

Chinese Malaysian English Phonology

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Abstract

Malaysian English (MaE) has gained recognition as one of the New Englishes and is now developing into a mature variety with its own pronunciation. This paper represents the first attempt at an auditory quantitative description of MaE spoken by a group of ten Malaysian Chinese adults. It is appropriate to consider Chinese Malaysian as a significant variety of MaE because Chinese form the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia. Historically, a Chinese ethnic group in Malaysia was the numerically dominant urban group who attended English-medium schools and used English as their dominant language. Today, many Chinese in Malaysia speak English as a first language. The present study investigates features of the consonant and vowel production of these adults. The consonant and vowel inventories are considered as well as phonological features. Where relevant, the MaE results findings are compared with other varieties of English. The findings of this study are important for linguists, speech-language pathologists, English language teachers and policy makers in their respective fields of work.

Keywords: Malaysian English, South-East Asian English, ASEAN English

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