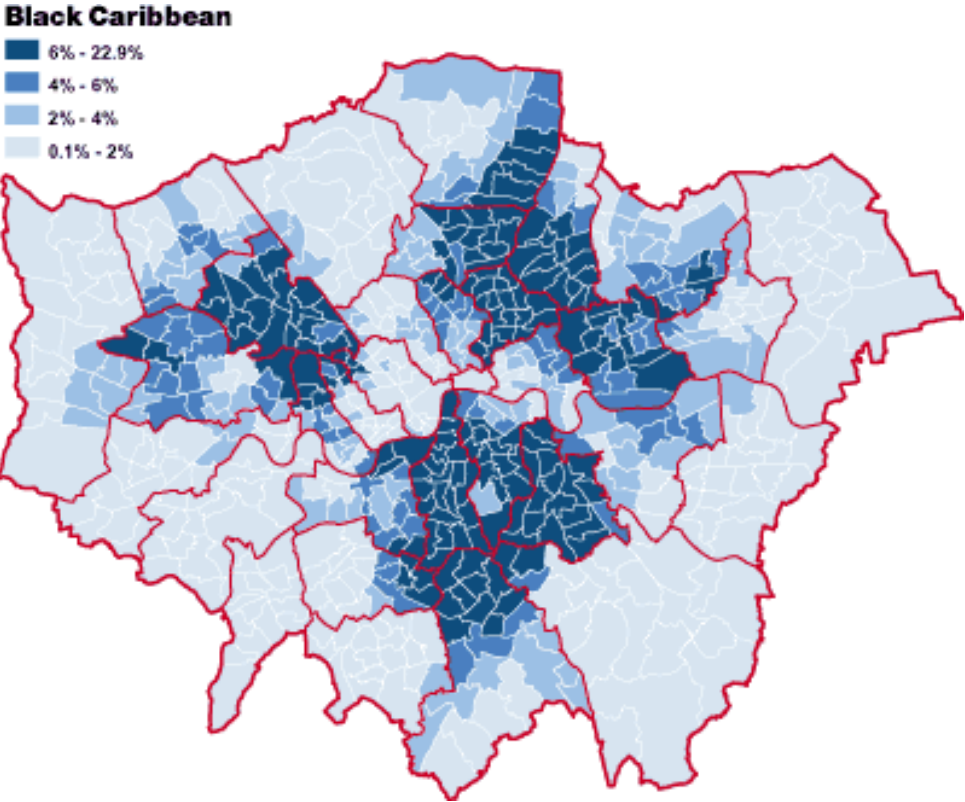
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Minorities in the Greater London area (2)



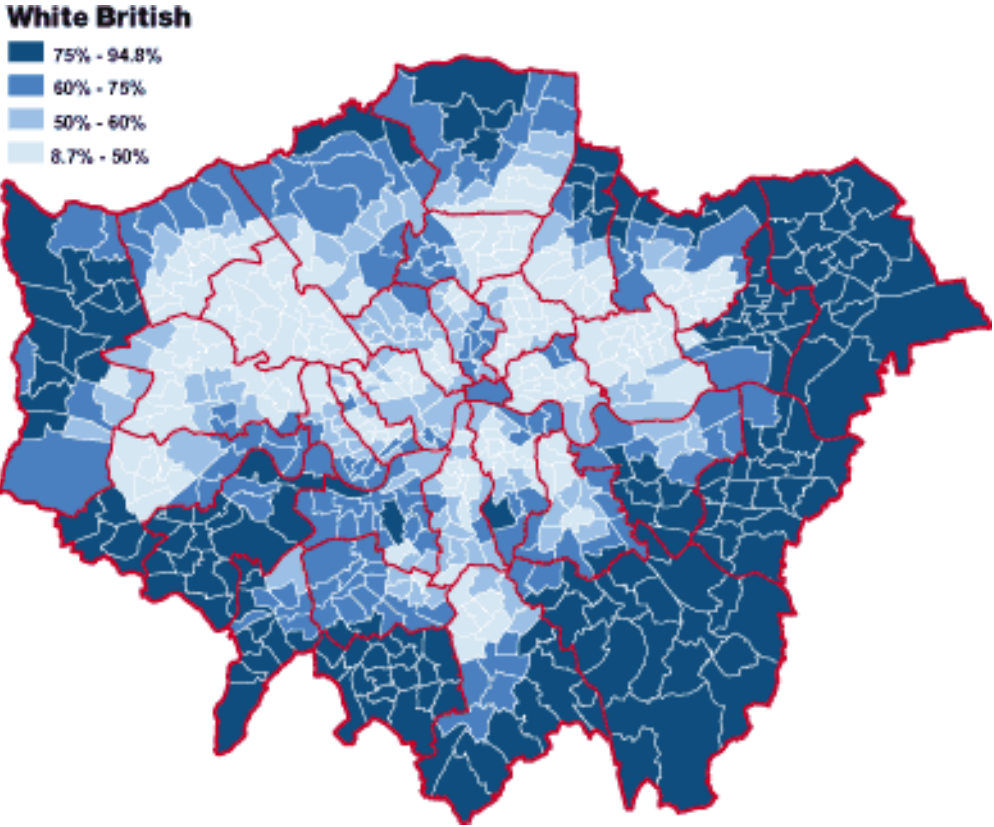
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Minorities in the Greater London area (3)



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/graphic/0,5812,1395103,00.html>

The "white British" population of London



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/graphic/0,5812,1395103,00.html>

1948-1980s: from *Jamaican Creole in England* to *Black British English*

- full native-language use of JamC marginal in Britain
→ "a *post-native* variety" (Patrick 2004: 232; Sebba 1993)
- BUT: JamC fails to disappear in the 2nd and 3rd generations
- "crossing" ("strategic code-switching which is symbolically related to ethnicity/race and which is used politically in boundary maintaining practices" – Rampton 1995: 126)
- → *covert prestige* – within and, increasingly, beyond the *Jamaican community*

1990s to date: from BBE to *Multicultural London English* (Kerswill, Torgersen & Fox 2008)

"Safe, man. You lookin buff in dem low batties. Dey's sick, man. Me? I'm just jammin wid me bruds. Dis my yard, innit? Is nang, you get me? No? What ends you from then? If this language sounds familiar, the chances are you're from inner-city London, where a new multicultural dialect is emerging. But wherever you live, it's coming to you soon. The 'cor blimey, guvnor's of those born within the sound of Bow bells are fading into oblivion as a new Jamaican-inspired language takes hold. In a not too distant future, the familiar EastEnders twang of the market seller ('Cam and git your tasty apples!') will be replaced by an Ali G-style patter ('Dem apples is sick, innit?')." (Emily Ashton, "Learn Jafaikan in two minutes," *Guardian* 12 April 2006)

Linguistic polyphony in contemporary multicultural fiction ...

Maybe he should change tack with her [Helena]. Maybe he wasn't bad enough. Perhaps he should drop the dress of his Queen's grammar and go for pure ragga blather? Or maybe for the vulnerable, Woody Allen, mildly tortured tip? (Diran Adebayo, *Some Kind of Black*, 38-9)

He [Dele] couldn't get a fix on her [Andria's] background. The accent was mostly a familiar east London one, but with a tinge of somewhere else that he couldn't pinpoint. The strangest thing was when she had talked about getting permission from her boss, she had pronounced 'ask Mrs Walms' as 'aaaks...', the way Jamaicans did. Very peculiar for an English girl. (ibid., 141)

Linguistic crossing in pop culture

TV comedy: "Ali G" (Sebba 2003)



Asian Dub Foundation

(<http://www.asiandubfoundation.com/>)

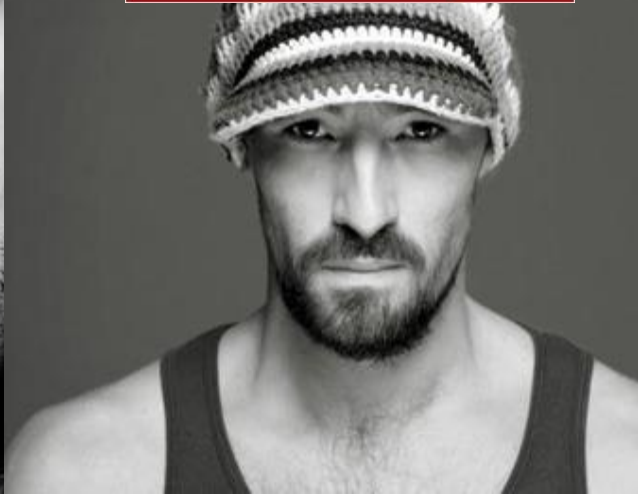


Gentleman/Jahcoustix,

Junkio Kudo (2002)



www.theodora.com/flags



"Cyber-Jamaican" (Mair 2011): a vernacular on the web

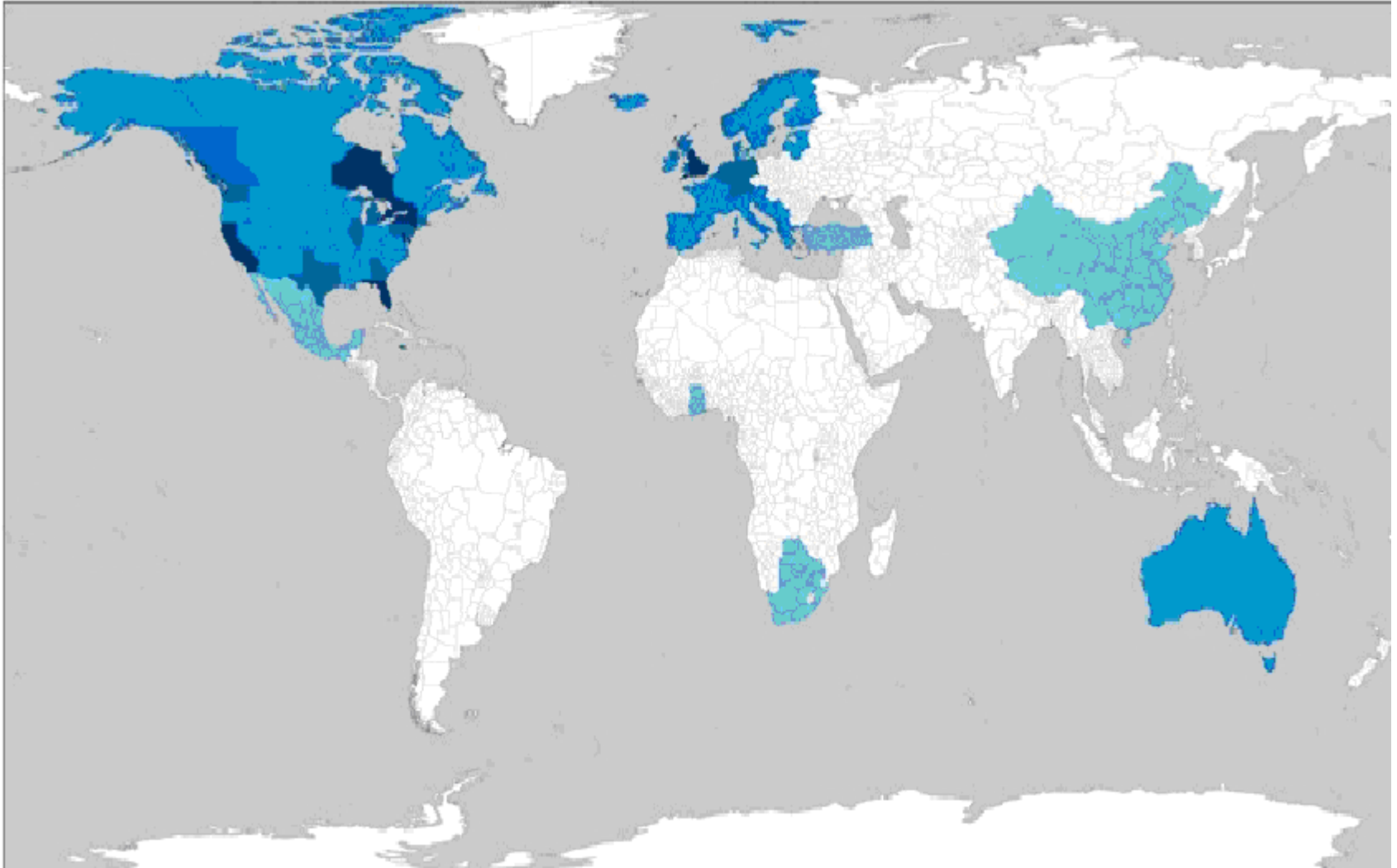
- written JamE: limited contact in an essentially diglossic situation; severely constrained code-switching
- spoken JamE: intensive contact in a Creole-English continuum; focus on the upper-mesolectal range
- diasporic and "post-native" varieties; crossing
- **JamE in computer-mediated communication?**
→ toward a sociolinguistic ethnography of www.jamaicans.com

CCJ: The Corpus of Cyber-Jamaican

16+ mio words from JamEng/ JC from www.jamaicans.com

Year	Number of words
2000	354
2001	104,077
2002	697,184
2003	1,808,513
2004	1,683,851
2005	1,477,049
2006	2,127,915
2007	4,878,145
2008	3,833,655
Total	16,610,743

Mapping CCJ in geographical space



Jamaican Creole on the web: being authentic without necessarily being mimetic

from the acoustic to the visual vernacular in three stages ...

(1) [RollinCalf] Satdeh time...braps, beef soup done, seh shi neva go a college fi bwile no yam. One mawnin mi a hat up little mackrel an some pepper an shi tell mi seh mi a tink up di house.

[Saturday time – and all of a sudden, the beef soup is ready, and she says she didn't go to college to cook yams. One morning, I am heating up a little mackerel and some peppers and she tells me that I am stinking up the house]

(2) [Bizi_Q] so what mi can use **fi** clean **gems, stones, diamonds**, etc?? mi have de silver/gold cleaning solution but it nuh seem **fi** do nutten **fi** de stone dem..sometimes it look wussa dan when it **went** in. mi read up pon de net an **some sites say use dish washing liquid..others say that's a big no no**. what **unu** use clean **unu** stones? **would it be better fimi** carry it go a jeweler?? how much dat would cost? **carry it go a jeweler??** how much dat would cost?

[so what can I use to clean gems, stones, diamonds, etc.? I have the silver/gold cleaning solution but it does not seem to do anything for the stones ... sometimes it looks worse than when it went in. I read up on the net and some sites say 'use dish washing liquid' ... others say that's a big no no. What do you use to clean your stones? Would it be better for me to take it to the jeweller's?]

(3) [Blugiant] oww manee peeps inn dem caribbean household versus **mzungu** oousehold. iff itt tekk two ar more caribbean wage earnas wukkinn more owa dan **mzungu** fi mekk more dan **mzungu** oousehold widd less peeps wat iss da artikkle seyinn bout da caribbean peeps qualitee aff life

[How many people are there in those Caribbean households versus white people's households? If it takes two or more Caribbean wage earners working more hours than white people to make more than a white household with fewer people what is the article saying about the Caribbean people's quality of life?]

Formal ↔ Informal ↔ Anti-formal

Formal: “Accepted as educated; belonging or assignable to IAE; also any regionalism which is not replaceable ...”

Informal: “Accepted as familiar; chosen as part of usually well-structured, casual, relaxed speech, but sometimes characterized by morphological and syntactic reductions of English structure and by other remainder features of decreolization.”

Anti-formal: “Deliberately rejecting Formalness; consciously familiar and intimate; part of a wide range from close and friendly through jocular to coarse and vulgar; any Creolized or Creole form or structure surviving or conveniently borrowed to suit context or situation.

When such items are used an absence or a wilful closing of social distance is signalled.

Such forms survive profusely in folk-proverbs and sayings, and are widely written with conjectural spellings in attempts at realistic representations of folk-speech in Caribbean literature.” (Allsopp 1996: lvii)

4. Conclusions: the galaxy of Englishes

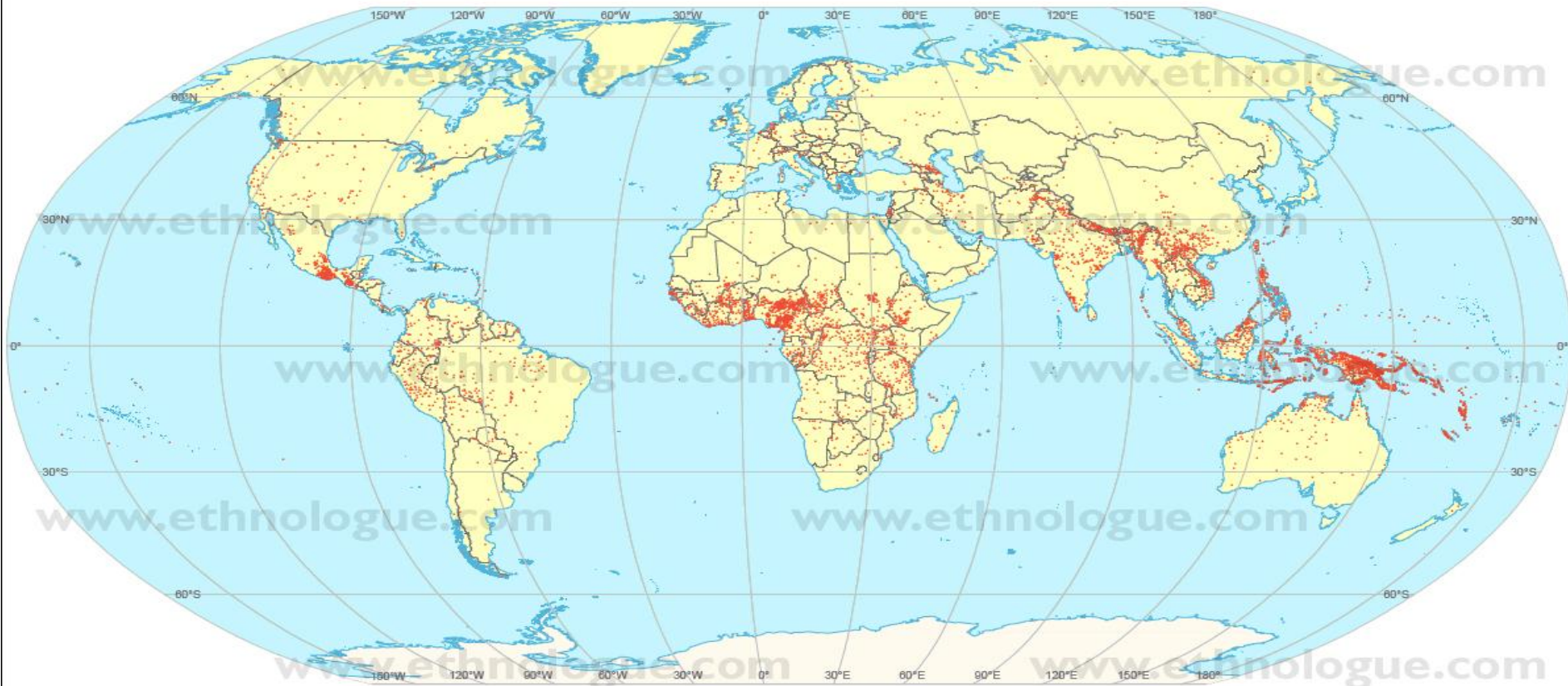
the world-language system (de Swaan 2002)

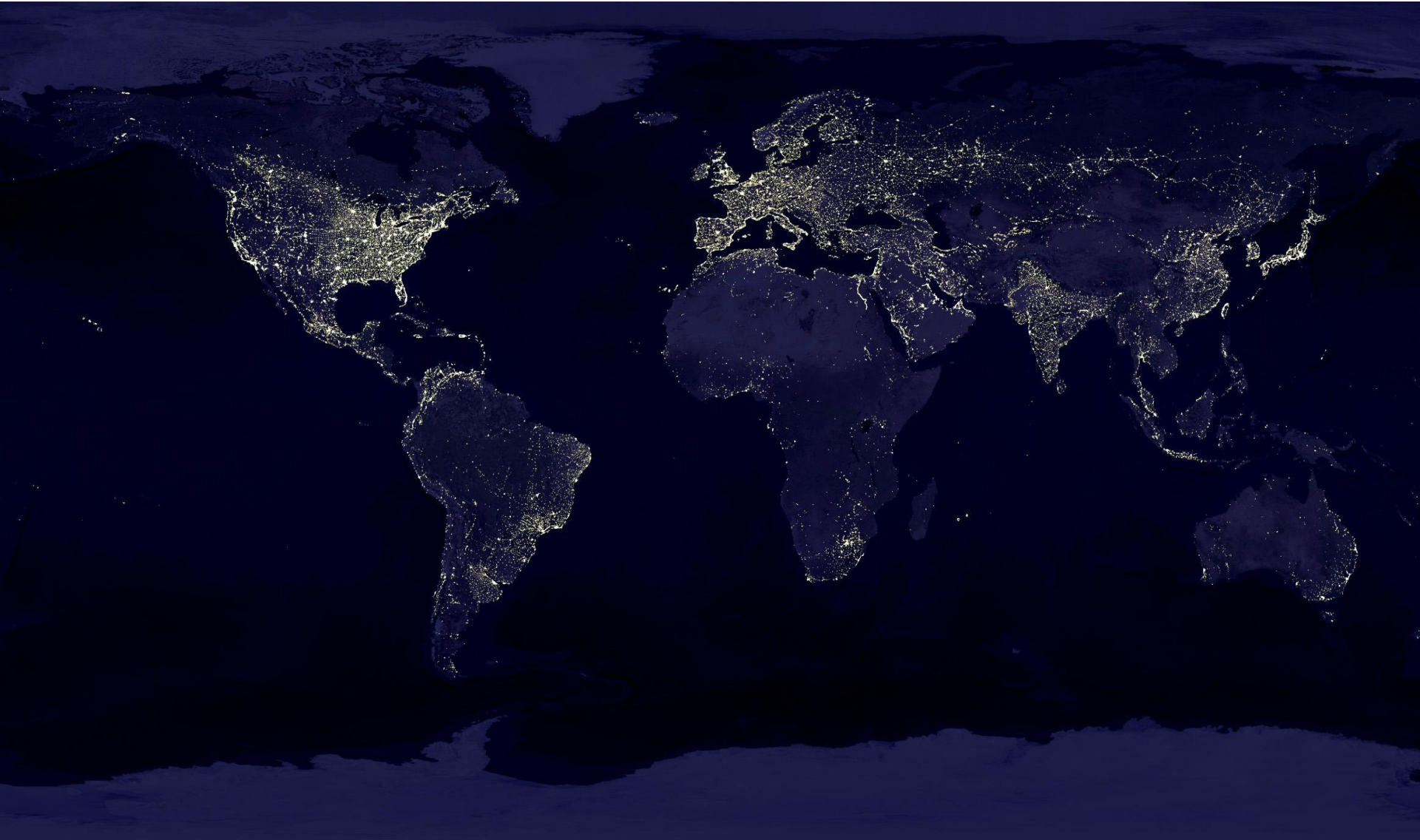
- hyper-central language: English, the hub of the world language system
- super-central languages: French, Hindi, Mandarin, Spanish, Turkish, Kiswaheli, ...
- central languages: Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Korean, ...
- peripheral languages: 6,000+

English, and 6,908 other languages

LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD

Each dot represents the geographic center of a language.





The galaxy of Englishes

- one (or two?) hyper-central varieties:
the global "hub(s)"
- ca. 10 super-central varieties
- ca. 100 central varieties
- ca. 1,000 peripheral varieties

- **the hub / hyper-central variety:** Standard American English
- **super-central varieties:**
 - standard:** BrE, AusE, IndE, NigE, JamE
 - non-standard:** AAVE, JamE, London
 - domain-specific ELF uses: science, business, international law
- central varieties:
 - standard:** IrE, NZE, ...
 - non-standard:** US "Southern" etc.
- **peripheral varieties:** all traditional rurally based non-standard dialects, plus a large number of colonial varieties including pidgins and creoles

Evidence

- strong unidirectional currents of lexical borrowing from AmE to all other varieties, including BrE, but only trickles in reverse direction
- British academic publishers following US orthographic practice
- strong non-standard impact of AAVE and Caribbean English on urban African vernaculars, but weak influence in the reverse direction

Tools most needed for the study of vernacular globalisation?

- large web-derived corpora of (standard or non-standard) English?
- large multilingual corpora?
- small but better-transcribed and annotated corpora of spontaneous interaction?
- multi-modal corpora of spontaneous interaction?
- more powerful statistics?
- more conceptual refinement in qualitative case-studies?
- more psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic experimentation?

“We possess (if we use it well) a descriptive apparatus of unparalleled precision, capable of reading infinitely big features of society from infinitely small details of communicative behaviour. Our most persuasive discourse is empirical and descriptive: we are at our best when we provide theoretically grounded and sophisticated descriptions of language problems in the world. The theoretical challenges of globalization may make some scholars inclined to produce more theory than description; in my view this would mean that we thereby sacrifice some of our best and most powerful tools.” (Blommaert 2010: xiv)

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