



English in the
Jewel in the Crown
- Indian English -

Rochana Jayasinghe

rochjayasinghe@gmail.com





- Number of English speakers in the Indian subcontinent – 200 million to 333 million
- India is among the leading English-using nations in the world; 125 million
- The third largest English book printing country in the world after the UK and the US
- India publishes more books in English than in any other language

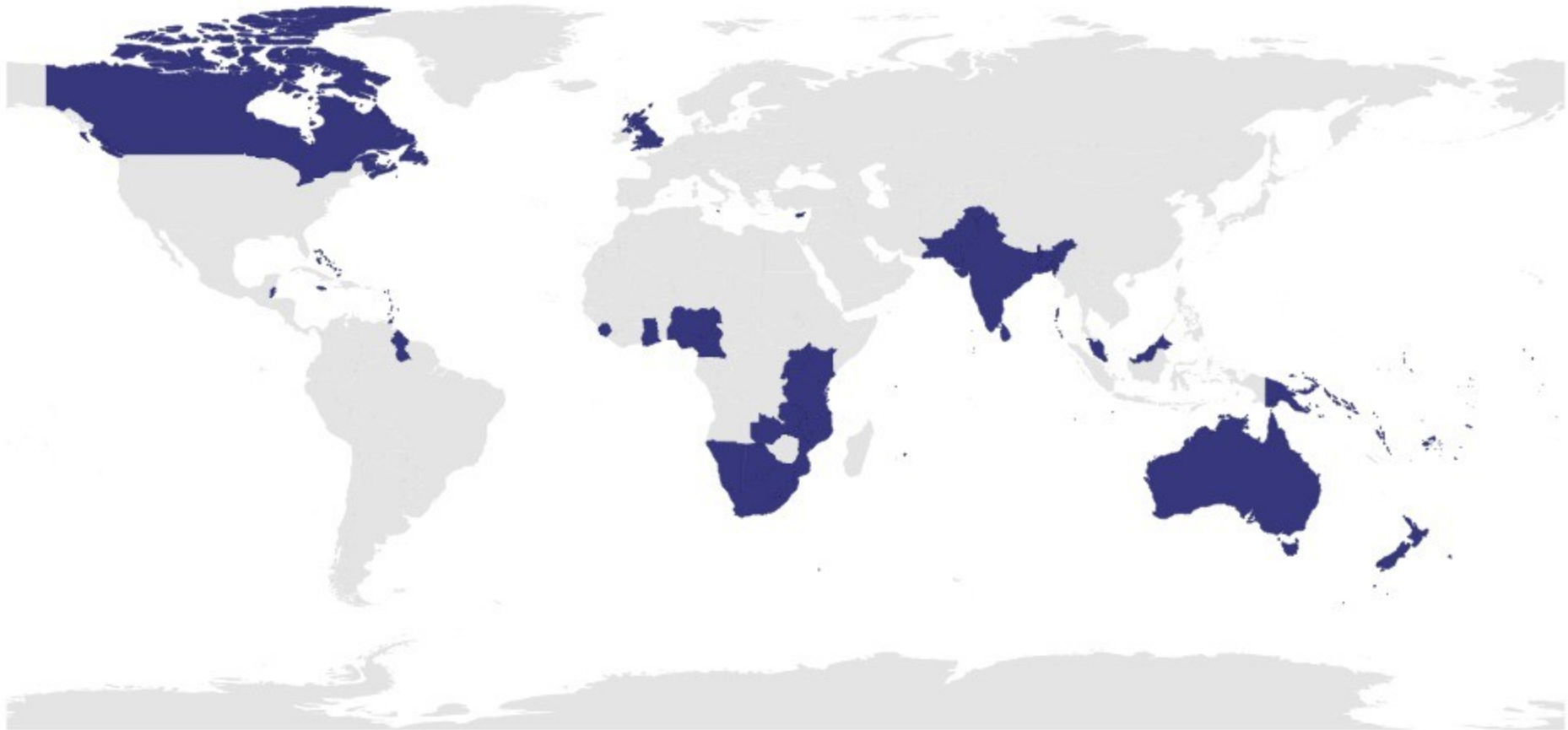
HOW? WHY?



BRITISH RAJ (1858-1947)

Jewel in the Crown

- One of the 22 official languages
- Widely used in administration, education, media, cross cultural communication
- Plays the most prominent role in the prestigious domains of education, science and technology
- The instrument that various political leaders utilized for national awakening and freedom struggles



- What is your good name?
- Today morning, yesterday night
- Cousin sister, cousin brother
- Prepone
- Do the needful

- Auntie/uncle
- Timepass
- Don't eat my head
- To pass out

- On/off the lights
- 'Only'
- Revert back
- Do one thing
- Himalayan Blunder

- I have a doubt
- Batch/batchmates
- Cut the call
- Current went/current came
- 'No'

Sri Lankan English

- Hi
- How have you been lately?
- What a shame
- Dont be silly
- No way!
- I accept that
- They're dating

- This is my son's girlfriend
- Everybody
- Everybody will be there
- Its crazy!
- Everything is alright
- Is that ok? Don't worry
- Late night partying
- This is ridiculous
- Dont make me repeat myself
- Unfortunately

- Can you turn the air conditioner on?
- Can you switch off the light?
- My arm hurts
- There you go
- There was so much traffic on the road today
- You must be so tired
- That's what I told you!
- Yes, that's right.
- I didn't know at all
- Bon Appetit!

- Sounds ridiculous?
- Is it wrong?

English is 'nativized'

- When a language is transported to new cultures as in South Asia, it undergoes striking changes
- It is not a uniform variety



Speak English “Our” Way

- English is now one of “our” languages
- Has ceased to be the “property” of England
- Small price to pay for colonial destruction?
- What about what I speak?

- *Long time, no see*
- *More the merrier*
- *No can do*

“Englishes”