

Recitation A

Which English Will We Speak?

English is called an international language, but there are actually quite a few varieties of English that exist around the world. English originated in England, but soon it spread to other countries, and different varieties of English began to exist. Today, the countries in which English is spoken can be divided into three groups.

The first group is made of those countries where English is the primary language. These are countries like England, Canada, the United States, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. There are more than 380 million native speakers of English in these countries alone.

There is a second group of countries that have their own varieties of English. Their histories have been directly influenced by one of the early English-speaking societies. They use English in various important ways within their own government and everyday life. India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Kenya are examples of this group. The total number of speakers in this group is in the hundreds of millions.

In a third group of countries, English is widely used as a foreign language. However, citizens use their native language within their own government and in everyday life. Some countries in this group are China, Russia, Japan, Korea, Brazil, Indonesia, and many Western European countries. Some people calculate the number of speakers in this group to be as many as one billion – and it is growing fast.

This changing situation raises many questions. Will another language replace English as the international language? If not, will people continue to use the English of countries such as England or the United States as models? Will new varieties of English develop in countries such as China or Brazil? Or, in the future, will a new international variety of English develop that doesn't belong to any one country, but to an entire area like Asia or Europe?

(305 words)