

Vietnamese English: Evolution, Variation, and Identity

Sunday, 28 July 2024 09:00 (30 minutes)

Existing studies on English in Vietnam mainly focus on English usage by Vietnamese learners, or the English speech by highly proficient and bilingual Vietnamese abroad, with limited research on the characteristics of Vietnamese English as an emerging variety and its connection to speakers' identity. To address this gap, the current study explored Vietnamese English spoken by various individuals in Hue City, Vietnam, and examined how linguistic features intersect with identity at regional (Hue), national (Vietnam), and global (World Englishes) levels. Using a community-engaged sociolinguistic approach, we recorded interactions with residents from diverse backgrounds, age groups, and proficiency levels in their environments, such as shops, hotels, tourist sites, and cafés in Hue. This resulted in 150 audio/video samples. Analysis focuses on speech features like accent, vocabulary, and grammar, and the interaction content, including perspectives on English and Huế Vietnamese.

Findings reveal core features of Vietnamese English. Phonologically, influences from Vietnamese (e.g., final consonant reduction) and dominant World Englishes (e.g., rhoticity) are evident. Lexically, loanwords, calques, and culturally significant terms appear, particularly from food, tourism, and heritage domains. Grammatically, copula omission, non-standard verb agreement, and irregular plurals are notable. Pragmatically, politeness strategies and discourse markers of World Englishes are observed. Regarding identity, our data show how English is used as a "technology of the self". Specifically, many participants' use of English reflects their individual agency, continuous self-improvement, and the delegation of responsibility for personal well-being onto the individuals.

This study contributes to understanding Vietnamese English's linguistic features and its role in identity construction, shedding light on its distinctiveness and intersections with broader sociocultural contexts.

Online Profile

Biography

Primary authors: NGUYEN, Huy (Hue University of Foreign Languages and International Studies); NGUYEN, Mai (Manchester Metropolitan University); Dr DAO, Phung (University of Cambridge)

Presenter: NGUYEN, Mai (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Session Classification: Parallel Oral Presentations

Track Classification: Teaching Methods and Applied Linguistics