



Eish, but is it English?

Rajend Mesthrie

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"What makes South African English different? Have you ever wondered where the words 'gogga', 'tsotsi' and 'larney' come from? Did you know that the first sentence uttered by a South African in English may have been spoken by a Khoikhoi man in 1613?

South African English is unique and is made up of several varieties. This entertaining and informative book looks at the forms of English spoken here, where they come from and how they fit into the spectrum of world Englishes. Humorous and engaging, it is packed with common expressions, slang, grammatical variations and distinctive South African words and phrases, including 'just now', 'busy waiting' and, of course, 'eish'. The book explores the influence of Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa and other languages on English as it is spoken in the diverse context of South Africa. It considers the social implications of language, questions notions of correctness and incorrectness, and celebrates South African English for its innovations and expressiveness. Eish, but is it English? is a book for everyone who is interested in the way we use language and make it our own.

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