Micronesia, The Structure and Use of English in

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1 Introduction

Contemporary Micronesia, 2,000 islands spread over 10,000,000 sq. km of the North West Pacific Ocean, is currently divided into seven different political entities (Figure 1):

- Republic of Palau: independent, in a Compact of Free Association with the United States.
- Guam: an organised unincorporated territory of the US.
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI): an organised unincorporated territory of the US.
- Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) (comprising four states, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae): independent, in a Compact of Free Association with the US.
- Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI): independent, in a Compact of Free Association with the US.
- Republic of Nauru: independent.
- Republic of Kiribati [kɪɾɪbas]: independent.

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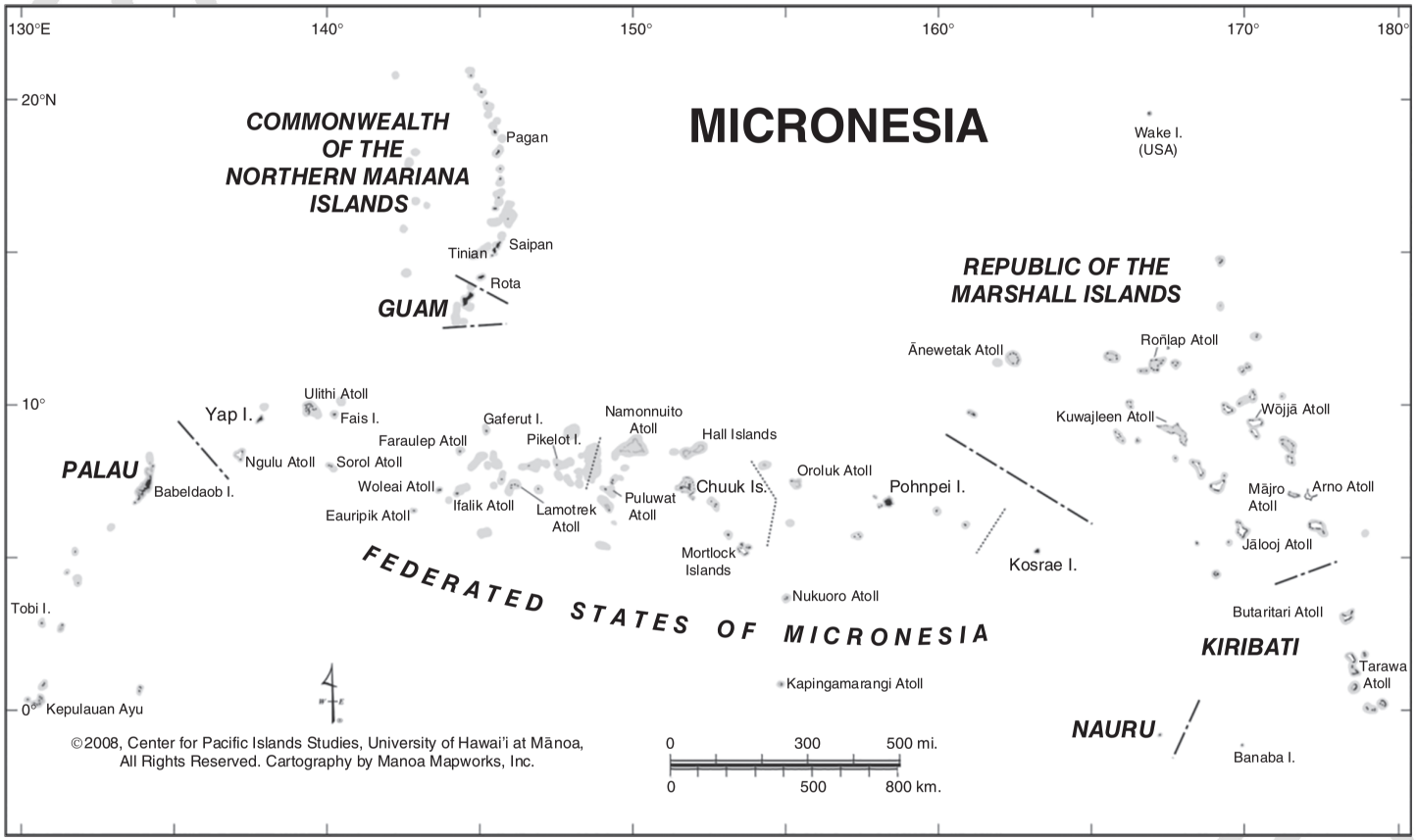

Figure 1 Contemporary Micronesia.

This entry looks at how English is used across Micronesia. First, it considers the different sociolinguistic influences that have shaped and continue to shape the region and which pull Micronesian territories in different linguistic directions. Second, it considers the factors that affect the degree to which English is both nativising as a local language, and becoming more prominent in local linguistic repertoires. In a few parts of the region, English is a dominant first-language (L1) variety used by monolinguals, in others it remains, for most people, a relatively rarely used second-language (L2) learner variety, in others still it is a nativising and increasingly used second-language dialect. The entry ends with a summary of the main linguistic characteristics of Micronesian Englishes.

2 Sociolinguistic perspectives on English in contemporary Micronesia

Everywhere that you find English in Micronesia, you also find other, local, indigenous Austronesian languages being spoken (Table 1) (Lynch et al., 2011).

Table 1 Indigenous Austronesian languages of contemporary Micronesia.

Palau:	Palauan, Sonsorolese, Tobian
Guam:	Chamorro
CNMI:	Chamorro, Saipan Carolinian
FSM:	Yapese, Ulithian, Woleaian, Satawalese, Namonuito, Puluwatese, Paafang, Chuukese, Mortlockese, Pohnpeian, Ngatikese, Mokilese, Pingelapese, Kosraean, Kapingamarangi
RMI:	Marshallese
Nauru:	Nauruan
Kiribati:	Gilbertese

Some but not all are Nuclear Micronesian (such as Chuukese, Gilbertese), others are Oceanic but not Micronesian (such as Yapese, Palauan, Chamorro, Kapingamarangi). Consequently, the indigenous languages differ quite considerably from each other, and these distinct substrates can be seen to shape the Englishes that have emerged in some parts of Micronesia.

To understand Micronesian English today, therefore, requires an examination of the contact relationship between it and the indigenous languages of the area. The relationship almost everywhere is diglossic, with English at the H[igh] end of the functional scale and the local languages at the L[ow] end. The diglossia manifests itself differently in different parts of Micronesia, however, with the role of English largely restricted to formal H roles in, for example, Kiribati and Nauru, but very much invading all aspects of L functions, for example, for the young educated in Guam, where language shift from Chamorro to English is very advanced. Another influential factor is the degree of access islanders have to the economic and cultural capital that English is claimed to bring. In some societies, full access to the language is restricted to a powerful and elite minority, whereas in others, for various reasons, access is much wider. This dynamic is exemplified by briefly looking at how education, the media, and political and diaspora connections serve to influence residents' access to English.

Across Micronesia, education is mostly in English, with indigenous language education present everywhere, but to different extents. In Kiribati, primary education is

mostly in Gilbertese, with English being introduced gradually and only becoming the medium of instruction from secondary school onwards. Almost all teachers are local, and one of the issues the country faces (as does Nauru) is training enough teachers, and raising their own English proficiency levels (Mettler, 2017, p. 19). Leonhardt cites a 2014 report showing that by Grade 6, only 33% of students in Kiribati achieve grades of satisfactory or above (Leonhardt, 2019, p. 149). In Guam, on the other hand, under American control since the late nineteenth century, education is entirely in English, and has been for most of the past century, with most of the teachers tertiary-trained. The history, culture and some language basics of indigenous Chamorro are taught but this has been "rather ineffective in getting the younger generations to learn the language" (Kuske, 2019, p. 58). Tertiary education in English is offered locally at the University of Guam, and since Guam is politically part of the US, students can also travel freely to other universities there. Palau sits in-between the two: the education system was boosted in the 1960s by the arrival of many English-speaking US Peace Corps Volunteers, and both English and Palauan are compulsory in state school. But, like in Guam, there is an extensive private school sector (staffed largely by Americans from a range of religious organisations) offering smaller classes and an entirely English-medium education for the elite, which contrasts with the state sector (where the teachers are mostly from Palau or the Philippines). Tertiary education requires a move to Guam, Hawai'i, or further afield. Access to elite Englishes is restricted, then, to the politically and economically powerful.

Mass media and the internet have had a dramatic impact on the penetration of English into Micronesian lives. Newspapers and radio on Kiribati are almost entirely in Gilbertese. There is extremely limited live TV, and internet access, while improving, is expensive and still in its infancy, especially on the more remote islands. In Guam, almost all of the media – newspapers, TV (much of which is from the US), radio – are in English, which is also the overwhelmingly dominant language of social media on the island (Kuske, 2019, p. 60). One radio station, *Isla 63 – Island Pride*, has more than tokenistic Chamorro content. Again, Palau sits in-between. The main newspaper, *Tia Belau*, is in English and a good deal of the TV is from American sources. But there are also TV and radio productions in Palauan: *EPFM 87.9 Ngerel Belau* broadcasts documentaries, political discussions, press conferences, and such, in Palauan. *OTV2 Er Kid* provides Palauan-language TV coverage of parliamentary and political debates, the weather and tidal information, public information programmes, as well as local sports, such as pole climbing and piglet chasing.

The Micronesian island states are, finally, to different degrees, tied into wider regional and global networks that bring contact with Inner Circle Englishes. All of former American Micronesia remains in some way, either informally or formally, politically and economically tied to the US. Guam, with its long and strong political, military and social connections to Hawai'i and the rest of the US, has long acted as the epicentre for American-influenced Micronesia. Many Micronesians from the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau, especially, see Guam as an inviting target destination for work or education, a destination that eases access to Hawai'i and the mainland. Many especially male Micronesians, furthermore, have joined the US military, and served actively in recent campaigns (for instance in Afghanistan). Assisted undoubtedly by social media, American cultural influence has diffused through its former colonial territories in Micronesia, using Guam especially as a regional staging post.

Kiribati and Nauru do not have such strong affiliations at their disposal. The UK forgot about its responsibilities to these states decades ago. Australia and New Zealand are now the main loci of orientation, Australia for Nauruans and both for i-Kiribati, though ties are weaker than those northern Micronesia has to the US. Financial aid from Australia and New Zealand is much more sporadic and short-term, infrastructural connections are poorly developed, economic ties looser, and islanders face immigration restrictions to go to Australia and New Zealand. The diaspora communities are smaller, therefore, and cannot function as an engine for the development of closer ties in the way they do further north.

3 Nativisation and convergence to Inner Circle norms

The sociolinguistic context described above has undoubtedly shaped the extent to which English has nativised, the extent to which it has become the locally dominant language, and the extent to which there is convergence towards regional Inner Circle norms. Nativisation – the stabilisation of "an L2 system that is a synthesis of substrate effects, interlanguage processes and features adopted from the settlers' koiné English" (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p. 32) – and, as English becomes more dominant, convergence to Inner Circle norms, are therefore greater where:

- English has spread into diglossically L(ow) functional domains.
- The role of English in the education system and media is significant and carries economic and cultural capital.
- English has been the language of colonial rulers longer.
- English has ousted local languages.
- The island has stronger political, social and economic ties with and diasporic communities in a (usually colonial) Inner Circle Anglophone nation.
- There are communities of first-language speakers on the islands.
- Speakers are from local ruling elites and/or younger, more educated, well-travelled.

Guam sits at one end of the scale, therefore, where young educated speakers are fully "native" often monolingual speakers. US English has been the colonial language since 1899 and is displacing Chamorro; and it is politically integrated with the US, and has strong diaspora, employment and educational ties there. Furthermore, it houses large US garrisons employing many local staff. Kiribati sits at the other end, where English is still a learner variety, and the stabilisation of a structurally nativised variety is only found among the nation's small elite. The local language Gilbertese has great vitality, is routinely used by the entire population, with little language shift evident at all. Although it has economic and political ties with Australia and New Zealand, these are not as close or as intensive or as intimate as those the Micronesian nations further north have with the US. It is one of the least visited countries in the world, and has few resident speakers from Inner Circle nations. The other parts of Micronesia sit between these two extremes. Almost all younger urban speakers in Palau, for example, are fully bilingual and show considerably more evidence of substrate and interlanguage influence on the nativised variety among the state educated, and more evidence of convergence towards US Englishes among the young privately educated elite.

4 An overview of Micronesian Englishes

The following sections introduce the key structural characteristics of Micronesian Englishes, attempting to capture some of the diversity within Micronesia, from those countries with fewer speakers for whom English is their preferred language, for example Kiribati, to those where it is the preferred language of most local speakers, as in Guam (Britain et al., 2024).

4.1 Phonology

4.1.1 Vowels

The English vowel systems across Micronesia span those showing little (such as Guam) to those showing considerable substrate influence from local languages (such as Nauru, Kiribati). Wells's (1982) lexical set system is used to describe the main developments.

4.1.1.1 KIT, FLEECE

As is common in many world Englishes, FLEECE and KIT overlap in those varieties where fewer speakers have English as their preferred language (such as Kiribati) – KIT is somewhat closer and fronter in these varieties than in many Inner Circle varieties. On islands where English is overwhelmingly speakers' preferred language, KIT is somewhat backer and lower, participating in wider global developments affecting the front short vowel set.

4.1.1.2 DRESS

This tends to be a higher and fronter [e] in those varieties spoken on islands with few speakers that have English as their preferred language, and backer and lower in the others. Kuske (2019), for example, shows considerably lower and backer realisations of both KIT and DRESS among younger Guam speakers.

4.1.1.3 TRAP, BATH

Across former US-controlled Micronesia, TRAP remains open, and not raised as it is in many US varieties. Given that Guam otherwise has converged quite considerably with American English, this is a distinguishing feature for that variety, even among young speakers for whom English is their preferred language. TRAP overlaps with BATH and is relatively front, especially in the more acrolectal varieties. In Kiribati, however, TRAP is rather raised and fronted, and very distinct from its fully open BATH vowel, perhaps a reflection of its connections with New Zealand, which also has had raised TRAP. In Nauru, TRAP is fronter than BATH but remains low.

4.1.1.4 LOT, THOUGHT

These are distinct on islands where English tends not to be the preferred language, but are merging on those islands with greater US influence, such as Guam, and (acrolectal) Palau and Saipan.

4.1.1.5 FOOT, GOOSE, GOAT

Micronesia is not (yet) participating in the fronting characteristic of many Inner Circle varieties. Younger Guamanian speakers show slight fronting of FOOT and GOOSE, but they remain back vowels.

4.1.1.6 Comma

In Nauru and Kiribati, the comma vowel is less centralised. Older less educated Nauruan speakers use an open vowel, while older Kiribati and basilectal Palauan speakers have fronter variants.

4.1.1.7 face, price, mouth

face has a very raised and fronted nucleus across Micronesia, often higher than dress, and the glide is short, often almost monophthongal. mouth generally has a low back nucleus, and a long glide to mid or high back. In Nauru, the nucleus is fronter and the glide shorter, and to a lower back position. price, too, tends to have an open nucleus, but a full glide to mid to high front.

4.1.2 Consonants

4.1.2.1 Stops

In Kiribati and Nauru, relatively unaspirated /p, t, k/ and relatively unvoiced /b, d, g/ are common. This appears to be intimately connected to the substrate: Leonhardt (2019) shows that stops in Gilbertese, which do not have a voicing contrast, tend to have a Voice Onset Time that is shorter than aspirated English stops, but longer than unaspirated ones, so learners are faced with acquiring a three-way English system (aspirated vs. unaspirated vs. voiced) from one intermediate substrate paradigm.

/d/ is often realised as [ð] in Palauan English, a substrate effect: "dad" can therefore, among some basilectal speakers, be realised as [ðað]. Intervocalically, /t/ is often flapped, not surprising given its presence in all of the locally relevant post-colonial influences: the US and Australia and New Zealand. /k/ is uvularised to [q] in a number of Micronesian Englishes, including Palauan, older Guamanian, Nauruan and Kiribati.

In much of Micronesia, -t/d deletion in word final clusters is common, understandable since many of the Oceanic substrate languages do not permit word-final consonant clusters. In Palauan English, however, -t/d deletion among more basilectal speakers is much rarer than in Inner Circle varieties, also a substrate effect – Palauan, a non-Micronesian language, tolerates many more consonant cluster combinations than English, and in word final position tends towards an audible schwa release, rather than deletion, of alveolar consonants in the second position of a consonant cluster.

4.1.2.2 Fricatives and affricates

Voiced fricatives /v, z, ʒ/ are occasionally devoiced. Mettler reports that /v/ is occasionally fronted to [b] in Nauru. /θ/ and /ð/ are often realised as dental stops (especially word-initially), or as labiodental fricatives (word-finally) (Mettler, 2017, p. 45). /ʃ/ is often fronted to [s], for example [fisiŋ] is reported in Palau (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 328). /ʧ/ is often realised as [ts], especially in non-acrolectal varieties, as is /ʤ/: Kuske, for example, reports [tsʌrts] *charge* for older Guamanians. /ʤ/ can also be realised as /ʃ/, for example in Kiribati (Kuske, 2019, p. 172). Micronesian languages lack /h/. In local Englishes both /h/-deletion, in words such as *house* and *hear* and prevocalic /h/-insertion, before words such as *after* and *own*, are reported (Buchstaller, 2020; Lynch, 2021).

4.1.2.3 Liquids, glides and approximants

US-influenced varieties are generally rhotic, especially those spoken by the more highly educated speakers in Guam, Saipan and Palau. Nauruan and Kiribati Englishes are mostly non-rhotic, though Mettler reports incipient and variable rhoticity among

young Nauruans (Mettler, 2017, p. 47). Prevocalic /r/ is often a tap. Leonhardt notes interchangeability of /l/ and /r/ in Kiribati English, with *play* being realised as [pɹei] and *zero* as [silɒ] (Leonhardt, 2019, p. 131). /l/ in non-prevocalic position is often relatively clear in comparison to many Inner Circle varieties, though Kuske reports some vocalisation in Guam (Kuske, 2019, p. 173). /j/ is often deleted after coronals in the US-influenced varieties.

4.1.3 Prosody

Micronesian varieties appear more syllable-timed than most Inner Circle varieties, with fewer reduced or unstressed syllables. Stress patterns often differ from those found in Inner Circle varieties: Hess, for example, reports [sɜ˞tɪfɪˈkeɪt] for *certificate* from Saipan, and Mettler [pɾɔˈtestent] for *protestant* from Nauru (Hess, 2019, p. 119; Mettler, 2017, p. 47). Vowel-vowel hiatus is often resolved with a glottal stop. Britain and Matsumoto, for Palau, find [maiʔoɬdɛboi] for *my older boy* (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 329).

4.2 Morphosyntax

Micronesian Englishes share very many morphosyntactic structures typical of world Englishes in general. Just some of the main ones are mentioned here. More information is available elsewhere (Britain et al., 2024).

4.2.1 Noun phrase

4.2.1.1 Pronouns

Gilbertese does not distinguish gender on pronouns and, consequently, in Kiribati English "he" and "she" are used interchangeably for male and female referents (Leonhardt, 2019, p. 141) (see also Hess, 2019, p. 120 for Saipan; Kuske, 2019, p. 176 for Guam). Pro-drop is not infrequently reported, as in Examples (1–2), when the context renders the absent subject unambiguous (Hess, 2019, pp. 120–121; Lynch, 2021, p. 118):

(1) Q: did you like it? A: Like it very much (Lynch, 2021, p. 118, Kosrae).
(2) can't afford to fly, can't afford to go anywhere else, wait till we get a real job (Mettler, 2017, p. 54, Nauru).

4.2.1.2 Pluralisation

Some nouns are count nouns in Micronesian English, but not in Inner Circle Englishes, as in Examples (3–4):

(3) I have five lands (Leonhardt, 2019, p. 140, Kiribati).
(4) he's selling fishing gears (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 333, Palau).

Occasionally, nouns are doubly marked for plurality, as in Example (5):

(5) how the womens are when they get pregnant (Hess, 2019, p. 121, Saipan).

Plurals are often not marked when the quantifiers, or some other aspect of the context, imply plurality (Examples 6–9):

(6) he has lots of children, that's why, lots of son (Lynch, 2021, p. 116, Kosrae).
(7) the past two typhoon that approaches (Hess, 2019, p. 121, Saipan).
(8) his mom and my mom are sister (Kuske, 2019, p. 177, Guam).
(9) there's several long distance carrier (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 333, Palau).

4.2.1.3 Existential constructions
Existentials are often initiated with "it" rather than "there" (Examples 10–11):

(10) I think it's about three hundred houses there (Lynch, 2021, p. 116, Kosrae).
(11) here it's almost like no choice (Lynch, 2021, p. 116, Kosrae).

4.2.1.4 Determiners
Some more basilectal speakers use quantifiers *much* and *many* interchangeably, as in Examples (12–13):

(12) too much girls at the side (Mettler, 2017, p. 53, Nauru).
(13) there's not that much rangers working during swing shift (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 334, Palau).

4.2.1.5 Articles
The use of articles differs from that in Inner Circle varieties. Hänni (2018), investigating Nauruan and Kosraean Englishes, shows that the substrate language influences the English system of article deployment adopted. For example, she shows that, as in Nauruan, the zero article is perceived as non-specific and non-identifiable, the indefinite article as specific and non-identifiable, and the definite article as expressing both specifiability and identifiability (Hänni, 2018, p. 102; Hess, 2019, p. 122). Allomorphy of the articles is often absent: the definite article is often realised as [ðə], and the indefinite as [ə] before vowels as well as consonants, as in Example (14):

(14) he got a argument with the girlfriend (Lynch, 2021, p. 117, Kosrae).

4.2.1.6 Possession
Possession is sometimes marked by simple juxtaposition of the possessor and the possessed, as in Example (15):

(15) my father land (Leonhardt, 2019, p. 141, Kiribati).

4.2.1.7 Comparison
Double comparatives and superlatives are reported from across Micronesia (Examples 16–17):

(16) we're the most loudest (Lynch, 2021, p. 122, Kosrae).
(17) he knows more better where to find the turtle (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 335, Palau).

4.2.2 Verb phrase
Variable copula absence is reported from across Micronesia, as in Examples (18–20):

(18) that woman my mother (Leonhardt, 2019, p. 142, Kiribati).
(19) the one that call in on Monday, he not coming in (Hess, 2019, p. 127, Saipan).
(20) we very naughty before (Mettler, 2017, p. 50, Nauru).

Common in the more basilectal, less native varieties is non-standard agreement in the present tense, with *-s* being deployed variably across the paradigm, as in Examples (21–24):

(21) all houses looks pretty pointy (Lynch, 2021, p. 110, Kosrae).
(22) they say some of the super waves goes down into there (Hess, 2019, p. 126, Saipan).
(23) he have different sides, so he keep taking off the earring (Mettler, 2017, p. 49, Nauru).
(24) she always complain about her headache (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 330, Palau).

Past tense is often marked adverbially or signalled elsewhere in the context, rather than morphologically on the verb, as in Examples (25–28):

(25) when I go back to Tafunsak, I saw him (Lynch, 2021, p. 112, Kosrae).
(26) when my mother die, I take care of all my sisters and brother (Kuske, 2019, p. 178, Guam).
(27) yesterday we make a roster for one month (Mettler, 2017, p. 51, Nauru).
(28) but when we were young we never argue with our chores, we rotate our chores in the house and if I don't do my assignment, I'll be ashamed to ask for dinner (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 331, Palau).

Regularisation of past BE *were*-forms to *was*, as in Example (29), is not especially common across Micronesia, but is found sporadically:

(29) we was going to go to Germany (Lynch, 2021, p. 113, Kosrae).

Quotative *be like*, as in Example (30), is now found across Micronesia among young people (Hess, 2019; Lynch, 2021):

(30) they're always paranoid, I'm like 'wow this is not good' (Hess, 2019, p. 129, Saipan).

4.2.3 Negation

Negative concord is reported sporadically from a number of parts of Micronesia, as in Examples (31–32):

(31) because sometimes when you don't do nothing for ten years (Hess, 2019, p. 125, Saipan).
(32) I don't want nobody to tell me (Kuske, 2019, p. 179, Guam).

4.2.4 Question formation

Simple intonation is often used to construct questions (example 33), or wh-forms with no syntactic inversion (Example 34):

(33) it is really going to open? (Hess, 2019, p. 128, Saipan).
(34) where our governor is hiding? (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 335, Palau).

Yes/no answers to questions in Micronesia orient to whether the question is factually correct, as in Example (35):

(35) Q: Can I not go there? A: Yes (meaning: you can't) (Lynch, 2021, p. 124, Kosrae).

4.2.5 Prepositions

Preposition use is known to be highly variable in world Englishes, and this is also the case in Micronesia, as in Examples (36–38):

(36) we have kids that will want to go college (Kuske, 2019, p. 180, Guam).
(37) compete to other districts (Mettler, 2017, p. 55, Nauru).
(38) and I get really pissed off from her (Britain & Matsumoto, 2015, p. 333, Palau).

4.3 Lexis

The lexicon is one of the domains in which local distinctiveness has greatest potential to emerge, given that English adapts to and borrows from local languages to describe frequently encountered local flora, fauna, food and cultural traditions and artefacts for which it has no (precise enough) term itself. Micronesia is no different (a full account can be found in Britain et al., 2024). Table 2 shows some Micronesian examples in the domains of cultural artefacts, traditions, ceremonies and titles; food; and terms for Westerners.

Table 2 Lexical items borrowed from local Micronesian languages.

A bai	traditional men's meeting house – Palau
Mwaneaba	community meeting house – Kiribati
Ngasech	a gathering to mark a married woman's first successful delivery of a baby – Palau
Unimwaane	honorific title for man – Kiribati
Ice srihmet	frozen coconut meat – Kosrae
Ikuri	local type of mackerel – Nauru
Lemmai	breadfruit – Guam
Usr	local banana – Kosrae
Aset	foreigner of Western origin – Kosrae
Iburbur	foreigner of Western origin – Nauru
I-matang	foreigner of Western origin – Kiribati

A number of local terms have entered Micronesian Englishes to denote greetings and terms of address, some of which have been grammaticalised into discourse markers.

4.3.1 Greetings

Adios (from Spanish) goodbye, (Guam, where Spain was, for several centuries up until 1899, the colonial ruler).
Buenos (from Spanish) hello (Guam).
Håfå ådai hello (from Chamorro: Saipan and Guam).

4.3.2 Terms of address and discourse markers

Bwiih Saipan Carolinian for *sibling*, used as a positive politeness marker, with a similar function to "bro" (Example 39):

(39) happy birthday bwiih! (Hess, 2019, p. 131, Saipan).

Che'lu Chamorro for *sibling*, also used like "bro", "dude" in Guam.

Cherrang Palauan address term, now used as a discourse marker functioning, in Example (40) below, to perform emphasis:

(40) Our fuel at our car was below the empty line, cherrang (Matsumoto, 2020b, p. 48, Palau).

Fan More common in Saipan than Guam now, functions as a polite directive or request marker, as in Example (41):

(41) Fan give me the rice (Hess, 2019, p. 131, Saipan).

Lanya From Saipan Chamorro, a discourse marker denoting surprise or shock, as in Example (42):

(42) A: I would throw the basketball and I would miss B: What is that, lanya! (Hess, 2019, p. 130, Saipan).

Nay Guam English tag, meaning "right?", as in Example (43). *Ke* has the same function in Kiribati English:

(43) three strikes, nay, and you're out (Kuske, 2019, p. 181, Guam).

Neni Chamorro for baby, used as a term of address from older to younger, as in Example (44):

(44) neni, go help her out (Kuske, 2019, p. 183, Guam).

Ollei Palauan address term, now used by young people as a discourse marker functioning like "you know" or "eh" (appealing for understanding), as in Example (45) or "dude" (exclamation, mitigation) or as a marker of surprise (Matsumoto, 2020a, p. 77):

(45) I was too drunk, ollei (Matsumoto, 2020a, p. 77, Palau).

Par/Pari [pʌr]-[pʌriʔ] (from Chamorro *kumpaire* and before that Spanish *compadre*), used to mean "dude" or "bro", as in Example (46):

(46) say, par, give me a ride after here, eh (Kuske, 2019, p. 182, Guam).

4.4 Summary

Micronesian Englishes therefore show considerable substrate influence at the phonological level, an influence that also is the cause of some region-internal differentiation (see Palauan vs. Kiribati English with respect to -t/d deletion). Some other features, not often noted in other world Englishes, appear to be used right across Micronesia among speakers who have not significantly converged to an Inner Circle norm (such as /k/ uvularisation). Others, meanwhile, are typical of world Englishes more generally, such as syllable timing. At the morphosyntactic level, Micronesian English deploys many Outer Circle forms typical of world Englishes in general distinguishing it from Inner Circle varieties, though these are less often found among younger speakers in Guam who, of all Micronesians, have converged most towards American English.

Lexically, Micronesian Englishes are unsurprisingly distinctive, with indigenous languages donating terms for local cultural, geographical, botanical and zoological concepts for which there are no precise equivalents in English.

5 Conclusion

The sociolinguistic ecologies of Micronesia, which are multilingual, with diverse colonial experiences and distinct degrees of orientation to and integration with Anglophone neighbours, mean that it is necessary to speak not of one, but of numerous Micronesian Englishes, shaped by different substrate languages, different ranges of domains in which they are locally deployed, and different networks of ties to the English-speaking world beyond. These region-internal differences manifest themselves especially at the phonological and lexical levels, while Micronesian English morphosyntax displays many characteristics typical of Outer Circle Englishes in general.

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ABSTRACT

English today is an official language across the whole of Micronesia. It co-exists with a large number of indigenous languages, most of which show considerable vitality. It is not possible, therefore, to look at the role or structure of contemporary Micronesian Englishes without taking into account the bi- and multilingual ecologies within which these local languages cohabit with English. This entry begins with a short portrait of the multilingual nature of Micronesia. In order to exemplify how the relationship between local languages and English functions, as well as how it differs across the region, the entry looks at the role of English in three domains: the education system, the media and in contemporary relations with Anglophone Pacific Rim nations. The entry concludes with an overview of the structure of contemporary Micronesian Englishes.

KEYWORDS

Guam; Kiribati; Kosrae; language variation; Mariana Islands; Micronesia; Nauru; Palau