CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to study the question forms used by Malaysian DSE of South Indian origin to ascertain their patterns of use of English. Since this study includes both standard and non-standard forms of questions, this chapter includes a review of what Standard English (SE) is and also examines the variations in question forms in SE, ME and other varieties around the world as found in other studies.

2.1 ROLE AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

With globalisation, the English language is becoming increasingly dominant throughout the world. More people are simultaneously learning English around the world and this leads to English being increasingly used globally making it truly an international language. More countries are entering the Kachruvian expanding circle to the extent that the ability to distinguish between the varieties used in the outer circle and expanding circle is becoming less evident (Graddol, 2006).

Thus, the original three circles of English model as conceived by Kachru (1985) is no longer adequate to explain the role of English in the world today as there have been many changes. For instance, there is the issue of whether non-native speakers of English who have their own variety of English as their L1 can be considered as native speakers of English. There is also the question of whether people can still be considered native speakers of their MT even if they cannot speak it. Furthermore, there is ambiguity in the term 'native speaker' (McArthur, 2002: 431) and this is more confusing in the Malaysian context (Knowles, 2006) as English has been actively used in this country for more than 100 years and there exists groups of people who are originally defined as non-native

speakers of English but are most comfortable using this language. In fact, native speakers of English as traditionally defined cannot claim to possess hegemony over English as the inner circle expands and some countries in the outer circle claim L1 status, as in the case of Singapore. As pointed out by Pakir (2001), many countries in the outer circle such as Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore, are becoming bilingual with English as a dominant language qualifying them to be a member of the inner circle. For example, a study conducted by Foley (2001) found that 65% of the Singaporeans spoke English, the largest figure obtained in comparison to the other languages spoken in Singapore. As a result, it was theorised that English is more a first language rather than a second language or a foreign language in Singapore (Foley, 2001). The obvious need to rethink the concept of native speaker has led to a reevaluation of Kachru's model:

> Kachru himself has recently proposed that the inner circle is now better conceived as the highly proficient speakers of English – those who have 'functional nativeness' regardless of how they learned or use the language (Gradol, 2006: 110).

Furthermore, the recognition of so many varieties of English has brought about the emergence of new epicenters away from the traditional 'homeground' of English and led to the debate about the use of the word "Englishes", which assumes varieties within a variety. Thus, as Pakir explains (2001: 2), there is both a push and pull factor for the increasing use of English and at the same time the emergence of more varieties of English:

> I would like to suggest that, although the demands of globalisation assist the push towards the use of more English, the local conditions of multilingualism also create new 'epicenters' of 'pluricentric' English representing a move towards more Englishes. (Pakir, 2001: 2)

This is consistent with what is occurring in Malaysia where English has established itself in Malaysia for almost three centuries. The three biggest ethnic groups (Malays, Chinese and Indians) often use English as one of the intra and inter-ethnic communication tools. Although MT and ethnicity may cause further variations and therefore create new

epicentres, these varieties are not mutually misunderstood as there seems to be enough common linguistic cues to promote mutual understanding.

However, there is a growing trend to use local or regional models of English for intra-national and regional communication. There is an increasing body of research on English in different regional settings, such as English used in ASEAN communications where the official language is English. In addition, during the 11th meeting of ASEAN leaders in Kuala Lumpur (2005), the Indian Prime Minister touched on the role of English in the process of globalisation (Graddol, 2006). He proposed that a Centre for English Language Training be set up in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam to enhance trade activities. The preferred choice was trainers from ASEAN countries and not native speakers as they would have a more suitable accent which is not difficult to understand (Graddol, 2006).

The model used for teaching English in schools should also be considered. Previously the model for English language teaching was based on the premise that it was to be used for communication with native speakers. However, today the need for English as a tool for communication among non-native speakers is more prevalent among non-native speakers rather than native speakers and this has assisted in the push towards more varieties (McArthur, 1998). Thus, it has been suggested that the variety of English to be taught in the classroom would best be one from a country with close cultural and geographical proximity, and which has achieved the status of being a standard. This relates to the suggestion that non-native models such as ME may be taught in the classrooms as in the case of Indonesia but as stated by the English Language Teachers in Indonesia, “it would be difficult to make the Indonesians accept the Malaysian model” (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

It is incorrect to assume the varieties of English around the world as deviant, inferior or sub-standard when compared to SE. They are simply varieties which have their

own local and regional intelligibility. Each of these varieties consist of an indiscriminate number of sub-varieties ranging from the simple pidgin–like variety to the standard of the regional variety which is at most times globally intelligible and very close to SE but with some variations due to the cultural influence of the region.

2.2 STANDARD ENGLISH

The eighteenth and nineteenth century publishers and educationists recognized syntactical and lexical features of English which they regarded as correct and this variety then came to be known as Standard English (SE) (Britain & Clift, 2003). This variety was chosen as the users had the highest degree of power, wealth and prestige (Trudgill, 1999). However, the spread of English to the new colonies eventually gave rise to new varieties of English such as American English (AE) and Australian English, each with their own standards. Kachru (1985) distinguished these countries as the inner circle consisting mainly of nations with native speakers of English, that is, those who have English as their MT (McArthur, 2002). The Singapore, Malaysian, Philippino and Indian varieties of English have also been accepted as having their own standard varieties (Kirkpatrick, 2006) although they belong to the outer circle. These countries had contact with English for a long period of time and their varieties of Englishes have gone through a period of acculturation and nativisation (Kachru, 1992). Thus it is undeniable that these regional standard varieties would have differences in their accent and even vocabulary but the syntax and word order can be assumed to be more similar.

In an attempt to describe what SE is, Trudgill (1999) characterizes what it is not. It is not a language but a variety of English normally used in the written form and it is closely associated with the education system. Historically SE is associated with those having

power and is deemed most suitable to be used in the classroom and resulting in it having a great social impact.

SE is also not linked to any accent or pronunciation and as such it is wrong to assume that one has to use Received Pronunciation for example, when using SE. Trudgill (1999) also states that SE is not a style as it can vary in its level of formality. In other words, SE is not just to be used in formal situations but also in informal ones. Finally, SE is not a register, for example, to be used specifically for medicine, law or mathematics. Thus, SE can be used in any field, at any levels of formality, with any type of accent.

Thus, SE is a social dialect without a related accent and as such it is not bound to any geographic location. There is no continuum actually linking SE to other dialects. Thus, in all varieties of English there is a standard form. For example, there is Standard American English (AE), Standard Singapore English (SSE) and even Standard Malaysian English (SME) and there are then many common grammatical features between SEs around the world. Thus, SME is the highest sub-variety on the lectal cline of ME.

2.3 MALAYSIAN ENGLISH

Baskaran (1994) notes that at every social level and purpose there is a particular variety of Malaysian English (ME) that is used. There is a range of Englishes that form ME and it is on a lectal cline which is an indiscrete continuum whereby there are infinite lectal varieties and sub-varieties. Baskaran (1994: 27) succinctly defines ME as a continuum with three sociolects.

> The acrolect (the 'high' social dialect) is used for official and educational purposes. The mesolect (the middle social dialect) is used in semiformal and casual situations. The basilect (the low social dialect) is used informally and colloquially as patois, and shades into a pidgin used mainly by village peddlers when talking to tourists and potential customers.

Therefore, the varieties of Malaysian English are on a lectal cline whereby the variety in use would depend on the purpose, settings and the participants as suggested by Finegan (1980).

In Finegan's model, the purpose of a speech would explain why the conversation took place. For example, when a person is giving instructions to his subordinates and needs to show his authority, he would most probably use SE. However, a non-standard variety would most probably be used when the purpose of a conversation is to show camaraderie or to steer a sense of kinship (Rajadurai, 2004).

Setting refers to the place where the conversation took place. If one was speaking at his workplace, he would use the highest variety available to him. If the conversation is at a market, the chances are the speaker would use a much lower variety.

The participants refer to the speaker and the hearer. Speakers' ethnic background, age, ability to use other languages, geographical background for example from urban or rural areas, type and level of education and their social circle will determine their repertoire. The variety they choose to use will also be determined by the hearers' repertoire.

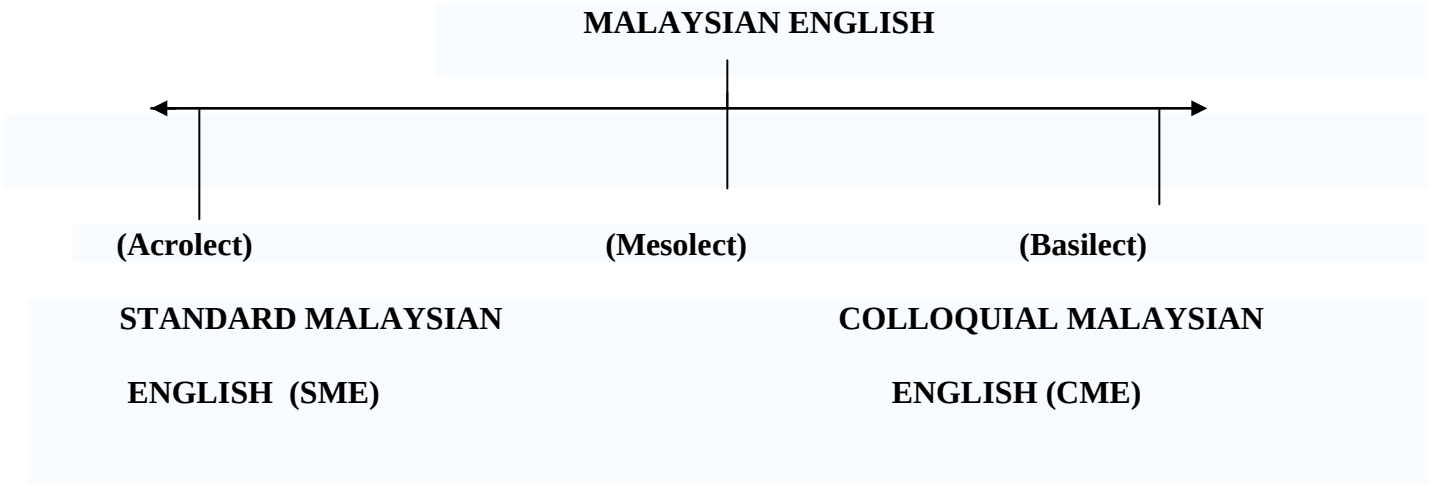
Thus, there is mobility among these sociolects defined by Baskaran (1994) that is, a person is able to move up or down shift along the continuum depending on whether one has the variety. Lee (1998) also found that most Malaysians who are proficient in English are able to move from MCE to SME.

MCE		SE
Where you going? or You going where?	→	*Where are you going?*
How you going?	→	*How are you going?*

(Preshous, 2001)

For example, they may be able to use both the standard and non-standard forms of questions. In short, there is a lectal cline in the use of Malaysian English (ME) ranging from the Colloquial Malaysian English (CME) to the Standard English (SE). This concept is supported by Gaudart, (2000: 47) recognizing ME as varieties with sub-varieties on a continuum as represented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1
Lectal Cline of Malaysian English



Standard Malaysian English (SME) is the acrolectal sub-variety of Malaysian English. It is generally used in the more formal domains particularly in written contexts such as journals and academic writings. This is the variety tested during examinations and is generally accepted as the 'correct' form. It can also be used in the spoken form especially to mark one's position and authority. The more acrolectal variety of ME was also used at the workplace to 'sound more professional' (Pillai, 2006: 73). It is also used by parents when talking to their children to show authority. Official speeches and the news are usually rendered using this variety and can be expected to be considered the most suitable variety to be taught in schools.

The mesolectal variety is commonly used in the informal domain (Benson, 1990) and is usually used in everyday conversations with family (Pillai, 2006), friends (Baskaran, 1994; Gaudart, 2000), in informal emails (Towndrow, 2006) and text messages. It is a sub-variety also referred to as Colloquial Malaysian English (CME) (Pillai & Fauziah, 2006). Additionally, this sub-variety is also often referred to as Manglish and sometimes Malenglish (Lee, 1998). CME is a non-standard variety and one of the characteristics of this variety is that it is often used to show camaraderie and solidarity that can identify a person ethnically, culturally and socially. Even educated speakers use this sub-variety for informal interactions (Benson, 1990). This is the English which is considered 'inappropriate' in the classrooms or in formal situations and it may even be deemed as offending and disrespectful. Towndrow (2006: 187) cited an example where a student sent a text message to his lecturer using Singapore Colloquial English. The lecturer was outraged by the language used in the text more so as the sender was a trainee teacher. Although the text message itself had nothing offensive, the use of non-standard English was felt to be inappropriate as a form to be used towards someone of higher authority. In other words, the choice of using standard or non-standard varieties is linked to the aspects of power and solidarity.

At the other end of the ME cline is the basilectal variety. It is usually used when the English is limited and often there is code mixing with their MT or Malay. Thus, the basilectal variety is considered the pidginized variety with few consistent structures or patterns. This sub-variety lacks the systematic pattern of the mesolectal variety.

The lower varieties are most exploited by creative writers (Lowenberg, 1992), the media and advertisers. This is because in the Malaysian context, these varieties are highly colloquial (Benson, 1990) and have the most ethnical distinctness and are thus often used to depict interaction in English among Malaysians, and this is often so in almost all regional

dialects because of the rich cultural and MT influence over the English in a country (Magura, 1985).

Upon exploring the notion of what is SE or rather what it is not, and its role in ME, it is necessary to identify the syntax of question forms in SE as it would be the crux of this research.

2.4 QUESTION FORMS IN STANDARD ENGLISH

There are basically four types of question forms in the direct form (Leech & Svartvik, 1986), *yes/no* questions, *wh* questions, questions in the statement form and tag questions.

2.4.1 *YES/NO* QUESTIONS

These questions seek a *yes/no* response. They start with an auxiliary in front of the subject as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2
Structure Of *Yes/No* Questions

Auxiliary	Subject	Predicate
Do	you	have a job?
Have	they	answered all the questions yet?
Is	he	having a problem?

When not contracted, the 'not' remains after the subject. For example

(1a) *Are you not happy?*

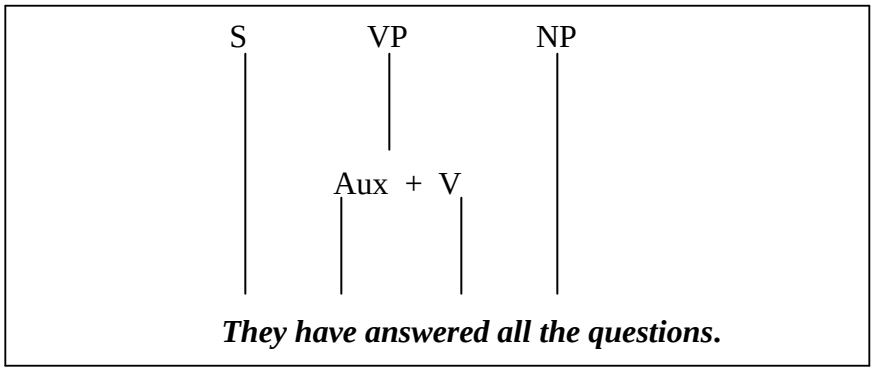
(1b) *Will we not go there?*

The negative is attached to the auxiliary in contracted forms. For example:

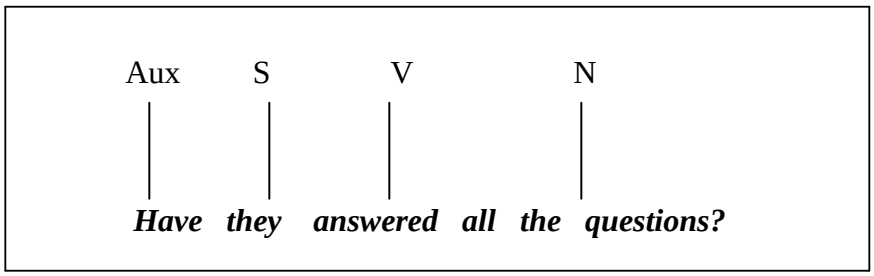
(2a) *Aren't you happy?*

(2b) *Won't we go there?*

Negative *yes/no* questions in the spoken form are more commonly used in the contracted form. Therefore in a statement the word order will be as follows:



However in an interrogative form, the position of the auxiliary is inversed.



Similarly, the present perfect tense is used when enquiring about something in the recent indefinite past (Leech & Svartvik, 1986: 66). When these questions are asked the response is either a negative (*no*) or an affirmative (*yes*). However when the question is asked in the negative, there is an element of disbelief or even shock in the question particularly when the non-contracted form of the auxiliary and the negative is used. For example, *"Have they not done their work yet?"*

The person asking the question has presumed that 'they' had been given sufficient time and the fact that they may not have finished is unexpected. However, the answer can still only be a *yes* or a *no* (Leech & Svartvik, 1986: 113). Thus, a *yes/no* question without an assumption and not aimed at confirming the information is usually framed in the positive form. This also applies to *yes/no* questions beginning with modals as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3
Yes/No Questions Beginning With Modals

Modal	Subject	Object
Can	they	answer the questions?
Could	he	complete the race within four minutes?
Will	the Prince	ask her to the ball?
May	I	go out?
Shall	we	go to the mall?
Should	we	ask for directions?

In the negative form, these questions will be

(3a) *Can't they answer the questions?*

(3b) *Can they not answer the questions?*

(4a) *Couldn't he complete the race within four minutes?*

(4b) *Could he not complete the race within four minutes?*

(4a)) *Won't the Prince ask her to the ball?*

(4b) *Will the Prince not ask her to the ball?*

(5a) *May I not go out?*

(This modal does not have a contracted form. The negative form is more often used with the modal *can* for example, *Can I not go out?)*

(6a) *Shan't we go to the mall?*

(6b) *Shall we not go to the mall?*

(7a) *Shouldn't we ask for directions?*

(7b) *Should we not ask for directions?*

Though both the pairs have the same meaning, there is a 'stronger' impact in the second question where there is no contraction of the negative and modal.

In American English *do* tends to be used with *have* as the main verb compared to British English. For example

(8a) *Do you have her address?* (American English)

(8b) *Have you her address?* (British English)

(Schrampfer, 2003: 126)

2.4.2 *WH* QUESTIONS

These questions begin with one of the *wh* forms such as *who, whom, whose, what, when, why, where, which* or *how*. *Wh* questions (unlike *yes/no* questions) tend to have a falling intonation (Leech & Svartvik , 1986: 284). The two forms of *wh* questions are forms with a subject and forms without a subject as shown in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4
Structure Of *wh* Questions

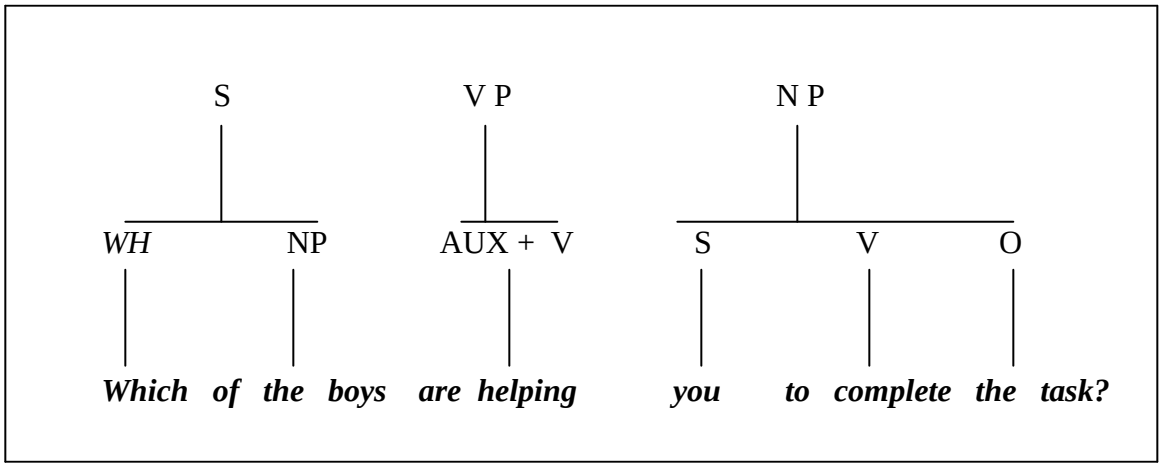
forms	***wh* or *wh* phrase**	**auxiliary**	**subject**	**predicate**
forms with a subject	When	do	you	go for recess?
	What kind of results	do	you	think you will score?
forms without a subject	Who	will	X	go on the trip?
	Which of the boys	are	X	helping you to completed the task?

X = omission of subject

The *wh* form is usually positioned at the beginning of the question. However, if there is a noun or a noun phrase, the *wh* will be placed before this. Thus, the question above can also be produced as:

To complete the task which of the boys are helping you?

The main question is "Which of the boys are helping you?" which begins with a *wh* form as represented in the following tree diagram.



The purpose of a *wh* question is to enquire, that is it is an information seeking question. The respondent will have made no pre-assumptions before asking these questions.

2.4.3 QUESTIONS IN THE DECLARATIVE FORM

Any statement can be turned into a question by ending the statement with a rising intonation. For example, in *yes/no* questions, there is the inversion of the auxiliary with the subject. However, in informal speech, this inversion may not occur. In such structures, the statement ends with a rising intonation turning it into a question as shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5
Structure Of Questions In Declarative Form

subject	auxiliary	predicate
You	are	going to school today?
They	will	visit the mall today?

Thus, a question such as *"Are you going to school today?"*

will be asked as *"You are going to school today?"*

Like other *yes/no* questions, the underlying meaning of the negative question has an assumption or an expectation attached to it. For example, the negative of the question would be *"You are not going to school today?"*

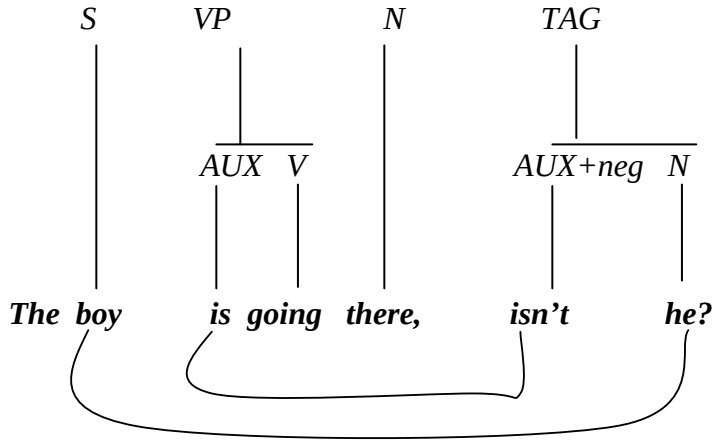
The speaker in this situation has assumed that the person he is speaking to is going to school today. There is an element of disbelief as one may have made a wrong assumption. The tone of these questions is informal and the negative forms will assume the response to be a '*no*' (Leech & Svartvik, 1986: 112). Many varieties of English around the world produce questions in the declarative form (see Section 2.6.1). This structure occurs more frequently in the spoken context compared to the written form.

2.4.4 TAG QUESTIONS

A tag question is a shortened *yes/no* question. It is constructed when the speaker has made an assumption or has a belief and the purpose of the question is to confirm this (Leech & Svartvik, 1986: 112). In other words, the purpose of a tag question is to confirm a belief or assumption. The speaker uses a tag question because he expects the hearer to agree with him. Therefore, he is giving his idea at the same time by attaching a tag to what would be a statement. The difference between a tag question and a *yes/no* question is that in the latter, no idea or opinion is given. For example in a question *'Have you read The Pearl?'*, the speaker has no idea if the hearer has read the book. However if he says,*'You have read The Pearl, haven't you?'*, there is an underlying assumption that the interlocutor must have read the book. There are two types of tag questions: negative tag questions and positive tag questions.

2.4.4.1 NEGATIVE TAG QUESTIONS

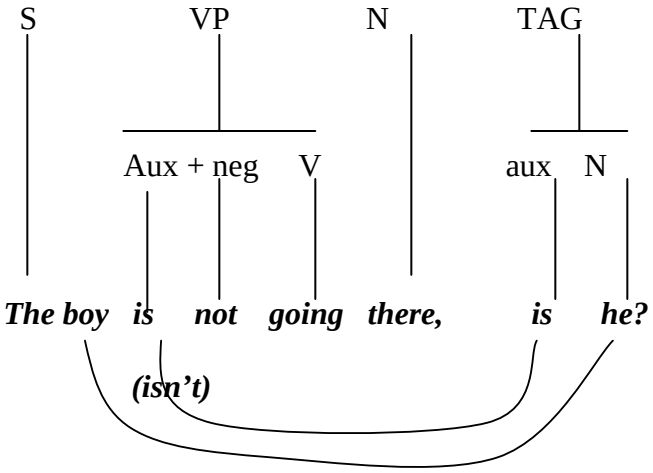
In a negative tag question, the corresponding negative of the auxiliary and the subject (in the pronoun form) make the tag for the affirmative statement as shown in the following tree diagram where the negative of the auxiliary *is* is used in the tag with the pronoun *he* for *the boy*:



In this example, the speaker has assumed that the boy is going to a certain place and the purpose of the question is to seek confirmation about this matter.

2.4.4.2 POSITIVE TAG QUESTIONS

In a positive tag question, the corresponding auxiliary in the positive form and the subject (in the form of a pronoun) form the tag of negative statements as shown in the tree diagram below:



The speaker is under the impression that the boy is not going to a particular place and the purpose of the question is to seek confirmation from the interlocutor. Thus, in tag questions, the speaker must have a belief or an assumption and the purpose of the question is to confirm this.

Thus, the difference between a positive and a negative tag question lies in the assumptions made. In the example of a negative question form, the speaker has assumed that the boy is going to the particular place while in the example of the positive tag question, the speaker has assumed that the boy is not going to the place. However the purpose of the question remains the same, that is, to confirm a doubt.

2.4.5 QUESTIONS IN THE INDIRECT FORM

Indirect questions refer to how a message from another person is conveyed. . When a question is in the indirect form, the auxiliary and subject must be inversed from how the initial question was asked as shown in the following examples:

Direct: *(9a) She asked him, "Must I complete this form?"*

Indirect: *(9b) She asked him if she must complete the form.*

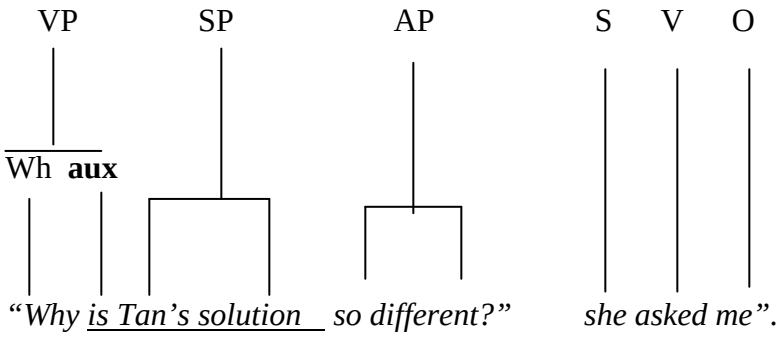
{the auxiliary '*must*' and the subject '*she*' is inversed) Another example would be

Direct: *(10a) She asked him, "Which movie is Sally going to watch?"*

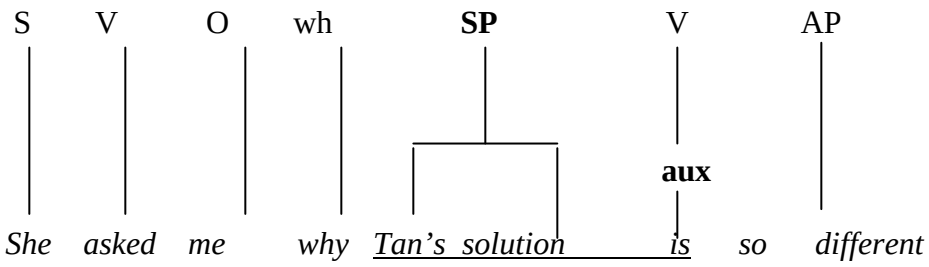
Indirect: *(10b) She asked him which movie Sally is going to watch.*

The indirect form does not indicate the exact word order of the initial utterance and therefore the written form will not have the inverted commas. The change from direct form into indirect form is represented in the following tree diagrams:

Direct form

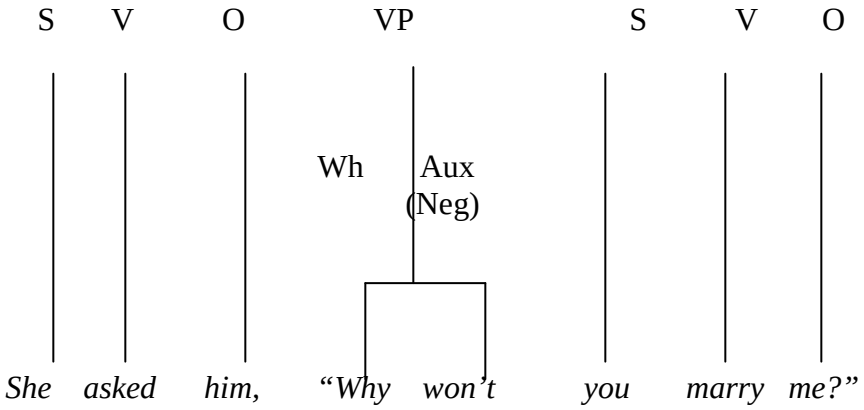


Indirect form:

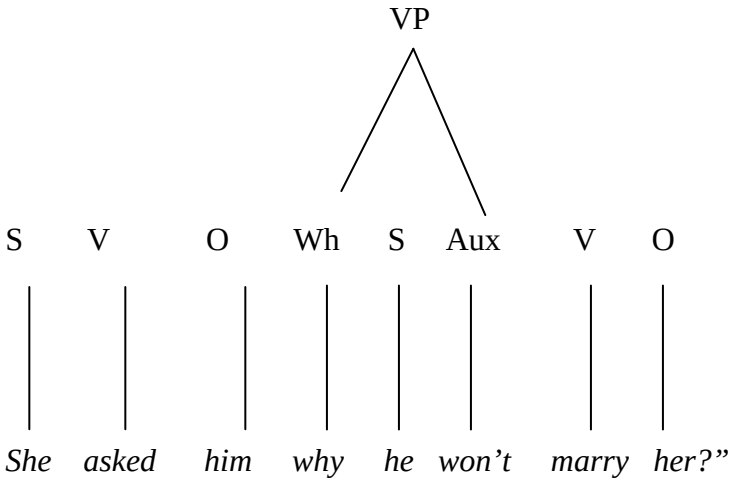


The subject phrase *'Tan's solutions'* is inversed with the auxiliary *is* to form a question in the indirect form. Another example from Leech and Startvik (1986: 119) is as follows:

Direct form



Indirect form



Thus, to know if in an indirect *wh* question the subject and the auxiliary are inversed, the direct *wh* question form must first be analysed. If a standard direct *wh* question is used then there must be an inversion of the subject and the auxiliary in order to form a standard indirect question. If this inversion does not take place, then the indirect form becomes non-standard structure as in the example above (*Why you won't marry me?).* Thus, a standard indirect form can be produced if the position of the subject and the auxiliary in the direct form is maintained. However, if the speaker attempts to inverse the

subject and the auxiliary from the initial position, the indirect question formed will be a non-standard one. Figure 2.6 will further explain occurrence.

Figure 2.6
The Different Forms In Direct And Indirect Questions

Indirect forms / direct forms	Subject and auxiliary is inversed	Position of the subject and auxiliary is maintained
Why won't you marry me? (**standard**)	*She asked him why he won't marry her?* (**standard**)	*She asked him why won't he marry her.* (**non-standard**)
Why you won't marry me? **(Non-standard)**	*She asked him why won't he marry her.* **(Non-standard)**	*She asked him why he won't marry her?* **(standard)**

Another aspect of indirect questions where a question is embedded into another for example is structures such as *11b, 11a* and *11b* have the same intended meaning.

(11a) *What is your name?*

(11b) *Can you tell me what your name is?*

The speaker intends for the hearer to state his name although syntactically, the phrase *'Can you tell me'* makes these structures *yes/no* questions whereby the answers can be a *yes* or a *no* for both *11a* and *11b*. However such answers would not be appropriate because it is clearly understood that the speaker does not intend to know if the person is capable of telling his name but rather to know the person's name. Other examples are as follows:

(12a) *Why are you late?*

(12b) *Can you tell me why you are late?*

(13a) *When can you see me**?***

(13b) *Can you tell me when you can see me?*

Thus, it is almost like there is a question embedded in another question. The questions in *(12b)* and *(13b)* are embedded in other questions beginning with the phrase '*Can you tell me'*. The use of such indirect forms could be linked to power and social distance, and to increase politeness factors.

According to Brown and Levinson (as cited in Slembrouck, 2006), politeness strategies are often used to make the hearer more comfortable. Here the concept of the word 'face' refers to one's self-esteem. Indirect questions can be used in order to reduce face threatening acts (FTA) (Slembrouck, 2006) and as a negative politeness strategy *(11b)* to create distance and power *(10b).*

2.5 QUESTION FORMS IN MALAYSIAN ENGLISH

Question forms in CME are said to have particular characteristics (Baskaran, 2005) perhaps due to the process of simplification of syntactical structures and also due to influence from local languages such as Malay, Chinese dialects and Tamil. Baskaran (2005) uses an impressionist approach to identify the mesolectal and basilectal variety of ME while Pillai (2006) discusses examples of ME of L1 speakers.

2.5.1 *WH* QUESTIONS IN ME

Firstly there tends to be no subject- auxiliary inversion in *wh* questions (Baskaran 2005). For example:

(14) *Where is he going?* in SE may become

(14a) *Where he is going?* or

(14b) *Where he going?*

(14a) is common in the mesolectal ME while *(14b)* reflects the basilectal ME.

According to Baskaran (2005), translated in Malay, the question would be

Dia sedang pergi ke mana? or *Ke mana (kah) dia sedang pergi?*

(He ing go to where?) or *(To where he ing go?)*

which becomes

(He going where?) or *(Where he going?)*

Thus, there occurs the copula ellipsis where the auxiliary '*is*' is left out of the question form (Baskaran, 2005: 147). Other examples cited in Pillai (2006) obtained in family discourse are:

(15a) *What time you leaving?*

(15b) *Who you going with?*

(15c) *Where you going?*

Similarly, ellipsis was found in Singapore English; a variety of English which shares similar characteristics to ME because of shared history, geographical proximity and shared socio-cultural backgrounds. Some of the examples cited by Gupta (undated) were:

(16a) *Why you so stupid?*

*(*Why <u>are</u> you so stupid?)

(16b) *Why she never come here?*

(Why <u>didn't</u> she come here?

(16c) *How to fix?*

(How <u>are</u> we to fix this?)

Secondly, in ME *wh* questions, the *wh* forms can take the final position as in:

(17a) *He is where?*

17b) *He has what?*

(17c) *They had eaten when?*

(17d) *She will come how?* (Baskaran, 2005: 145)

However, they are utterances to show disbelief rather than to ask questions or seek clarifications. These forms seem to have an underlying meaning of surprise or shock or they may be direct translations from local languages for example Chinese. Similar constructions can be found in Singapore English.

(18a) *You go where?*

(Where are you going?) (Gupta, 2005)

(18b) *Tan Yen Yen did what?*

(What did Tan Yen Yen do?) (Ghim, 1995: 169)

The reason for the *wh* forms taking the final position may be the result of the MT such as Tamil and Malayalam. For example

(19)	*Avəl*	*eŋge?*		(Tamil)
	She	*where?*	instead of	*Where is she?* (Baskaran, 2005: 161)

Another example would be as follows:

(20a)	*Aven*	*eppo*	*padikiraan?*	(Tamil)
(20b)	*Aven*	*eppela*	*padikia?*	(Malayalam)
	He	*when*	*study?*	

In all these examples, there is the ellipsis of the auxiliary and the *wh* form is not at the frontal position. Thus, the two occurrences may be due to the influence of the MT or Malay depending on which has a greater influence on the speakers. However, in Pillai (2006) no example of the *wh* in the final position was cited. Probably this occurs more frequently in the basilectal variety of ME but is not common among the L1 speakers who may be on the higher end of the mesolectal variety.

2.5.2 *YES/NO* QUESTIONS IN ME

The *yes/no* questions in ME follow the same order as the sentence form of Subject - Verb - Object with tags / particles such as *or not* or *yes or not*. In the basilectal form Baskaran (2005) states that the enclitic *ah?* is added at the final position and uttered with a falling intonation. For example

(21) *Was Patrick late?* (SE)

(21a) *Patrick was late or not?*

(21b) *Patrick (was) late, ah?*

(22) *Is she coming?* (SE)

(22a) *She is coming or not?*

(22b) *She coming, ah?*

(Baskaran, 2005: 149)

Similar examples were cited by Pillai (2006)

(23) *Still doing your homework ah?*

(Are you still doing your homework?)

Again, there is ellipsis of the copula and there is no inversion of the auxiliary and the subject and particles are added such as *or not* and *ah* which could be the influence of Malay or the MT. For example:

(24) *Does she like that cake?* which can be translated into Malay to

Dia suka kuih muih itu **atau tidak**?

*(She likes cake that **or not)***

The declarative form of this question is

(25) *Dia suka kuih itu.*

(She likes cake that.).

The phrase *atau tidak* is added to change it into the interrogative form and this seems to have transferred on to ME where a statement like *'She likes the cake'* is changed into the interrogative form by adding the particle *or not*.

Another example would be the question '*Has he bathed?'* In the sentence form it is as follows:

(26) *Aven kulithein* (Tamil*)*

(He has bathed) *or*

*Aven kulitchu (*Malayalam)

When the sentence is changed into the interrogative form it becomes:

*Aven kulihuvit**aia**?* *(*Tamil)

Aven kulitchu**a**? *(*Malayalam)

The verb ends with the sound /a/ in Tamil and Telugu while in Malayalam it is a close by /כ:/. This may be the reason for the use of the particle 'ah' at the end of the question form in ME. There are also examples cited by David (2000: 70) where there is ellipsis of the auxiliary 'did' and then the verb would be in the present tense.

(27a) *Chong won the art competition?*

(Did Chong win the art competition?)

(27b) *Tina, today you and I are going for a movie and a walk down the beach?*

(Tina, are you and I going for a movie and a walk down the beach today?)

The absence of the subject and object pronouns (Tan, 2003) is common in both Singapore English and ME. This is also referred to as 'pro-drop' and is particularly evident when the referent is physically present and there is situational evidence to whom the statement refers to (Leong, 2003).

An example cited is when a child asks his parents if he can watch television as he had completed his homework.

(28) *Can watch TV or not?* (Leong, 2003: 18)

The parents are aware that the child is asking permission to watch television as he has completed his homework.

Another example is of two friends awaiting a common friend who has yet to turn up for an appointment. One then calls the friend they are waiting for.

(29) *Cannot come ah?* (Leong, 2003: 19)

It is clear to the hearer that the question refers to the person they are waiting for.

2.5.3 TAG QUESTIONS IN ME

The purpose of a tag question is to seek confirmation whereby the interlocutor agrees or disagrees with the initial statement before the tag. Hudson (1975) cited in Baskaran (2005:141) states that *isn't it* and *is it* are fossilized tag forms in ME. This means that these two tags are generalised tags and all positive tags in ME will be *is it* while all negative tags would be *isn't it.* Lee (1995, cited in Kuang, 2002) states that the tag *is it* is similar to the *kan* in Malay which is often used to soften the interrogative. The word *kan* is the abbreviation for the word *bukan* which means *isn't it.* Figure 2.7 shows the differences in the question tag forms in SE and ME.

Figure 2.7
Differences in SE and ME Tag Questions

SE	ME
You have eaten, haven't you?	*You have eaten, isn't it?*
You haven't eaten, have you?	*You have not eaten, is it?*
You are going to help him, aren't you?	*You are going to help him, isn't it?*
You are not going to help him, are you?	*You are not going to help him, is it?*

Thus, the only tag that will be used in interrogatives seeking a confirmation or when assumptions are made should be either *is it* or i*sn't it* depending if the earlier statement is a positive or a negative statement. The tag '*or not'* is attached to a sentence and the meaning is that there is no assumption attached to it (Baskaran, 2005: 149). For example, in the question, *Sarah is going to school today, or not?,* the speaker does not know if Sarah is going to school and as such the purpose of the question is to enquire and not to confirm a doubt. Another example can be found in Siew Yue Killingley's short story 'Everything Arranged' (cited in Lowenberg, 1992). It is a situation where two lovers in college are finding ways to keep in touch during the holidays. The girl, Rukumani says, "*This time you can write or not?"* Here Rukumani does not know if the boy, Devanayagam is able to write to her during the holidays. Thus, this would be a *yes/no* interrogative and not a tag question. However the tag *'yes or not'* when attached to a declarative has an assumption attached to it. For example:

*(30a) Sarah is going to school**, yes or not?*** or

*(30b) Sarah is not going to school, **yes or not**?*

In *(30a)* the speaker has assumed that Sarah is going to school and the purpose of this question is to seek confirmation from the hearer. In *(30b)* the speaker has assumed otherwise that Sarah is not going to school and the purpose of the question is also to seek confirmation but the tag does not change. This means that the positive and the negative declaratives have the similar tag. David (2000: 70) gives an example of tag questions by a Malaysian youth.

(31) One Utama is a shopping mall, right?

(One Utama is a shopping mall, isn't it?)

Ghim (1995: 167) also provides a similar example.

(32) *And that is for the children, right?*

(And that is for the children, isn't it?)

Thus the purpose of using the tag is still to confirm but there seems to be a trend to use other strategies in order to make that confirmation such as the use of the word *right* or the phrase *yes or not*.

2.5.4 THE USE OF PARTICLES

The use of particles in Singapore English has been examined by Lim (2007), Wong (2004), Gupta, (1992) and Fong (2003). Zhiming (1995) worked particularly on the particle *already* and Wee (2002) on the particle *lor*. Some of the other particles *are lah, ah, what, hor, leh and ma*. The indications are that there is great influence of the South Chinese dialects on the use of particles in the colloquial variety of Singapore English (Gupta, 1992; Zhiming, 1995). However, Baskaran (1987) attributes the particle *ah* in ME to the influence of Tamil but there was no evidence for this. Gupta (1992) states that in Singapore English, the particle *a* or *ah* is a tentative particle to be used to assume and suggest. However, this particle has two roles: a pragmatic role as a tag or hedge and a syntactical role as a comma (Low, 2003) to punctuate the statement or question. When this particle is used in question forms in Singapore English, the speaker expects an agreement (Lim, 2007). It can also be used to mark a question in the statement form. For example:

(33) *Then you got to do those papers again* ***a****?*

(So do you have to do those papers again?) (Lim, 2007: 460)

Without the particle *a* the question can be mistaken for a statement and the only other identifying factor to distinguish this utterance as a question would be the intonation that is used.

A study by Ghim (1995) on the spoken Singapore English found that some of the subjects were not able to produce standard forms of questions and resorted to the use of particles. For example:

(34) *Are there Saturday classes* ***or not****?* (Ghim, 1995: 167)

(Are there Saturday classes?)

The particle *or not* indicates that the speaker only requires a *yes* or a *no* answer and not an explanation. Another form of giving a confirmation is for example:

(35) *What do I do with them* ***is it****?* (Ghim, 1995: 168)

(What do I do with them?)

This is said in repetition of a question posed to the speaker (*What do you do with the three year olds?*). The purpose of the speaker repeating the question is to confirm that he has understood the question correctly.

The particle may be placed at the beginning, middle or end of an utterance but they are capable of many implications such as to express ones feelings, to emphasize a question form, to pause or to interrogate a person of lower authority. The significance of the use of particles is that the speakers' intentions can be conveyed 'without being too direct and abrasive' (Kuang, 2002: 150). This would mean that the use of these particles may be a 'face saving strategy' or to 'emphasize solidarity'.

2.5.5 VARIATIONS IN INDIRECT QUESTIONS IN ME

According to Baskaran (2005: 148), the ME indirect *wh* interrogative is identical to the direct interrogative. This would mean that *wh* questions in ME in the direct form is not inversed and thus they are similar in the word order in the indirect form. Examples of these are shown in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8
Direct and Indirect Questions forms in SE and ME

	Direct form	Indirect form
SE	*Where are you going?*	*She asked me where I was going*
ME	*Where you are going?*	*She asked me where I was going*

However, it could be that it is the indirect structure that is frequently not inversed while the direct form uses SE. For example:

Direct form *Where **are you** going?*

Indirect form *She asked me where **was I** going.*

Non inversions in the indirect form was found by Pillai (1997) based on classroom observations.

(36) *Can anyone tell me **what is** the meaning of delinquency?*

(Can anyone tell me what the meaning of delinquency is?)

Variations are often considered a result of the influence of the MT. However there are similarities among varieties which do not share any other common language other than English. Thus, these variations could be due to simplification of the language. The next section will show variations from SE in question forms as found around the world and which also commonly occur in Malaysian and Singaporean English.

2.6 QUESTION FORMS IN OTHER VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

Syntactical variations from SE in question forms are evident in all New Englishes around the world. These varieties share common features due to the simplification process, even though they have different local languages. So perhaps the main reason for a new variety is to simplify the language and not so much because of the MT influence perhaps

because for a user of a New English his "communicative competence governs his actual performance" (Kandiah, 1998: 97).

2.6.1 NON INVERSION IN YES/NO QUESTIONS

Bamiro (1995) cites examples from written West African English in creative writing and states that the variations are due to the influence of the MT. For example, in West African English there is no inversion of the auxiliary verb and the subject in *yes/no* questions (Bamiro, 1995: 194).

(37a) *You've decided finally then?*

(Have you decided finally then?)

The non inversion has enabled the use of the contraction of *'you've'* which is not possible if used with the inversion. Thus, this may be the result of a simplification process.

A similar example was found in Brunei English (Cane, 1994: 356) in speech in the informal domain as shown below:

(37b) *That girl is very talkative, ah?*

(Is that girl very talkative?)

An example of non inversion in a *wh* question form in a question regarding the time of a certain religious event was seen in Sridhar (1992: 143) who studied the English of an Indian immigrant (Telugu) settled in New York employed as a scientist at major research centre.

(37c) *And when this puja is to be started?*

(When is this puja to be started?)

Similar structures can also be found in Caribbean English where the question form is similar only that it is said with a rising intonation (McArthur, 2002: 232).

(37d) *You are coming?*

(Are you coming?)

2.6.2 ELLIPSIS OF THE AUXILIARY

Ellipsis often occurs when the auxiliary is omitted in a statement or question. Ellipsis of *do* in no auxiliary situations can be found in Indian English (Sridhar, 1992: 145)

(38a) *What the hell you think?*

(What the hell **do** you think?)

A similar ellipsis of the auxiliary *do* was found in Brunei English (Cane, 1994: 356)

(38b) *You want to come with me?*

(Do you want to come with me?)

Yes/no questions are formed upon the inversion of the auxiliary and the subject. However, in the case above, the statement form does not require an auxiliary. '*You want to come with me.'* is a declarative structure. It does not require the presence of the auxiliary *do*. Thus, when forming a question, there is a subject but there is no auxiliary to inverse. This could probably be the reason for the declarative word order to be retained in the question form. In English used in Hong Kong, McArthur (2002: 360) shows example of ellipsis of the auxiliary *is.*

(38c) *This first time you here?*

(Is this the first time you've been here?)

Here, there is ellipsis of the auxiliary occurring on two occasions. The auxiliary *is* is dropped at the initial part of the utterance and have been at the end of the utterance.

2.6.3 NON-STANDARD USE OF TAGS

As explained earlier in this chapter in 2.4.4, the purpose of a tag question is to confirm a doubt. There is an assumption made before the question is asked. The tag would consist of a positive or negative form of the auxiliary and a pronoun when SE is used. Non-standard forms of tag questions were cited in creative writings in West African English by Bamiro (1995: 195):

(39a) *Is funny, no?*

(It is funny, isn't it?)

The particle *no* functions as a tag that is to seek confirmation from the hearer. It is a positive statement and the tag used can be identified as a negative form. The speaker is attempting to seek confirmation by giving a negative tag.

Similarly in Indian English the words *yes* and *no* are often used as tags as cited in McArthur (2002: 321)

*(39*b*)* *He is coming, yes?*

(He is coming, isn't he?)

(39c) *She was helping, no?*

(She was helping, wasn't she?)

Such generalized question tags of *isn't it?* commonly seen in Malaysian and Singaporean English seem to also appear in Ugandaan English (Fisher, 2000: 60).

(39d) *You are coming tonight , isn't it?*

(You are coming tonight, aren't you?)

The use of a generic tag in is also common in South India (McAuthur, 2002: 322)

(39e) *They are coming tomorrow, isn't it?*

(They are coming tomorrow, aren't they?)

McArthur (2002: 281) also cites that the 'isn't it' tag is used in East African English

(39f) *He came here yesterday, isn't it?*

(He came here yesterday, didn't he?)

Thus, it can be seen that apart from the fossilized tag of *isn't it*, there is the use of words to indicate the negative (*no)* and the positive *(yes*) to show that the speaker's intention is to seek confirmation. Thus there is a process of simplification where the same tag is used for all (*isn't it*), or simply the words *yes* or *no* in place of the positive or negative tag.

2.6.4 NON INVERSION IN INDIRECT QUESTIONS

Non inversion in embedded questions in the indirect form, common in Singapore and Malaysian English was also found to be common in Indian English (Sridhar, 1992: 144).

(40a) How can I know what did you do?

*(*How can I know what you did?)

The main question is *What did you do?* Thus, to state that there is no possible way for the speaker to know what the hearer had done the phrase *'How can I know…'* is added. Therefore the speaker has just put both the phrases together.

In South African English it is also common to see basic interrogative structures maintained in indirect questions (Wade, 2007). Some examples in the written form were

(40b) I will also discuss how does the stress and intonation contribute in communication between different cultural groups.

(I will also discuss how the stress and intonation contribute in communication between different cultural groups.)

(40c) Nobody will come to me and ask what is the score.

*(*Nobody will come to me and ask what the score is.)

(40d) *She asked me why didn't I tell her I am busy.*

(She asked me why I didn't tell her that I am busy.)

Thus, in indirect questions as well as imbedded questions, the word order of the questions in the direct form is retained and the subject and auxiliary will not be inversed and this is evident in many varieties of English.

2.7 METHODOLOGY ON ELICITING DATA

Apart from the variations from SE that are found around the world, it is also important to note how these data is elicited. Fasold (1984) recommends the use of open questions in preliminary study and then use the results to construct a structured questionnaire. Thus, in this research a preliminary study would give insight to the topics the TG would most probably discuss. This can then form the domains to build the various question forms.

In most cases of study on the spoken varieties of English, the audio recording method is the most popular as used by Pillai (2006), Foley (2001), Habibah (2000), Venugopal (2000), Morais (2000), Rajadurai (2004). However, this means that the data comprises recordings from the media (Pillai, 2006; Rajadurai, 2004) or a smaller sample that does focus on a particular structure or characteristics. Thus, there are studies that use structured questionnaires whereby the respondents were required to write out their verbal responses. For example, Kreutel (2007) used this method to study on ways of disagreeing. Similarly, Lee (2006) also used such a method where respondents were asked to provide written responses to written stimulus but which are supposed to indicate their spoken responses. However it is doubtful how authentic these responses would be as when the verbal response is transferred into the written form, there may be changes whereby the respondent may attempt to self-correct. Thus, to increase the validity of the results, the

survey Lee (2006) conducted extended to around 500 native speakers of British, Singapore and Malaysian English. However, in the present study, there are very few participants as there are not many DSE in Malaysia and due to time constraints. As such, it is important to obtain the respondents' natural spoken variety of English. To achieve this, it would be best to give the respondents little time to respond as with interviews and audio recordings the respondents will not have time to self-correct in order to produce SE. This is supported by McDonough (1997) who states that interviews enable the respondents to use ordinary language with all its freedom and sensitivity. Nunan (1992) also lists interviews as a suitable tool to study linguistic variations. Thus, in order to obtain a spoken variety, a written response would not be appropriate. Interviews and audio recordings would be the most suitable tool. However, when dealing with a large amount of empirical data, questionnaires have the added advantage of being suitable for quantitative analysis.

2.8 CONCLUSION

To sum up, English today is more frequently used as a communication tool among non-native speakers. The spread of English, has resulted in the emergence of many new SE. Thus, ME as an emerging variety is a variety with sub-varieties on a continuum ranging from SE to MCE. Baskaran (1994), Benson (1990), Gaudart (2000) have found the MT influence to be most influential over one's variety of English. However, as varieties which share no similar MT or cultural and geographical background seem to have similar variations, it could also be that these variations are due to the process of simplification.

At present, most studies on ME focus on the English of non-DSE. Pillai (2006) studied the use of ME by L1 speakers of English in the domain of the home focusing more on parent and child interactions. There has also not been any study on ME focusing on

question forms. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap to explain the question forms found in ME as used by teenage DSEs.

The following chapter will explain how the study was carried out. It will begin by identifying the DSE. The methodology for data elicitation and quantification will also be discussed.