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TESI DI LAUREA

**THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN
ENGLISH ON BRITISH ENGLISH**

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A mamma

“Two people separated by a common language”

George Bernard Shaw

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Introduction

Although linguists admit that the change in the British English language comes, nowadays, from the American continent, there are some questions that constantly trouble the minds of those interested: how great this influence is, what areas of vocabulary it affects, whether this influence is perceived as a kind of corruption or it is a normal change, and what predictions could be made for the future of the English language in the given circumstances. Consequently, I state that this thesis is an attempt to find answers to all the above questions, given my interest in the two main varieties of the English language, British English and American English.

The first chapter begins with a short history of the English language expansion, followed by a description of the geographical, social, and functional varieties of the English language. In the geographical varieties section, varieties of English worldwide are described, beginning in the United Kingdom and continuing on the American continent, then in Australia and New Zealand, Asia and the Pacific, ending on the African Continent. The last varieties on focus are hybrid languages, the pidgins and creoles based on the English language. In the United Kingdom, British English is described first, with careful attention paid to Received Pronunciation (RP), the basis for comparison between varieties of English spoken worldwide. Then Irish, Scottish and Welsh English are analysed from both phonetic and lexical points of view. On the American Continent, I point out the features of English in the United States with its standard variety General American, through its relationships to British Received Pronunciation. It is

impossible today to provide an accurate history of American dialects, but I tried to make an analysis of America's four major regional dialects to the best of my possibilities. Canadian English comes next, followed by Caribbean English, especially Hawaiian and Jamaican English. English in Australia and New Zealand is described in next sub-chapter. English as it is spoken in South Asia is described with its major features with particular attention to the Indian sub-continent. The development of English as a second language in the Pacific Rim, represented by Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, is described with some specific features. On the African continent, English in South Africa and English in West and East Africa are described with their characteristic phonological and lexical patterns respectively. Social varieties of the English language are on focus next: first, Standard English, namely cultivated speech, common speech, and uneducated speech, followed by slang. The last section deals with ethnic varieties of English: Hispanic Americans, namely Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Chicanos (or Mexican Americans), Black English, African-American English, or Jewish English. Functional varieties of the English language close chapter one of the thesis. The headings are formal versus informal and written versus spoken language.

The main sections of the second chapter are a short history of the making of American English (divided into three periods¹ whose dates correspond to political and social events with important consequences for the language); and the features of American English (pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary) in relation to British English. The study of the pronunciation of American English focuses on the main aspects of phonetics and phonology: patterns of pronunciation, different pronunciations for individual words, stress, intonation, and rhythm. The specific features of spelling are based on a summary of the early attempts made over the years in order to simplify orthography. The principles

¹ The Colonial, the National, and the International period.

involved in the reformation of spelling - simplification, derivational uniformity, regularization, reflection of pronunciation - together with specific features of spelling, are next listed and exemplified. The vocabulary section begins some ways of vocabulary enrichment in American English through centuries. Then, some examples are brought forward by selected vocabulary differences between British and American English: same words, different or additional meanings in one variety; same concept, different terms or expressions (and here the differences belong to the most common fields of everyday vocabulary); and idiom differences and usage. The last section of the chapter deals with American English grammar. The differences between British and American English Grammar are not significant and belong to the following categories: verb, negative concord, tag questions, noun, pronoun, article, preposition, adverb, adjective, and collocations.

Chapter three focuses on the lexical influence of American English on British English. The information is gathered under the headings: American English versus British English; lexical influence of American English on British English; and extent of the influence of American English on British English. The sub-chapter 'Lexical Influence of American English on British English' is of most importance and begins by revealing the factors that favoured the influence of American English on 'world English':

- ❖ Magnitude of publishing industry in the U.S.
- ❖ Magnitude of mass media influence on a worldwide scale
- ❖ Appeal of American popular culture on language and habits worldwide
- ❖ International political and economic position of the U.S.

It expresses the influence of American English on British English: on one hand, on the everyday vocabulary, conversational words, phrases and expressions. On the other hand, in the case of the functional varieties, the American influence is present in the fields of computing, journalism, broadcasting (cinema, television

and theatre; wireless and music), advertising and sales, politics and economics, travelling and transport.

The findings of the sub-chapter 'Extent of Influence of American English on British English' have been grouped under several headings. The first one (Influence of American English on British English – fact or fiction?) definitely proves, with some examples, that there is a twofold influence of American English on British English: on the everyday vocabulary and on the vocabulary of functional varieties. The result was a political, educational, economic, or artistic international gathering during which American words or phrases passed into the traditional standard of British English. After establishing that the influence of American English on British English is a real fact, my concern was to show how significant this influence really is in the sub-chapter Debt of British English to American English. Finally, in the 'Influence of American English on British English – Corruption or Normal Change?!' section, I was interested in finding out if this influence of American English on British English threatens in any way the future of the English language in the United Kingdom. The distribution of American words and phrases according to everyday and functional varieties vocabularies shows that the greatest number belongs to the latter one. This shouldn't worry anyone as chances that words and phrases specific to this domain to pass to and remain in the basic word stock are very little. Furthermore, vocabulary of functional varieties is the norm for certain categories of people, whose number is relatively small in comparison to the mass of common people having nothing or very little in common with them. The concern, if any, should come from the words and phrases of everyday vocabulary. And again the concern is useless as this is a small number compared to the total number of words and phrases in the British vocabulary basic stock. Most of the American influence on British English is a matter of fashion which springs out of people's desire to admire something or somebody that seems better, more powerful, and even more attractive. And one must not forget that fashions come and go and rarely leave behind something that is not of good

quality and thus is bound to be adopted by everybody. Another interesting fact is that words and phrases that have long existed in British English acquired new meanings under the American influence. Terms that belongs to everyday vocabulary, computing, journalism, broadcasting, advertising and sales, politics and economics, and travelling and transport. Many are revivals of old words and phrases due to American influence. This leads to the conclusion that in this last case the American influence on British English cannot be regarded as a matter of fashion anymore, but as a matter of necessity. The problem of the lack of appropriate terms for different fields of activity was solved by extension of meaning or revival of terms already at hand in British English vocabulary. So it is obvious to say that the influence of American English on British English is not a matter of corruption, but of normal change, whether it is or not dictated by fashion or necessity.

Chapter I

History and Varieties of the English Language

Since its appearance the English language went through a big metamorphosis. New words have appeared while some went lost. Words have changed in meaning. The grammatical endings of words have been modified, and many such endings went out of use. There have been turns in word-order. Pronunciation modulated drastically. All together these transformations made the English language develop during the centuries. The history of the English language is usually divided into three broad periods which have been defined as Old English, Middle English and Modern English or New English. These periods overlap important socio-political changes: Old English covers from the first Anglo-Saxon settlements in England to about 1100, Middle English from about 1100 to about 1500, and Modern English from about 1500 to the present day.² Changes in a language are of various kinds yet those concerning pronunciation have caused the most disagreements. This is strictly related to the important role played by the influence of foreign idioms. Nations with high commercial, political, and cultural prestige tend to influence the others: for centuries, French influenced all other European languages, while today the English language is penetrating in countries all over the world, largely because of the power and prestige of the United States.³ For example, when the Romans conquered a large part of Europe, North Africa, and the Near East, their language, Latin, became spoken over wide areas as the language of administration and government. When the Roman Empire was overrun by barbarian invasions it began to disintegrate and both Latin and local language had been replaced by the invader's ones – in England, by Anglo-Saxon,

² Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 38-39.

³ *Ibidem*. p. 48.

in North Africa, by Arabic. Still in France, Italy, and Spain, Latin was enough rooted to survive invasions and evolved into new languages. This process occurred several times in human history, which is why we now have around six thousand different languages in the world.

1.1 The origins and development of the English Language

“ The languages brought into relationship by descent or progressive differentiation from a parent speech are conveniently called a family of languages.”⁴

English belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European languages. The original Indo-European parent language became extinct long before written records existed. It was spoken by prehistoric people active somewhere in Eastern Europe. The location of their origin, however, remains an unsolved problem. Sometimes between 3000 and 2000 BC this primitive people, still living in the Stone Age, began a series of migrations. During the centuries that followed, successive waves of Indo-Europeans moved westward into Europe and southward into Persia and India resulting in the obliteration of the earlier inhabitants' language by the invaders spoken idiom, in much the same way that, in the United States, English superseded the languages of the American Indians. The Celts are the first people in England about whose language we have definite knowledge. In the first century AD, the Romans began the conquest of Britain, and for the next several hundred years were in control of most of it. They conquered the Celts which were warring tribes established throughout the British Isles during the Iron Age. Romanization was proceeding on the island in much the same fashion as on the Continent, when the Roman occupation was cut short by the withdrawal of the legions, which were sent to buttress the tottering Roman

⁴ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 20

Empire against the onslaughts of the eastern barbarians. The language of the British Celts, therefore, was never completely replaced by Latin. It follows a period widely known in the European history as the *Migration Period* – a period of decline and fall, invasion and migration. After the Roman legions had withdrawn from Britain in 410 AD, Britain was still a Roman province and new settlements were made including the Anglo-Saxons, people from Germanic origins who migrated to the southern half of the island from continental Europe. The traditional account of the Germanic invasions goes back to Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, completed in 731, refers to the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles being the Germanic tribes conquering England. The struggle with the Romano-Celtic population was a long one. Britain had been exposed to Saxons attacks from as early as the fourth century, even while the island was under Roman rule. We know little about this struggle but the Anglo-Saxon domination was not assured until late in the sixth century. By about 700, the Anglo-Saxons occupied most of England and a part of southern Scotland. The Anglo-Saxon conquest was not just the arrival point of a ruling minority, but the settlement of a whole people. Their language remained a dominant one, and there are only a few traces of Celtic influence on Old English.⁵ The failure of Celtic to influence Old English is due to the fact that their language had no prestige compared with that of the conquerors. In addition to Saxons and Angles, the Germanic invaders of Britain included Jutes and Frisians. These groups were closely related in language and culture and regarded themselves as one people however a political union came slowly. In the late ninth century, King Alfred saved the South and West of England from the Danes, and in the tenth century Alfred's successors reconquered the North and the East. In the second half of the tenth century, Edgar not only ruled all England, but was recognized as overlord of Wales and Scotland as well. This moment on, the unity of England was durable and ruled as a single country. The unification of England under the West Saxon

⁵ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 100-101.

kings led to the recognition of the West Saxon dialect as a literary standard. The surviving texts from the Old English period are in four main dialects: West Saxon, Kentish, Mercian, and Northumbrian, certainly there were other dialects of which records have not been found⁶ (see map 1). West-Saxon became the literary standard of a united England. Many of the earlier manuscripts were destroyed in Viking conquests of the North and Midlands consequently we know little about the Anglo-Saxons until after their conversion to Christianity, which introduced them to writing. As elsewhere in medieval Europe, writing was in the hands of clerics, who often had strong views about what is proper to record and what is not. The conversion of England to Christianity begun in around 600 A.D. and with Christianity came writing. The English already had a writing form, runes, but these were used for short inscriptions. The English language of today is the language resulted from the history of the dialects spoken by the Germanic tribes who came to England in the manner described. English belongs to the Low West Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. This means in the first place that it shares certain characteristics common to all the Germanic languages. For example, it shows the shifting of certain consonants. It shows the adoption of a strong stress accent on the first or the root syllable of most words, a feature of great importance in all the Germanic languages because it is chiefly responsible for the progressive decay of inflections in these languages.⁷ In the course of time, the English language has undergone such a change so that one cannot read Old English without special study. The pronunciation of Old English words differs from that of their modern equivalents. Long vowels in particular went through considerable modifications. A feature of Old English is the rarity of words derived from Latin and the absence of French ones which form a large part of the present vocabulary. Nowadays they are essential to the expression of ideas and make up more than half of the words in common use. The Old English vocabulary was on the other hand almost purely

⁶ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. p. 104

⁷ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 45-46

Germanic. A large part of this vocabulary, moreover, has disappeared from the modern language.⁸ Changes continued at an increased speed, and in less than a century we can say that the Old period is over, and that Middle English has begun. As the name "Middle" suggests we are dealing with a period of transition. The Middle English period begins with the Norman Conquest at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, when the duke of Normandy, William the Conqueror, defeated King Harold and became king of England. The Norman invasion brought French into England. The Normans spoke a French influenced by Germanic dialect. This dialect was Norman French. This led to the unusual situation, in which the common people spoke one language, English, and the aristocrats another, Norman French. Naturally, the two languages gradually began to mix into what we now call Middle English. The Normans gradually became isolated from their French roots. In 1204 King John, a descendant of William the Conqueror, lost the province of Normandy to the king of France. At the end of the 14th century the Anglo-Normans no longer had any land left in France. The Normans decided to adopt English as their official language and in 1362 the Parliament was opened in England.⁹ This parliament was situated in Westminster, London and this resulted in the eventual dominance of the London dialect as the standard spoken and written language due to London's importance as a commercial centre and seaport, as well as its proximity to the court in Westminster. A process of standardization of English had begun. The changes of this period affected English in both its grammar and vocabulary. These were so extensive in each field that it is difficult to say which group is the more significant. Those in grammar reduced English from a highly inflected language to an extremely analytical one. Those in the vocabulary involved the loss of a large part of the Old English word-stock and the addition of thousands of words from French and Latin. This standard form of written English, established in the late Middle Age had a rival: Latin, which still

⁸ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 49

⁹ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. pp. 113-114

had great prestige as the language of international learning. During the *Reformation* religious disputes played a considerable part in the defeat of Latin. The translation of the Bible into English and the changeover from Latin to English in church services raised the prestige of English. Another factor in favour of English was the increased national feeling which led to a greater interest and pride in the national language. Latin slowly fell into the background. The linguistic jump from Middle English to Modern English is too great to make it in one step, and for this reason scholars identified a transitional period called *Early Modern English*. The Early Modern English period coincided with the Renaissance. This was a great time of learning and discovery. Many new words had to be found for all the new concepts that needed naming. At the time, there was a heated debate going on in England whether these terms should be coined from Anglo Saxon words or whether they should be borrowed from Latin and Greek, which were considered to be the languages of learning. The Latin and Greek promoters won the dispute (later called the *Inkhorn Controversy*), and a great number of Latin and Greek terms were borrowed into English. While English was establishing its local independency from Latin it was at the same time more under its influence than at any other time in its history. The Renaissance was the period of the rediscovery of classics in Europe. One result of this Latin influence on English was the large number of loan-words introduced into the language. There was a flood of Latin words. By 1600 Latin is the greatest source of loanwords in English. Some of the words were taken over bodily in their Latin form, with their Latin spelling, like *genius* (1513), *species* (1551), *cerebellum* (1565), *militia* (1590), *radius* (1597), *torpor* (1607), *specimen* (1610), *squalor* (1621), *apparatus* (1628), *focus* (1644), *tedium* (1662) and *lens* (1693).¹⁰ Some of the loans, however, were adapted, and given an English form. For example, the Latin ending *-ātus* is often replaced by *-ate*, as in *desperate*. The Latin ending *-itas* sometimes becomes English *-ity* (as in *immaturity*), and Latin *-entia* and *-antia* can appear as English *-ence*, *-ency* and *-ance*, *-ancy* (as in

¹⁰ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 175-176

transcendence, delinquency, relevancy).¹¹ Many of the loans belong to the general vocabulary, a few everyday words, but the vast majority are the kind of words that are introduced into a language through the medium of writing rather than speech. Although Latin was by far the main source of loanwords in the early modern period, a number were borrowed French. French loans included military words (*bayonet, feint*) and words from the life-sciences (*anatomy, muscle*), but also many words from the general vocabulary. A final factor which affected the vocabulary of English was the expansion of the British Empire. People came in contact with languages all over the world and borrowed freely from them, especially words denoting objects and phenomena that they themselves lacked words for. Examples include *taboo* (Polynesian), *bungalow, jungle and yoga* (Indian languages), *tea* and *ketchup* (Chinese), boomerang (Aboriginal languages), *moccasin* and *squaw* (Native American languages). Another two major factors that influenced the language and served to separate Middle and Modern English were the Great Vowel Shift and the advent of the printing press. No one knows why this vowel shift happened. As Charlton Laird has succinctly put it: "*For some reason, Englishmen started shoving tense vowels forward in their mouths. Then they stopped. And they have remained stopped. Nobody knows why they started or why they stopped.*"¹² There was evidently a chain reaction in which each shifting vowel pushed the next one forward: All the long vowels gradually came to be pronounced with a greater elevation of the tongue and closing of the mouth, so that those that could be raised were raised, and those that could not without becoming consonantal (*i, u*) became diphthongs. The "o" sound of *spot* became the "a" sound of *spat*, while *spat* became *speet*, *speet* became *spate*, and so on. The "aw" sound of *law* became the "oh" sound of *close*, which in turn became the "oo" sound of *food*. Chaucer's *lyf*, pronounced "*leef*," became Shakespeare's *life*, pronounced

¹¹ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. p. 179

¹² Bryson B., *The Mother Tongue - English And How It Got That Way*, William Morrow & Co, 1990, New York. p. 84

"*lafe*," became our *life*. Not all vowels were affected. The short *e* of *bed* and the short *i* of *sit*, for instance, were unmoved, so that today we pronounce those words just as the Venerable Bede¹³ 1.200 years ago. The other major factor in the development of Modern English was the advent of the printing press. William Caxton brought the printing press to England in 1476. This brought standardization to English. The dialect of London, where most publishing houses were located, became the standard. Spelling and grammar became fixed, and the first English dictionary was published in 1604. From the seventh century onwards, there was a growing feeling that English needed to be standardized, refined, and fixed therefore between 1650 and 1760 there was a strong movement in favour of the establishment of an English academy. The academy's functions would be to correct the English language and to lay down the correct usage. Proposals had no consequences until the eighteenth century when the first comprehensive dictionaries of English and numerous English grammars appeared. As a result, there emerged a sharpened sense of correctness in relation to a standard form of English, and this came to be encountered worldwide, as speakers of educated British English gained influence throughout the British Empire. At the same time, the question of standards became more complex, with the arrival of American English as an alternative global presence. The seventeenth century saw the triumph of the scientific outlook in England. Scientists needed technical terms for an enormous number of things so the most obvious influence has been in the expansion of the scientific vocabulary. It has been estimated that the technical vocabulary of the natural sciences now runs into several millions of items. In forming this enormous vocabulary, scientists were able to draw on various sources. One is to take a word already existing in every day's use and give it a special scientific meaning, which is what the chemists have done with *salt*, the botanists with *fruit* and *pollen*, and the physicists with *current*, *force*, *gravity*, *power*, *resistance* and *work*. Another way is to take over words from other languages, especially from Latin and Greek. An

¹³ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. p. 214

extremely common way of providing new scientific words is to invent them, using Greek and Latin material. From Greek, for example, are *allelomorph*, *anode*, *barometer*, *cathode*, *electrolysis*, *electron* and *zoology*. From Latin elements are formed such words as *accumulator*, *atmosphere*, *habitat*, *hibernate*, *invertebrate* and *transducer*. From this period come many words to do with the human body, like *abdomen*, *skeleton*, *tendon*, and *tibia*, and also a number of names of diseases.¹⁴ In the seventeenth century words were predominantly medical and biological also physics and chemistry. In the eighteenth century came an enormous expansion in the vocabulary of the life-sciences, for this was the age of biological description and classification. In our century the flow has continued in the newer fields of genetics and nuclear physics. The expansion of the English vocabulary, however, has not been confined to scientific words. The main tools used to expand the vocabulary in the Late Modern Period have been *affixation*, *compounding*, and *conversion*. The prefix *un-* was widely used, as in *unforgiving*, *unfunny*. The prefix *de-* was used especially for forming new verbs, like *decarbonize*.

A common suffix is *-ize*, which is used to form verbs from adjectives like *nationalize*, and from nouns like *carbonize*.¹⁵ Other active suffixes in Late Modern English include *-able*, *-ee*, *-er*, *-ie* or *-y*, *-ist*, *-ly* and *-wise* (often used in American English for forming new adverbs). Compounding, the formation of new words from free morphemes, has also played a considerable part in the Late Modern Period giving words like *airmail*, *graveyard*, *offside*, and *bandmaster*. A process which has been extremely productive in the Modern English period is that of conversion, the derivation of one word from another without any change of form. The word *market*, borrowed from Norman French in the twelfth century, was originally only a noun. Since the seventeenth century it has also been possible to use *market* as a verb. This kind of change is very rare in Old English, but is easy to find in Modern

¹⁴ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 215-217

¹⁵ Lerer S., *The History of the English Language volume II*, The Teaching Company, 2008, Virginia. pp. 77-78

English because of the loss of inflections. There is nothing in the word *market*, taken in isolation, to show what grammatical class it belongs to, whereas the Latin word *mercātus*, from which it is ultimately derived, shows immediately by its ending that it is not a verb. The process of conversion has been highly productive in Late Modern English, and especially in the past century. Examples of verbs formed from nouns are *to headline*, *to referee* and *to service*. New compound nouns are also formed from verbs: from the verb *to hand out* has been formed the noun *a hand-out*. Another process of expansion of the vocabulary is the process of shortening. This is done by cutting off the end of a word, as when *cabriolet* is shortened to *cab*, *photograph* to *photo* and *aeroplane* to *plane*. Occasionally the beginning of a word is cut off as when *omnibus* become *bus*.¹⁶

A few new words are made by *blending* that is, by combining a part of one word with another: *brunch*, breakfast and lunch, *motel*, motor hotel and *smog*, smoke and fog. Another means by which words come into the standard language is by borrowing from regional dialects or from the language of specialized groups. Such borrowings are called *internal loans*. An internal loan is not a new word, of course, but it is a new acquisition. Words also creep into the standard language from lower-class speech and from the argot of occupational groups: *gadget* was first heard of as sailors' slang in the late nineteenth century. Many words which were once considered 'low' or 'vulgar' are now fully accepted. Another source from which many English words have been derived in the past is the names of persons and places. For example, *sandwich* owes its use to the fact that the earl of Sandwich on one occasion put slices of meat between pieces of bread or the verb *to pasteurize* from the name of the French scientist Louis Pasteur. Like other processes of English word derivation this can be well illustrated in the nineteenth century and later. The word for *tabasco* sauce comes from the name of the Tabasco River in Mexico. *Camembert* comes from the village in France from which cheese of this type was originally exported. A *limousine* is so called from the name of a province

¹⁶ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 223-224

in France, and during the 1920s the American city Charleston gave its name to a dance. The word *colt* which names a firearm is merely the name of the inventor.¹⁷ This is one of the sources from which new words are still being derived. By the end of the eighteenth century, the standard language had become close to that of the present day in spelling, grammar and pronunciation so it is described as Modern English. But there continued to be massive increases in vocabulary as a consequence of the industrial and scientific revolutions and the globalization of the language – a process that would continue throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. The language future, like the language past, is set to be full of surprises. But to find out what has happened in history overall, the true winners and losers among human groups, we cannot ignore the outcomes of the language struggle.

¹⁷ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 288-289



Map 1 Old English dialects.

1.2 Geographical Varieties of the English Language

English is spoken today on all five continents as a result of colonial expansion in the last four centuries or so. The colonial era is now definitely over but its consequences can be seen clearly in the presence of English as an official and often native language in many of the former colonies. The distribution is a direct consequence of English colonial policy, starting in Ireland in the late twelfth century and continuing into the 19th century, reaching its peak at the end of the reign of Queen Victoria and embodied in the saying 'the sun never sets on the British Empire'. A language traditionally becomes an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people – especially their political and military power. Latin became an international language throughout the Roman Empire, but this was not because the Romans were more numerous than the peoples they subjugated. They were simply more powerful. And later, when Roman military power declined, Latin remained for a millennium the international language of education, thanks to a different sort of power – the ecclesiastical power of Roman Catholicism.¹⁸ The English language has always been on the move. As soon as it arrived in England from northern Europe, in the fifth century, it began to spread around the British Isles. However, English has become a world language because of its wide diffusion outside the British Isles, to all continents of the world, by trade, colonization, and conquest. The process began with English settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth in North America that soon gave to England the Atlantic seaboard. English settlements in the West Indies also began in the seventeenth century, in competition with French, Spanish, and Dutch colonizers.¹⁹ British domination of the Indian subcontinent dates from the second half of the eighteenth century. The beginnings of the English occupation of Australia also

¹⁸ Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. p. 7

¹⁹ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 189-190

occurred in the eighteenth century, after the American War of Independence. The American Revolution had deprived them of a convenient place to which to deport criminals. The prisons were overcrowded, and in 1787 it was decided to send several shiploads of convicts to Australia. Soon after, the discovery that sheep raising could be profitably carried on in the country led to considerable immigration, which later became a stampede when gold was discovered on the continent in 1851.²⁰ The expansion of British influence and power continued at an even greater rate during the nineteenth century establishing their rule in regions of West Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa. During the first half of the century British rule was also established in Singapore, British Guiana, New Zealand, and Hong Kong. In all these areas, British English has been influential, while in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, both taken by the United States from Spain at the end of the nineteenth century, the American form of English has dominated.²¹ And it is surely American political and economic power, even more than the diffusion of English through the former British colonies and dominions, that accounts for the dominant position of English in the world today. The development of so many varieties of English has produced problems and controversies about the language. This happened especially in former British colonies which became independent in the second half of the twentieth century and where Standard British English was the language of administration, and local departures. Given the numerous varieties of English in the world today, it is obviously impossible to do more than give a few examples of the differences between them. These can be considered under the headings of Phonology, Grammar and Vocabulary. The varieties of English both in Europe and overseas tend to show variation in certain key features, for instance special verbal structures to express aspectual distinctions are common to nearly all varieties in the developing world. The most obvious effects of English expansion are to be

²⁰ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 272

²¹ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 235-236

seen in the vocabulary. New territories mean new experiences, new activities, new products, all of which are in time reflected in the language. Trade routes have always been important avenues for the transmission of ideas and words.²² Pidgins and creoles, however, will be considered separately, since they are so different from the standard varieties of English.

1.2.1 English in the United Kingdom

The second half of the twentieth century was a period of great social and geographic mobility which enjoyed increased access to education and to broadcast media. All of this has had an impact linguistically. There's an incredible amount of regional diversity in the language spoken in the United Kingdom today. Britain also experienced a new wave of immigration, particularly from Commonwealth countries, with speakers bringing fresh dialects and accents that further enrich the linguistic landscape. Especially in urban areas, speakers of Asian and Caribbean descent have blended their mother tongue speech patterns with existing local dialects to produce wonderful new varieties of English, such as London Jamaican or Bradford Asian English.²³ In Britain the standard is called Received Pronunciation. The term stems from Daniel Jones at the beginning of the present century and refers to the pronunciation of English which is accepted - that is, received - in English society. Received Pronunciation, or RP for short, is an accent, not a dialect, since all RP speakers speak Standard English. In other words, they avoid non-standard grammatical constructions and localised vocabulary characteristic of regional dialects. RP is also regionally non-specific, that is it does not contain any clues about a speaker's geographic background. It does reveal a great deal about their social or educational background. RP is probably the most

²² Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 274

²³ <http://www.bl.uk/> , The British Library Board

widely studied and most frequently described variety of spoken English in the world, yet recent estimates suggest only 2% of the UK population speak it.²⁴ It has a negligible presence in Scotland and Northern Ireland and is arguably losing its prestige status in Wales. It should properly, therefore, be described as an English rather than a British accent. As well as being a living accent, RP is also a theoretical linguistic concept. It is the accent on which phonemic transcriptions in dictionaries are based, and it is widely used in competition with General American for teaching English as a foreign language.²⁵ In the United Kingdom there are also local forms of the language known as regional dialects. They go back to the earliest period of the language and reflect conditions that prevailed at a time when travel was difficult and communication was limited between districts relatively close together. Even among the educated the speech of northern England differs considerably from that of the south. The dialect of southern Scotland claims special consideration on historical and literary grounds. In origin was a variety of Northern English, but down to the sixteenth century it occupied a position both in speech and in writing on a plane with English.²⁶

English in Northern Ireland

The *Plantation of Ulster* began in 1609 and was the organised colonisation of Ulster – a province of Ireland – by people from Britain during the reign of King James I. Most of the colonists came from Scotland and England. Colonising Ulster with loyal settlers was seen as a way to prevent further rebellion, as it had been the region most resistant to English control during the preceding century. This part of the island was at that time exclusively Gaelic-speaking.²⁷ From the early seventeenth century onwards, Irish lands were confiscated and given to British who arrived in increasing numbers, bringing the English Language with them.

²⁴ Wells J. C., article published in Medina & Soto (eds.), *II Jornadas de Estudios Ingleses*, 1997, Universidad de Jaén, Spain. p. 19-28, <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/rphappened.htm>

²⁵ Trudgill P. & Hannah J., *International English*, Oxford University Press, 2002, New York. p. 9

²⁶ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 298

²⁷ Trudgill P. & Hannah J., *International English*, Oxford University Press, 2002, New York. pp. 98-99

Large numbers of settlers came from southwest Scotland and spoke a Scots dialect, while the remaining settlers came predominantly from the north and Midlands of England. Thus English in the northeast of the island developed in relative isolation from other English-speaking areas such as Dublin, Northern Ireland has continued to develop a linguistic tradition that is distinct from the rest of Ireland. Scots, Irish Gaelic, seventeenth century English and Hiberno-English, the English spoken in the Republic of Ireland, have all influenced the development of Northern Irish English, and this mixture explains the very distinctive hybrid that has emerged. Speech in the whole of Ireland is for instance rhotic. The vowel system of Northern Irish English more closely resembles that of Scottish English, rather than the English of England, Wales or the Republic of Ireland. Pairs such as *pull* and *pool* are often homophones, *boot* frequently rhymes with *foot* and phrases such as *good food* are pronounced with vowels of equal length. Many speakers - particularly older speakers in rural communities – retain pronunciations that are a throwback to much older, conservative forms of English, such as inserting a <y> sound after an initial <k> or <g> in words like *car* and *garden*, such that they sound a little like ‘kyarr’ or ‘gyarrden’.²⁸ Northern Irish English also has a very distinctive intonation pattern. A broad Northern Irish accent is characterised by a very noticeable tendency to raise the pitch towards the end of an utterance, even if the speaker is not asking a question.²⁹

English in Wales

Until the start of the eighteenth century the vast majority of the population of Wales spoke Welsh. The Industrial Revolution saw a massive influx of English speakers at the start of the nineteenth century. English began to replace Welsh as the mother tongue of many speakers in that part of the country. In rural west and north-west Wales, the population remained predominantly Welsh speaking,

²⁸ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 199-200

²⁹ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/find-out-more/northern-ireland/>, The British Library Board

although by the start of the twentieth century contact with English had increased to the point that most speakers were bilingual. By the start of the twentieth century Welsh was no longer widely spoken as a mother tongue in the densely populated urban areas in the south and along the border with England. Educational policy during much of the first half of the last century was a constant threat, although Welsh survived remarkably well in rural areas as a community language. In recent years the compulsory teaching of Welsh in schools, and a renewed sense of political and cultural pride has led to a steady increase in the number of Welsh speakers. The accent and dialect of South Wales is strongly influenced by the English spoken in neighbouring areas, such as Bristol and the West Country; the English spoken in Mid-Wales bears some comparison with that spoken in places like Shrewsbury and other Midlands border areas, and the English spoken in North Wales has a strong resemblance to the variety spoken on Merseyside. Welsh has also exerted a strong influence on the English spoken in Wales because many speakers were and are bilingual in English and Welsh, and because the two languages have existed side-by-side within the same communities for generations. The characteristic intonation pattern of Welsh is the pronunciation of the vowel in words such as *rude* and *threw* with an <iw> sound and the lack of a <z> sound among some speakers in North Wales. Another characteristic derives from the different stress placement, rhythm and timing of Welsh English.³⁰

English in Scotland

The type of English spoken in Scotland is more difficult to define than elsewhere in the UK. From the time of the Union of Parliaments in 1707, the official written language of Scotland became aligned with that of England. As such, Standard English has been used as the language of religion, education and government and so it became the socially prestigious form adopted by the aspiring middle classes. Unlike in England, however, Standard English continued to be spoken with a

³⁰ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/find-out-more/wales/>, The British Library Board.

variety of local accents. The linguistic landscape of Scotland is complex with a broad range of dialects. As in Wales, an ethnic Celtic language exists alongside English — in this case Scottish Gaelic. Lately Scottish Gaelic it's experiencing a revival as a result of a renewed sense of national identity and recent positive legislation. Gaelic has for some time been restricted geographically to areas of the Highlands and the Western Isles so the language suffered catastrophically in the eighteenth century. Nonetheless it remains a community language in some parts of Scotland, especially in the Hebrides.³¹

Scottish English is recognisable by its pronunciation: speakers do not make the same distinctions in vowel length made by speakers with other English accents and the vast majority of speakers in Scotland are rhotic — that is, they pronounce the <r> sound after a vowel in words like *farm*, *first* and *better*. Alongside Standard Scottish English, exists a local vernacular language, Scots, a dialect descended from Old English and closely related to Northumbrian which has maintained a strong presence, especially in rural communities.³² It has recently been officially classified as a 'traditional language'. The distinction between those who speak Scots and those who speak Standard Scottish English is rather blurred. Speakers tend to drift between the two alternatives depending on context so we might hear a version of Standard Scottish English with a local accent, with features that we associate with Scots: saying *wee* for 'little', or using grammatical constructions like *does nae* for 'doesn't' or simply sprinkling their speech with isolated archaic pronunciations such as rhyming *house* with *goose* or *head* with *heed*.³³

³¹ Trudgill P. & Hannah J., *International English*, Oxford University Press, 2002, New York. pp. 91-94

³² Burchfield R. W., *The Cambridge history of the English language- volume V English in Britain and Overseas: Origins and Development*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, Cambridge. pp. 33-36

³³ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/find-out-more/scotland/>, The British Library Board.

1.2.2 English on the American Continent

English in the United States

'North America speaks English.' — Answer attributed to German chancellor Bismarck, when asked by a journalist in 1898 to identify the defining event of his times.³⁴

In America there is a standard language which is referred to as General American. It is common in Midwest, but it is spoken everywhere in the USA. People who are said to speak "without an accent" are actually speaking with this levelled-out form of speech that developed from the mid-Atlantic stretching westward through the Ohio valley. It was usually said to be characterized by the flat *a* (in *fast, path, etc.*), the unrounded vowel in *hot, top, etc.*, the retention of a strong *r* in all positions, and less tendency than British English to introduce a glide after the vowels [e] and [o], *late, note*. Most features of Standard American developed from a levelled mixture of dialects mostly from the poorer classes along the middle Atlantic seaboard who immigrated west after the American Revolution to find a better life. Regional dialects in the United States reflect the elements of the language of the main immigrant groups in any particular region of the country, especially in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. There are four main regional variations of spoken American English: Northern (really north-eastern), Southern, Midland, and Western (See Map 2). The main differences between them are in accent and vocabulary.³⁵ Some, for example, know that a *dragonfly* can be called a *snake feeder* or a *mosquito hawk*, others that it can be called a *darning needle*. Some rhyme the word pairs *cot* and *caught* and *Don* and *dawn*, but others do not rhyme them. To say how they got into the swimming pool last summer, some would say *dived*, others *dove*. There are various possible pronunciations, word choices and grammatical constructions for almost anything that any American would ever

³⁴ Miner M. & Rawson H., *The Oxford Dictionary of American Quotations*, Oxford University Press, 2006, New York. p. 316

³⁵ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 360-361

want to say. In large terms, the speech of people from one region is generally more similar to the speech of people from the same region and less similar to the speech of people from other regions. Geography is one of the most important factors for sharing variant linguistic features. The relative association of particular features of English with Americans from some particular part of the country has its roots in American history.³⁶

Northern dialects — among the oldest and most influential of American patterns, the Northern dialects extend from Maine to Northern Pennsylvania in the east and reach beyond the Mississippi across northern Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. These dialects have their primary source in New England. Furthermore, as a dialect area of the northeastern United States, it must also include New York City. Although originally most closely bound to Hudson Valley in New York State and its Dutch heritage, the metropolitan area might sensibly be regarded a major regional dialect area in itself, according to its social history of the past two centuries. Today, this Northern area includes six principal subdivisions: in the east, northeastern New England (Maine, New Hampshire, and eastern Vermont), southeastern New England (the Boston focal area), and metropolitan New York (the New York City focal area); and in the west, southwestern New England (western Massachusetts, Connecticut, and north central Pennsylvania), the Hudson Valley (south central New York and northeastern Pennsylvania), and the Inland North (western Vermont, Upstate New York, and derivatives spread across the Midwest beneath the Great Lakes and beyond the Mississippi into Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas).³⁷ This six subdivisions share a number of regional words. These include Northern lexical hallmarks: *angleworm* ‘earthworm,’ *boss*, *bossie*, or *co-boss* (a cow call), *brook* ‘small stream,’ *clapboards* ‘finished siding,’

³⁶ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. p. 40

³⁷ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 253-255

darning needle 'dragonfly,' *eaves trough* 'gutter,' *fills* or *thills* 'buggy shafts,' *johnnycake* 'corn bread,' *pail* 'bucket,' *pit* 'cherrystone,' *stone wall* 'fence of rough stones without mortar,' *swill* 'table scraps for hogs,' *whiffletree* or *whippletree* 'single-tree, wooden bar hooked to the traces of a harness.' Historically, however, many words now of general currency also originated in the northeastern quadrant of this territory, for example, *chipmunk*, *coal hod*, *firefly*, *gutter* 'eaves trough,' *kerosene*, *picketfence*, *salt pork*, *skunk*, *string beans*, *teeter* (board or -totter), *white bread*. Although no longer diagnostically useful in distinguishing regional speech, such words illustrate the influence of this geographic pattern on the national language. There are also forms emerged from folk usage and diminished in currency through the passage of time and the spread of general education like *all toonce* 'all at once, suddenly' and *sick to the stomach* 'nauseated'. Nevertheless, each helps to characterize the historical base of the regional pattern. Coastal Northern (eastern New England and New York City) has a number of striking characteristics. From Maine to Rhode Island, words such as *apple dowdy* 'deep-dish pie,' *bonnyclabber* or *clapper* 'curdled milk,' *but tonwood* 'plane tree, sycamore,' *comforter* 'quilt,' *fritters* 'fried cakes,' *hog's head cheese* 'headcheese,' *pigsty*, and *spindle* 'tassel' mark the rural vocabulary. Northern speech includes few general phonological features that distinguish it from the other three patterns. Indeed, the major phonemic features of the area are common to all current dialects of the English language.³⁸

Midland dialects — developed when settlers left Philadelphia. These dialects contain features from the Northern and Southern ones. Eastern Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) and Western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh) divisions of the Midland dialect extend their influence into the South respectively through the Shenandoah Valley and across the Midwest through the Ohio Valley. The historical reflex of these developments yields two primary constructs (east/west) and two secondary constructs (north/south). Only a few general Midland lexical forms extend across

³⁸ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language* volume IV - *English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 264-265

the territory from Pennsylvania into the Upper Midwest. They include *blinds* 'roller shades,' *coal oil* 'kerosene,' *dip* 'sweet sauce for pudding,' *fish(ing) worm*, *green beans* 'string beans,' *hull* 'to shell (beans or peas),' *little piece* 'short distance,' (*paper*) *poke* '(paper) sack,' *side pork* or *side meat* 'salt pork,' *skillet* 'frying pan,' *snake feeder* 'dragonfly,' *sook* (a cow call), and *spouts* or *spouting* 'drainpipes (from a roof)'. 'More narrowly defined, the historical Midland vocabulary emerges in another set of words that are essentially confined to the state of Pennsylvania: *cruddled* (milk) 'curdled,' *fire bug* 'firefly,' *hand stack* 'hay shock,' *overden* 'barn loft,' *overhead* 'loft,' and *piece* 'to snack.'³⁹ Besides the German loan translations that dominate these lists, such as *fire bug*, *green beans*, and *snake feeder*, other words also occur in communities with substantial German subcultures, from Milwaukee in the north to East Texas in the south: *fatcakes*, *rain worm*, *sawbuck* or *woodbuck*, *smearcase* 'cottage cheese,' and *thick milk*. Other Germanisms, such as *clook* 'hen,' *paper toot* 'paper sack,' *ponhaws* 'Philadelphia scrapple', *snits* 'dried fruit,' and *vootsie* (a cow call) are largely confined to Pennsylvania and its immediate neighbours. Conversely, the old Pennsylvania German loans *sauerkraut* and *spook* 'ghost' have gained general currency in virtually all dialects of American English. Perhaps the most familiar feature in Midland morphology may be the preposition *till*, in the phrase "*quarter till the hour*." Other regional phrases include *all the further* 'as far as,' *'got awake* 'woke up,' and *want off* 'want to get off.' Although now widespread in American folk speech, the following verb forms are also best associated with the Midland dialect area: *boilt* 'boiled,' *clum* 'climbed,' *dogbit* 'bitten by a dog' and *seen* 'saw.' Within the primary source area, the most distinctive morphological and grammatical features originate in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect with constructions that occur, like the vocabulary, in the German-American subcultural enclaves across the country: (the oranges are) *all* 'all gone,' *make out* (the lights)

³⁹ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 267-269

'put out,' and (school) *leaves out* 'lets out.'⁴⁰ Midland speech demonstrates its clearest regional distinctiveness in the pronunciation of certain consonants and vowels. Most pervasive is the realization of a fully retroflex postvocalic /r/, setting the area apart from coastal speech to the east and interior (historical plantation) speech to the south. Perhaps the most distinctive marker of Midland pronunciation is the widespread occurrence of intrusive /r/ in *wash* and *Washington*. The North Midland division extends the pattern south out of Philadelphia and west out of Pittsburgh. Marked at the south by the occurrence of /s/ instead of /z/ in *greasy*, as well as other features that divide Northern and Southern speech, the boundary between North Midland and Northern extends the southern influence of Philadelphia speech into the great valley of Virginia in the east and follows the course of Ohio River settlements from Pittsburgh to St. Louis in the west.

Here also, pronunciation offers the most reliable basis of regional distinctiveness, especially the pronunciation of low-back vowels in words like *barn*. The South Midland subregion extends the northeastern Philadelphia pattern deep into the southern United States, where it merges with upcountry dialects in the east and delta speech to the west. Among the most powerful South Midland lexical markers are these: *dog irons* 'andirons,' *fireboard* 'mantel,' *French harp* 'harmonica,' *'red worm* 'earthworm,' and *tow sack* 'burlap sack.' Morphological features include preterit and past participial *drinkt* and *shrinkt*, archaic *sot* for *sat*, and unmarked *swim*.⁴¹

Southern dialects — are quite different. It has been influenced by French, Spanish, African Americans and Native American languages in fact Black English and Southern dialects have a lot in common. Every foreigner can recognize the

⁴⁰Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 270-273

⁴¹ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. pp. 46-47

southern drawl accent. Historically, Southern dialects of American English begin south of the Potomac River in the east and extend across the domain of the old Confederacy, including Texas as well as the more recently settled Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and the border states of Kentucky, Arkansas, and Missouri, especially south of St. Louis. This region includes three primary speech patterns, coastal, interior, and delta. These dialects reflect the demographic history of the region. Two of the greatest population movements in American history shaped the cultural composition of the South. First, the migration out of Pennsylvania settled the Carolina piedmont and then the upper and lower reaches of the interior and extended historical Midland forms across the territory.⁴² Second, the mass transportation of blacks from their birthplaces in Virginia and South Carolina into the New Orleans slave markets reorganized the speech patterns of the central South. A number of lexical features mark the area, from the coast northward and across the entire South Midland territory. These include *baby carriage*, *bucket* 'pail,' *butter beans* 'lima beans,' *chifforobe* 'wardrobe,' *chop* (cotton) 'hoe,' *clabber* 'curdled milk,' *common* (a pejorative), *corn dodgers* 'corn bread preparation,' (*corn*) *shucks*, *dirt dauber* 'mud wasp,' *feist* 'small, noisy dog,' *goobers* 'peanuts,' *greens* 'boiled leaf vegetables, especially collards,' *grits* 'ground hominy,' *hootowl*, *Irish potatoes*, *jackleg* 'an inexperienced or fraudulent tradesman or professional,' *light bread* 'white bread,' *lightwood* 'pine kindling,' *pallet* 'bed on the floor,' *peckerwood* 'woodpecker,' *polecats* 'skunk,' *roasting ears* 'corn on the cob,' *screech owl*, *varmint* 'small predator,' *whetrock* 'sharpening stone,' *white lightning* 'unlicensed whiskey, moonshine,' and *yams* 'sweet potatoes.' Morphological and grammatical features found across the entire area include verb forms, function words, and distinctive pronominal usage. Although rarest in cultivated speech, the deleted copula and auxiliary verb occur all over the South, as in *he big* and *he done it*, respectively.⁴³ The negative

⁴² Nagle S. J. and Sanders S. L., edited by, *English in the Southern United States*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, New York. pp. 7-9

⁴³ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 275-279

construction *ain't* also seems indigenous to the entire area, although the fierce prejudice against this form seems at last to be taking hold even here. Other grammatical features are the preposition *at* in the phrase "*sick at the stomach*," the directive *yonder*, meaning 'there' as in "*over yonder*" or "*yonder comes Nora*," double modal auxiliaries *might can* or *might could* as in "*I might could do it*," the intensifier *right* as in "*right nice*," and the perfective *done* as in "*I done told you that already*." *Drug* for '*dragged*' also spreads across the entire territory with few constraints of social distribution. The most familiar elements of Southern word formation may, however, be the distinctive second person plural forms, *you all* or *y'all* and the less frequent possessive *y'all's*.⁴⁴ The general regional pattern includes several pronunciations of consonants and vowels, as well as prosodic features, which set Southern speech apart from the rest of the country. Consonant pronunciations include a "clear l" between front vowels, as in *Billy*, *Nelly*, and *silly*. From tidewater Virginia to the southernmost Texas coast, and across the piney woods beyond that coastal strip, certain generalized features characterize Southern speech, including lexical, grammatical, and phonological features. The general coastal lexicon includes *blood pudding*, *cat squirrel*, *gopher* 'land-burrowing tortoise,' *hog(s) head cheese*, *hoppergrass* 'grasshopper,' *live oak*, *mosquito hawk* 'dragonfly,' and *mouth harp* 'harmonica.' Words peculiar to the coastal strip include *collard greens*, *rain frog*, and *shell road*. In the piney woods, the subregional vocabulary includes *croker sack* 'burlap sack,' *mantel board*, *pinders* 'peanuts,' *piney-woods rooter* 'range hog,' *press peach* 'cling peach,' *shiner* 'minnow,' *skeeterhawk* (alongside *mosquito hawk*), *smut* 'soot,' and *splinters* 'resinous kindling.' Along the coast, pronunciation includes the loss of /h/ before /w/ in *wheel* and the vocalization of postvocalic /r/. General coastal word formations include past participial *drove* and *drank*. Elsewhere, the dominant forms of American English grammar mark the speech of the coastal strip, now dominated by urban patterns. Shared forms include *boogerman* 'devil,' *dairy* 'storage cellar,' *flitters* 'pancakes,' *granny* (woman)

⁴⁴ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. pp. 54-55

'midwife,' *hoosier* 'rustic,' *liver and lights*, middling(s)'bacon sides, 'mushmelon, *ridy horse* 'seesaw,' *rock fence*, *serenade* 'shivaree,' *somerset*, *swingletree* 'whiffle tree,' and *widow woman*.⁴⁵

The speech of the New Orleans focal area forms one of the most influential zones in the geographic structure of American English. As a primary settlement area and perhaps the most powerful focal area of American English – extending its influence as far north as Nashville, via the Ohio and Cumberland, and across the Gulf coast from Houston, Texas, to Pensacola, Florida – it unites the coastal and interior subdivisions. As a historic cultural centre, New Orleans extended influence to Mobile Bay in the east and to the South Texas coast in the west. In the interior, its domain extends up the Lower Mississippi and as far north as the Louisiana-Arkansas border. General delta features include *bayou* (for both 'backwaters' and 'creek'), *buckshot* (land), and *buffalo fish*. Interior Southern preserves most of the hallmarks generally associated with American Southern dialects.⁴⁶ These are lexical features: *bateau* 'rowboat,' *battercakes* 'pancakes,' *branch* 'creek,' *counterpane* 'bedspread'. Within the interior region of the South the vocabulary includes *candle fly* 'moth,' *clabbermilk*, *sauce* 'sweet topping,' *snake doctor* 'dragonfly,' *sorghum* 'molasses,' *sowbelly* 'salt pork,' and *spoiled* 'rancid' (of butter). With a dialect grammar similar to the rest of the interior, this subdivision has these striking pronunciation features: complete loss of /r/ in *car* and of /y/ in *Matthew*, a fully realized diphthong /ɪu/ in *student*, and a rounded low-back vowel in *wasp*.⁴⁷

Western dialects – contain features from the Northern and Southern groups. Within the Western dialects there are increasing differences. For example in southwestern dialects there are a lot of influences of Mexican Spanish. All major

⁴⁵ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 275-280

⁴⁶ Nagle S. J. and Sanders S. L., edited by, *English in the Southern United States*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, New York. pp. 137-140

⁴⁷ Ibidem. pp. 179-183

varieties in this large speech area developed from Eastern sources. The Mississippi Valley, however, is the primary source of Western dialects; there regional speech extended and reformed the three primary eastern patterns. Immediately west of the Mississippi River, the eastern pattern of Northern, Midland, and Southern is modified. The northern third of Iowa preserves a basic Northern pattern. The Southern pattern extends northward to the Louisiana-Arkansas border. But between these reasonably well differentiated areas, western reflexes of Midland dialects merge in a large graded area that combines Northern and Southern features with the west Pennsylvania pattern. Northern speech then extends westward across eastern South Dakota and southwestern North Dakota, where it enters the Rocky Mountain region in the Black Hills. Besides the delta subdivision that reaches up the Mississippi, Red, and St. Francis river basins to the Missouri boot heel, interior Southern speech extends westward across the Louisiana and East Texas piney woods to merge with plains Western beyond Dallas and Fort Worth. At the centre of this zone, St. Louis became the primary source of Western dialects that developed following express routes, wagon trails, and later railways, east to west. Much of the West, however, was settled through the establishment of pioneer speech communities directly from eastern sources in a process Robert Hall described this way:

“With ever increasing mobility, innovations are likely to travel very fast and far, and to be diffused first to secondary and then to tertiary centres of radiation, often by-passing many geographically intermediate but more isolated places, in a manner reminiscent of military “island hopping” and capture of advanced outposts by parachute troops before the “mopping up” operations carried out by the main body of the army.”⁴⁸

For example, the pervasive Inland Northern features in Rocky Mountain enclaves in Utah and Colorado, as well as on the Pacific Coast in California and

⁴⁸ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. p. 281

Washington, demonstrate this pattern most dramatically. The Mississippi Valley region includes two subregions that divide north and south in Iowa. The northern sector, centered at Minneapolis and Saint Paul, is a western extension of the Inland Northern dialects, and the southern sector, centered at St. Louis, combines Northern with Midland features. The easternmost varieties are of great importance because they form basic centers of communication for the transmission of Eastern forms into the West.⁴⁹ These include lexical forms *belly flop* 'a dive in which the front of the body lands flat,' *boulevard* 'grass strip at the side of a road,' (*devil's*) *darning needle* 'dragonfly,' 'cottage cheese,' *gopher*, *spider* 'frying pan,' *stone boat* 'a flat sledge for dragging heavy objects,' *swill pail*, and *whiffletree* 'a pivoted swinging bar to which harness traces are attached and by which a vehicle is pulled. Pronunciation includes the preservation of /h/ before the semivowels /w/ as in *whip* and /y/ as in *humour*. The speech of the west central Midwest reflects the union of two sub regional sets that originated in Pennsylvania. The primary source of dialects in this area seems to proceed from Western Pennsylvania. Nineteenth-century demographics, however, show a secondary source that proceeded into the same territory along an extended and circuitous route, the great migration out of eastern Pennsylvania. The resultant vocabulary includes items from Western Pennsylvania and its Ohio Valley extensions, such as *baby buggy*, *green beans* 'string beans,' and *gunnysack* 'burlap sack,' and terms from eastern Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky, such as *coal oil* 'kerosene,' (corn) *shucks* 'corn husks,' *French harp* 'harmonica,' *singletree*, *skillet*, *slop bucket*, and *snake feeder* or *snake doctor* 'dragonfly'. Pronunciation in this area shows a predominantly Western Pennsylvania influence with rounded low-back vowels as in *hog*. An essentially Southern dialect base extends across the delta regions. Its distinctive contributions to Western dialects, emerge as the local patterns reach westward. The incidence of features such as *baby buggy*, *coal oil*, *green beans*, and *skillet*, as well as the low-back vowels mentioned above, unite the middle and

⁴⁹ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. pp. 51-52

lower Mississippi Valley subdivisions from the Missouri boot heel to New Orleans.⁵⁰ The Western vocabulary includes *coulee* 'creek bed,' *prairie*, and *step* 'inside stairs. In the Red River basin north-western Louisiana and the adjacent plains of Arkansas and East Texas, a distinctively mixed Southern and Western vocabulary appears, including *branch* 'creek,' *corral*, *French harp* 'harmonica,' *lariat*, *lasso*, *pecker wood*, *pulley bone*, *souse*, and *whet rock*. Pronunciation includes strongly retroflex realizations of postvocalic /r/ and the re-emergence of /h/ before /w/, both missing in territories dominated by New Orleans and the lower Mississippi delta. The Western speech area is characterized by a small set of words: *sugar* 'range blanket,' *trail*, and *blink*, *bronco* (o), *jerky* 'dried beef or venison,' *lariat*, *lasso*, *ranch*, and *ranch hand*. From Montana and Idaho through Wyoming, Utah, and upper Colorado, Western dialects preserve an essentially Northern pattern. Settlers of this area were the Mormons and a large number of Americans of European birth or parentage. Their domain narrowed to the state of Utah and the border regions of Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nevada. The distinctive mountain flora and fauna of the northern Rockies were named with such terms as *quakes*, *quakers*, or *quakingaspen* 'indigenous poplars.' Other lexical features of the region include *basin* 'extended valley between mountains,' *butte* 'flat-topped hill,' *hole* (a Western-sized counter part of the Eastern mountain hollow), *park* 'high plains meadow,' *pigginstring* 'tie used in calf-roping,' and (saddle) *fender*. From central Colorado to interior Texas, as well as across the states of New Mexico, and Arizona, regional speech reflects the mingling of four cultural influences from the north, east, and south. These are the extension of the general Midland pattern that marks the northern subdivision, a western Midland pattern that distinguishes these lower enclaves, a Southern residue that diminishes east to west, and a powerful Spanish influence, which provides the southern part of the Western plains and Rocky

⁵⁰ Lerer S., *The History of the English Language volume II*, The Teaching Company, 2008, Virginia. pp. 147-150

Mountains with its most distinctive dialect features.⁵¹ The general Midland vocabulary includes a number of forms that occur with decreasing incidence in the Rockies. These include (corn) *shucks*, *roasting ears*, *slop bucket*, and *souse*. From the western Midland come *baby buggy*, *coal oil*, and *crawdad* 'crawfish,' as well as the strongly rounded low-back vowels, both before /r/ as in *barn* words and in *hog* words. Strongest in west Texas and southeastern New Mexico, Southern and South Midland features include *Christmas gift* (as a greeting), *both croker sack* and *tow sack* 'burlap sack,' *dog irons* 'andirons,' *gully washer* 'heavy rain,' *paper sack*, *pulley bone* 'wishbone,' *seesaw*, *snake doctor* 'dragonfly,' *toad-frog*, and *you all* (second person plural). Probably more important are the Southern lengthened free vowels and in gliding checked vowels that characterize the Southwestern drawl. From Spanish sources come *arroyo* 'dry creek,' *calaboose* 'jail,' *frijoles* 'pinto beans,' *hoosegow*, *mesa* 'flat-topped hill,' *remuda* 'string of horses,' and *sudadero* 'saddle fender. The patterns of regional dialects in the Far West with focal areas in Seattle and San Francisco include a considerable number of features that today approach general currency in American English. These Western dialects suggest the immediate future of the national language. The confluence of Northern, Midland, and Southern speech forms reshaped the language here in a territory that established unique relationships with European and American sources. Western society found its basis in native usage, and its dialects offer the most reliable model for American English at the beginning of the twenty-first century.⁵²

⁵¹ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 285-287

⁵² Nagle S. J. and Sanders S. L., edited by, *English in the Southern United States*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, New York. pp. 139-140

Dialect Regions of the United States



Map 2 Major dialect regions of the United States

English in Canada

Many British people identify a Canadian accent as American and many Americans identify it as British. Canadians themselves insist on not being identified with either group, and certainly the variety does display a number of unique features. In addition, the presence of French as a co-official language, chiefly spoken in Quebec, produces a sociolinguistic situation not found in other English-speaking countries.⁵³ Canadian English, while different from both British and American English, is in large measure a blend of both varieties; and to this blend must be added many features which are typically Canadian. The explanation for this mixed character lies primarily in the settlement history of the country, for both

⁵³ Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. p. 39

Britain and the United States have exerted continuous influence on Canada during the past two hundred years.⁵⁴ Canada shares with the United States a large vocabulary denoting all manner of things indigenous to North America. On the other hand, Britain has also made an enormous contribution to the settlement of English-speaking Canada with their immigration, especially along the Canadian-American border, where most of Canada's population is still concentrated, these newcomers came into contact with already established Canadians. The part of Canadian English which is neither British nor American is best illustrated by the vocabulary, for there are hundreds of words which are native to Canada or which have meanings peculiar to Canada. As might be expected, many of these refer to topographical features, plants, trees, fish, animals, and birds; and many others to social, economic, and political institutions and activities. Many other languages other than English have contributed to enrich Canadian English's lexicon. For example from Canadian French *brulé*, burnt-out area, *fameuse*, a type of apple, *lacrosse*, *Métis*, *portage* from Amerindian.⁵⁵ Mark Orkin notes that Canadians use "not bad" when they really mean "good" and that they say "not good" when they really mean "quite bad" and that something that is "fair" is expressed as being "not too bad."⁵⁶ Another feature of Canadian English is the "eh" expression. *Eh* is the expression, or filler word, most widely associated with Canadian English. *Eh* has many uses, of which at least ten have been identified. The different types of *eh* are used in statements of fact (it's cold out, *eh?*), commands (don't forget, *eh?*), a way of saying "pardon me" (*eh?* What was that you said?), and in the telling of narratives (I was walking to the hockey rink, *eh*, when I realized I forgot my skates), to name just a few. This short two letter interjection has been the subject of much academic study and debate, and these studies are preoccupied with exactly how Canadian *eh* is. Some academics insist that it is uniquely Canadian. For

⁵⁴ Gold E. and McAlpine J., *Canadian English: A Linguistic Reader*, Queen's University Kingston, 2010, Ontario. p. 56

⁵⁵ Ibidem. p. 58

⁵⁶ Orkin M., *Canajan, eh?*, General Publishing Company Ltd. Don Mills, 1973, Ontario, p. 22

example, in Mark Orkin's book *Speaking Canadian English*, it's stated that *eh* is "so exclusively a Canadian feature that immigration officials use it as an identifying clue." Others make the argument that *he* is a linguistic feature that is found in many English speaking nations, and therefore cannot be solely attributed to Canadian culture. For instance, *eh* exists in Africa, but it is purely used as an affirmative sound and is usually more drawn out: *ehhhhh*. In pronunciation, as in vocabulary, Canadians are neither American nor British, though they have much in common with both. Although most Canadians pronounce *docile* and *textile* to rhyme with *mile*, as the British do, it is probable that most pronounce *fertile* and *missile* to rhyme with *hurtle* and *missal*, as the Americans do. But no doubt Canadians pronounce some words in a way that is typically Canadian.⁵⁷ In recent years there have been indications that American spellings are becoming more commonly used in Canada. Many have, for example, been adopted by Canadian newspapers, especially those in the larger centers, and by magazine and book publishers. Young people seem to use such spellings as *color*, *center*, *defense*, *medieval*, *program*, *skillful*, and *traveler* much more frequently than was formerly the case, the implication being that at least some American forms are accepted as proper in many Canadian schools. The fact is that usage is very much divided, varying from province to province and often from person to person. For the most part, however, Canadians respond to these variants with equal ease.

English in the Caribbean

The countries of the Caribbean face multilingual situations. The varieties of English spoken in the Anglophone Caribbean today reflect the linguistic contributions of the English-speaking explorers and settlers who exported the language from the British homeland to the region in the early 16th century, as well as the range of peoples that have inhabited the region for the past 400 years, either

⁵⁷ Gold E. and Mc Alpine J., *Canadian English: A Linguistic Reader*, Queen's University Kingston, 2010, Ontario. p. 58

by birth, indigenous Amerindians or forced transplantation through slavery. This resulted in Creole, a distinct language system with words derived from English but with phonology, semantics and morphosyntax influenced by African languages and other forces. After it became established as the first language of entire communities, this creolised English was transmitted like any other language. Over the years, because of language contact phenomena, Creole came to influence, and be influenced by the standard and regional varieties of English brought from Britain. These uncreolised varieties survived among a few relatively isolated groups made up largely of whites, and Standard English survived as the language of administration and education in all the territories that remained British colonies.⁵⁸ The major English-speaking Caribbean islands are Jamaica and Barbados. There are fine shades of differences between speakers, although there are a number of elements that characterise most forms of Caribbean English. Final syllables in Jamaican Creole frequently have rising tone, reflecting the West African tone language spoken by the slaves, who carried their own phonology into their reinterpretation of a Germanic language with light and heavy stresses. A large number of words can be traced clearly to African languages like *nyam* (to eat) or *juk* (to prick, poke, spur, jab, and stab).⁵⁹ The lack of the verb 'to be' in statements such as *she dreaming*, where Standard English requires *she's dreaming*, is typical of the type of structure that occurs in a creole. Another feature is that pronouns may not be marked for subject/object distinctions and verbs might not always carry a tense marker as in the statement *him tell me dat yesterday* for *he told me that yesterday*. The meaning is always clear, despite the apparent simplification. Finally, there are common elements of Caribbean vocabulary, such as *pickney*, meaning 'young child'.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. pp. 39-40

⁵⁹ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 310-311

⁶⁰ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/minority-ethnic/caribbean/>

1.2.3 English in Australia and New Zealand

Australian English had its beginnings in the late eighteenth century in a convict settlement where people of diverse speech were brought together. Some levelling of dialects had probably already taken place in England or even at sea. The first settlers were especially important in setting the direction of linguistic development in the new land. Australia now has three layers of social accent: cultivated, used by about 50 percent of people and sounding very like British English; broad, a working-class accent used by a similar number of people, and general, an accent falling between the two and used by the great mass of people. Because an Australian's pronunciation of *hay* may register on an American as *high*, or *basin* as *bison*, these systematic differences have been the source of misunderstandings between speakers of General Australian and speakers of other national varieties, though not among speakers of General Australian themselves. Within Australia there are possible difficulties in the different patterns of General Australian, the dialect of the great majority, and Cultivated Australian, a minority accent that approaches the received standard of England.⁶¹ Many of the Australian words were borrowed from the aborigines, and from Maori in New Zealand. The Australians call a rowdy street loafer a *larrikin*, where an American talks of a *ranch*, the Australian speaks of a *station*⁶², *billabong* stands for a brackish body of water, *didgeridoo* for a kind of trumpet, *bombora* for a navigable stretch of river containing dangerous rocks, and of course *boomerang*, *koala*, *outback*, and *kangaroo*. The new natives also quickly showed a gift for colourful slang: *tucker* for food, *slygrogging* for sneaking a drink, *bonzer* for excellent, and, more recently, *technicolor yawn* for throwing up. Often these are just everyday words shortened: *postie* for postman, *footy* for football, *arvo* for the afternoon, *roo* for kangaroo, *compo* for compensation. And then of course there are all those incomparable Australian expressions: *don't*

⁶¹ Mitchell A. G. and Delbridge A., *The Speech of Australian Adolescents: A Survey*, 1965, Sydney. p. 37

⁶² Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 301

*come the raw prawn, don't try to fool me, or rattle your dags, get a move on.*⁶³ Australia has been as receptive to American influences as to British ones. In Australia, people eat cookies, not biscuits; politicians run for office, not stand as in Britain; they drive station wagons rather than estate cars; give their money to a teller rather than a cashier in a bank; wear cuffs on their pants, not turnips; say mail, not post; and cover small injuries with a Band-Aid rather than a plaster. They spell many words in the American way—labor rather than *labour*, for instance—and, perhaps most significantly, the national currency is the dollar, not the pound.

1.2.4 English in South Asia and the Pacific

The English Language arrived in South Asia as a result of colonisation. The British first arrived in India in the early 1600s and soon established trading posts in a number of cities under the control of The East India Company. By 1765 the Company's influence had grown to such an extent that the British were effectively controlling most parts of the country. This date is often taken as the start of what is referred to as *The Raj* — a period of British rule in India that lasted until Independence in 1947.⁶⁴ The Indian Constitution of 1950 recognized fourteen Indian languages, of which Hindi was to be the first national language. English was to serve as a transitional language with Hindi until 1965, but it has continued to be used as an official language. Whatever the stated policies may be in the future, it is certain that the English language will be spoken and written by a small but influential minority of the Indian population, including leaders in government, education, and the press. It is also certain that the variety of English recognized as standard in India—and in Bangladesh and in Pakistan—will be a

⁶³ Bryson B., *The Mother Tongue - English And How It Got That Way*, William Morrow & Co, 1990, New York. p. 108

⁶⁴ Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. pp. 46-47

South Asian variety in its pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary.⁶⁵ English had firmly established itself as the language of administration and many educated Indians were demanding instruction in English as a means of social advancement. English was increasingly accepted as the language of government, of the social elite, and of the national press. After Independence, India became a nation state, and it was intended that English would gradually be phased out as the language of administration. But there was no simple solution as to which language should replace it. At first Hindi, the most widely spoken language, seemed the obvious choice, but in a country with over 900 million people and more than a thousand languages it is difficult to choose a single national language. English remains as an 'Associate Language' in India, alongside Hindi, the '*Official Language of the Union of India*' and eighteen 'National Languages', such as Bengali, Gujarati and Urdu, which have a special status in certain individual states. English is widely used in the media, in Higher Education and government and therefore remains a common means of communication, both among the ruling classes, and between speakers of mutually unintelligible languages. According to recent surveys, approximately 4% of the Indian population use English. This represents 35 million speakers – the largest English-speaking community outside the USA and the UK. In addition there are speakers of English in other parts of South Asia, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where English plays a similar role. In terms of pronunciation, many speakers do not differentiate between the sounds <v> and <w>. They might also replace <th> in words like *think* and *this* with a <t> and <d> sound, as no Indian languages contain these consonants. Influenced by traditional Hindi grammar, speakers often use progressive tenses in statements, such as *I am believing you* or *she is liking music*.⁶⁶

The development of English as a second language in the Pacific Rim - Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong is especially interesting because of the influence of

⁶⁵ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 307

⁶⁶ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/minority-ethnic/asian/>

background languages, mostly Chinese dialects. In 1819 Sir Stamford Raffles founded Singapore at the tip of the Malay Peninsula, which together with Malacca and Penang became a British crown colony, the *Straits Settlements*. From the very beginning, Singapore prospered economically, and throughout the rest of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, English was an important language of government, business, and education.⁶⁷ During the 1970s a national fervour in Malaysia brought about a policy of promoting Bahasa Malay as the official language, and the use of English declined rapidly. This brought to a growing inability of Malaysians to read English by the mid-1980s, so recently, the Malaysian government has quietly begun to reemphasize English. Hong Kong, although more than a thousand miles across the South China Sea from Singapore, has similarities in the use of English because of its British colonial history. Here English is much less frequently used for oral communication.⁶⁸ Some of the specific features of English in Malaysia and Singapore are: the lack of an ending to mark the third person singular present tense of the verb; the omission of *be* both as a copula “*This coffee house—very cheap,*” in contrast with standard British and American English “*This coffeehouse is very cheap*” and also as an auxiliary “*My brother—working*” instead of “*My brother is working*”.⁶⁹

1.2.5 English on the African Continent

English in South Africa

Africa is the most multilingual continent on earth. The present Republic of South Africa had been occupied successively by the Bushmen, Hottentots, Bantus, Portuguese, and Dutch before the English settlers came. From all these sources, but especially from Dutch and its South African development, Afrikaans, the

⁶⁷ Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. pp. 56-57

⁶⁸ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 309

⁶⁹ Platt J. and Weber H., *English in Singapore and Malaysia: Status, Features, Functions*, Kuala Lumpur, 1980, Malaysia, pp. 63-64

English language has acquired elements. English has always been a minority language in South Africa, and is currently spoken as first language only by about 3.7 million in a 2002 population of over 43.5 million. Afrikaans, which was given official status in 1925, was the first language of the majority of whites, and acted as an important symbol of identity for those of Afrikaner background. It was also the first language of most of the colored population. English was used by the remaining whites of British background, and by the increasing numbers of the black population. There is thus a linguistic side to the political divisions which marked South African apartheid society: Afrikaans came to be perceived by the black majority as the language of authority and repression. English was perceived by the Afrikaner government as the language of protest and self-determination. Many blacks saw English as a means of achieving an international voice. The 1993 Constitution names eleven languages as official, including English and Afrikaans, in an effort to enhance the status of the country's indigenous languages.⁷⁰ A list of words and phrases that South Africans consider to be characteristic of their variety of English includes *biltong* (strips of dried meat), *braaivleis* (a barbecue), *donga* (ravine), *gogga* (insect), *koeksisters* (a confection), *kopje* (hill), *lekker* (nice), *mealies* (Indian corn), *ou* (fellow, U.S. guy), *spruit* (gully), *stoep* (verandah, U.S. stoop), and *veldskoene* (hide-shoes). A good number of English words are used in quite new senses. South African racial policies gave a new meaning to *location* as an area in which black Africans are required to live. *Lands* in South Africa are just those portions of a farm that can be used for cultivation of crops, *camp* refers to the fenced-in portion of a farm, and the *leopard* (Afrikaans *tier*, from *tyger*) is sometimes called a *tiger*.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. pp. 45-46

⁷¹ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 302

English in West and East Africa

The English language has a complex relationship to the many African languages. English colonizers began to visit West Africa from the end of the fifteenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the increase in commerce and anti-slave-trade activities had brought English to the whole West African coast. With hundreds of local languages to contend with, a particular feature of the region was the rise of several English-based pidgins and creoles, used alongside the standard varieties. British varieties developed especially in five countries, each of which now gives English official status - Sierra Leone, Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Liberia.⁷² On the other side, the Imperial British East Africa Company was founded in 1888, and a system of colonial protectorates became established. Several modern states gave English official status when they gained independence, and British English played a great role in the development of these states, being widely used in government, schools, and other public domains, also as a medium of international communication.⁷³ A large number of British emigrants settled in West Africa, producing a class of expatriates and African-born whites, reinforcing the exposure to British English. Some nations have deferred making the choice of an official language and continue to use English simultaneously with one or more of the African languages. The major countries where English is recognized as an official language are: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Even more complex than the choice of an official language is the question of a standard. Among speakers who learn English as a second language there will inevitably be a wide range of varieties, from pidgin at one extreme to a written standard of international acceptability at the other. In Nigerian English, *beat* and *bit* have the same tense vowel, distinguished if at all by length. J. C. Wells calls "*one of the most characteristic features of African English,*" the absence of the tense-lax distinction.

⁷² Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. pp. 50-51

⁷³ *Ibidem*. pp. 52-53

This produces a large number of homophones in Nigerian English and in other African varieties: *leave—live, seen—sin*, and *Don't sleep on the floor—Don't slip on the floor*, all with the tense vowel.⁷⁴ A feature that is common in African English is the lack of a diphthong in *today*, which has the simple vowel [e] instead. The processes that allow expansion of vocabulary and new meanings of words are very interesting in countries where English is mainly a second language. Borrowings or calques from the local languages, include *head-tie* (woman's headdress), *juju music* (a type of dance music), *bush meat* (game), *tie-dye cloth* (cloth into which patterns are made by tying up parts of it before dyeing), *akara balls* (bean cakes). Extensions and narrowing of meanings of words occur in *corner* (a bend in a road), *globe* (a light bulb), *wet* (to water [flowers]), *environment* (neighbourhood), *gallops* (potholes), and *bluff* (to give an air of importance). It is sometimes difficult to distinguish general West African usage from a national variety—Nigerian English, Ghanaian English, and Cameroon English; the following words and expressions occur in West African English, some with quite widespread currency: *bata* (sandals, shoes), *move with* (court, go out with), *wedding bells* (invitation to a wedding), *takein* (become pregnant), *be in state* (be pregnant), *give kola* (offer a bribe), *have longlegs* (have influence), *cry die* (wake, funeral rites). The morphology and syntax of English in Africa have generally the same structures as those of the international varieties of Standard English, although one may note formations with the plural suffix of words that are not ordinarily count nouns: *equipments, aircrafts, deadwoods, offsprings*. Some Standard English transitive verbs gain particles and become phrasal verbs, as in *voice out* instead of "*voice*" ("I am going to voice out my opinion"); *discuss about* instead of "*discuss*" ("We shall discuss about that later"); and *cope up with* instead of "*cope with*." After some verbs the *to* is dropped from the following infinitive like in "enable him do it".⁷⁵ In East Africa, verbs that are phrasal in Standard English lose the adverbial particle but keep the meaning of the phrasal verb. For example, "I *picked him* outside his house and he

⁷⁴ Wells J. C., *Accents of English*, University Press, 1982, Cambridge. p. 637

⁷⁵ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 316

dropped at work” for “picked him up” and “dropped him off”. Some nouns in Kenyan and Tanzanian colloquial speech have a plural form but are treated as singulars: *behaviours, bottoms, laps, minds, nighties, noses, popcorns*. The influence of Bantu is clearly apparent. The Bantu language Kiswahili is the most important African language throughout East Africa, and from its influence the East African variety of English has acquired some of its characteristic phonological patterns. From this language also have come loanwords that have passed into international currency: *safari, simba* (lion), *bwana* (master), *jambo* (hello).⁷⁶

1.2.6 Features of English-based pidgins and creoles

Of the varieties of English discussed in the preceding section, those of West and East Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Rim coexist and interact with well-established English-based pidgins and creoles. The linguistic and sociological issues that are raised by these varieties of language in daily contact have already been suggested with respect to Jamaican English. The theoretical interest to linguists, however, goes even deeper, because the study of pidgin and creole languages may give clues to a better understanding of a number of interrelated problems like the idea of a “continuum” among varieties of a single language and between closely related languages; the acquisition of language by children; the language-processing abilities of the human brain; and the origin of language. The study of present-day English in all its worldwide varieties is useful not only in itself but also in the illumination that it gives to some of these most basic issues in language and cognition. There are probably over two hundred pidgins and creoles in the world today. They are hybrid language-systems based on many different languages. A creole, like a pidgin, is based on two or more languages, but unlike a pidgin it is learned as a native language, and it contains fuller syntax and

⁷⁶ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 303-306

vocabulary. A particularly large number are based on English. They fall into two main groups, the Atlantic and the Pacific. The Atlantic varieties include those of the Caribbean, of Guyana, and of West Africa, and the Pacific varieties those of the South Sea islands, of Australia, and of the coasts of South-East Asia. A pidgin can fulfill a wide range of functions and sometimes speakers use a pidgin more frequently than their native language.⁷⁷ In English based pidgins, the main features taken over into the pidgin are lexical. English 'grass' in Tok Pisin is *gras*; 'moustache' is *mausgras*; 'beard' is *grasbilongfes* ('grass on face'); 'hair' is *gras bilong hed*; 'eyebrow' is *gras antap longai* ('grass on top along eye'); 'weed' is *gras nogut*. In these pidgin expressions, prepositions and word order rather than inflectional endings signal the grammatical and semantic relationships. A pidgin tends to preserve the absolutely minimal grammatical structures needed for effective communication. The preposition *bilong* (from the verb 'belong') serves a number of functions in Tok Pisin that in English would be assigned to varying case forms, including possession: 'my mother' is *mama bilong mi*; 'John's house' is *haus bilong John*. Pidgins can present aspectual distinctions some never explicitly marked in the verb phrase. For example, habitual or continuing action is indicated in Hawaiian Creole by including the particle *stay* in the verb phrase, and other creoles have similar markers: *I stay run in Kapiolani Park every evening* indicates habitual or repetitive action rather than action completed at a certain point. The accomplishment of purpose is made explicit in creole languages around the world. The English sentence "John went to Honolulu to see Mary" does not specify whether John actually saw Mary. Such ambiguity must be resolved in Hawaiian Creole. If the speaker knows that John saw Mary, the appropriate sentence is *John bin go Honolulu go see Mary*. If John did not see Mary or if the speaker does not know whether John saw Mary, the appropriate verb form expresses intention without expressing completion: *John bin go Honolulu for see Mary*.⁷⁸ Because

⁷⁷ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 257-259

⁷⁸ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 312-313

English-based creoles are so numerous and so widespread, the study of present-day English in all its worldwide varieties is useful not only in itself but also in the illumination that it gives to some of these most basic issues in language and cognition. Another important factor of language in general which the study of pidgins and creoles clarifies is the idea of a linguistic continuum. Whereas earlier observations noted only a binary distinction between the standard language and the “patois,” research during the past quarter century has made it clear that there are multiple, overlapping grammars between the basilect (the most extreme form of pidgin or creole) and the acrolect (the standard language). These intermediate grammars are known as mesolects. There is often an observable hierarchy of linguistic features associated with various points on the continuum (for example, different past tense formations of verbs, some closer than others to the standard). If a speaker has a nonstandard feature located near the basilectal extreme, it is likely that the speaker will also have all of the other nonstandard features that are increasingly closer to the standard language. This technique of analysis is known as an “implicational scale.” The regularity of such scales in pidgin and creole languages world-wide leads to yet another interesting problem: the order of acquisition of the scaled features in the process of learning a language. Typically the standard features near the basilectal end of the implicational scale are learned first, and those near the acrolectal end are learned later if at all. The study of language acquisition leads finally to a convergence in the concerns of creolists and generative grammarians.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Lerer S., *The History of the English Language volume II*, The Teaching Company, 2008, Virginia. pp. 154-155

1.3 *Social Varieties of the English Language*

1.3.1 Standard English

Standard English is often referred to as "the standard language". It is clear, however, that Standard English is not "a language" in any meaningful sense of this term. Standard English, whatever it is, is less than a language, since it is only one variety of English among many. Standard English may be the most important variety of English, in all sorts of ways: it is the variety of English normally used in writing, especially printing; it is the variety associated with the education system in all the English-speaking countries of the world, and is therefore the variety spoken by those who are often referred to as "educated people"; and it is the variety taught to non-native learners. But most native speakers of English in the world are native speakers of some nonstandard variety of the language, Standard English is thus not *the* English language but simply one variety of it. Standard English has nothing to do with pronunciation. In Britain there's a high status and widely described accent known as Received Pronunciation (RP), that it is not associated with any geographical area, being instead a purely social accent associated with speakers in all parts of the country, or at least in England, from upper-class and upper-middle-class backgrounds. It is widely agreed, though, that while all RP speakers also speak Standard English, the reverse is not the case. RP is in a sense, standardised, it is a standardised accent of English and not Standard English itself.⁸⁰ This point becomes even clearer from an international perspective. Standard English speakers can be found in all English-speaking countries, and it goes without saying that they speak this variety with different non-RP accents depending on whether they came from Scotland or the USA or New Zealand or wherever. There is considerable confusion concerning the relationship between Standard English and the vocabulary associated with formal varieties of the

⁸⁰ Lerer S., *The History of the English Language volume II*, The Teaching Company, 2008, Virginia. pp. 65-68

English language. Styles are varieties of language which can be ranged on a continuum ranging from very formal to very informal. Formal styles are employed in social situations which are formal, and informal styles are employed in social situations which are informal. Speakers are able to influence and change the degree of formality of a social situation by manipulation of stylistic choice. All the languages of the world would appear to demonstrate some degree of stylistic differentiation in this sense, reflecting the wide range of social relationships and social situations found, to a greater or lesser extent, in all human societies. In many areas of the world, switching from informal to formal situations also involves switching from one language to another. English as it is employed in areas where it is the major native language of the community, such as in the British Isles, North America and Australasia, is a language which has the fullest possible range of styles running from the most to the least formal. This obviously does not mean to say, however, that all speakers have equal access to or ability in all styles. Sociolinguists agreed that Standard English is a dialect. Standard English is simply one variety of English among many. It is a sub-variety of English. Sub-varieties of languages are usually referred to as dialects, and languages are often described as consisting of dialects.⁸¹ Standard English is however of course an unusual dialect in a number of ways. It is for example by far the most important dialect in the English-speaking world from a social, intellectual and cultural point of view; and it does not have an associated accent. Unlike other dialects, Standard English is a purely social dialect. Because of its unusual history and its extreme sociological importance, it is no longer a geographical dialect, even if we can tell that its origins were originally in the southeast of England. In the English-speaking world as a whole, it comes in a number of different forms, so that we can talk, if we wish to for some particular purpose, of Scottish Standard English, or American Standard English. But the most salient sociolinguistic characteristic of Standard English is that it is a social dialect. Historically, we can

⁸¹ Barber C., *The English Language: A historical introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, New York. pp. 223-228

say that Standard English was selected (though of course, unlike many other languages, not by any overt or conscious decision) as the variety to become the standard variety precisely because it was the variety associated with the social group with the highest degree of power, wealth and prestige. Subsequent developments have reinforced its social character: the fact that it has been employed as the dialect of an education to which pupils, especially in earlier centuries, have had differential access depending on their social class background. There are differences between Standard English and the nonstandard dialects. These differences are not phonological, and that they do not appear to be lexical either. Standard English is a social dialect which is distinguished from other dialects of the language by its grammatical forms. Standard English most certainly tolerates sentence-final prepositions, as in *"I've bought a new car which I'm very pleased with."* and does not exclude constructions such as *"It's me"* or *"He is taller than me."* Grammatical differences between Standard English and other dialects are in fact rather few in number, although of course they are very significant socially. Standard English of course has most of its grammatical features in common with the other dialects.⁸²

1.3.2 Slang

*"Slang is language which takes off its coat, spits on its hands- and goes to work."*⁸³

– Carl Sandburg

Slang has, whether appreciated or not, always been a part of our everyday language. Slang is used in many different types of media and situations. In computer mediated communication, such as instant messaging, a lot of the language used is slang, such as writing "lol" instead of "laughing out loud" or "C

⁸² <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/SEtrudgill.htm>, Bex T. & Watts R. J. eds. *Standard English: the widening debate*, Routledge, 1999, London. pp. 117-128

⁸³ quoted in Lindskoog K. A., *Creative Writing*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1989, Michigan. p. 66

U" instead of "see you". However, slang occurs in oral communication all over the world. Slang is an area of lexis in a permanent state of flux consisting of vivid and colorful words and phrases which characterize various social and professional groups, especially when these terms are used for in-group communication. Slang provides and reinforces social identity but it is also used in society at large to achieve an air of informality and relaxation and "*the more one knows somebody, the more one can rely on abbreviated forms and slang.*"⁸⁴ Of all social groups, the young are the most prone to the use and renovation of slang and unconventional language. They exhibit great social dynamism and are receptive to changes in fashion: in clothes, look, style, and also in speech. Another important part in the development of slang is the invention of new words; this phenomenon is very obvious within the hip-hop-culture, but it can also be words that are substitutes for already existing words such as *pub*, which originated from "public house", but when used frequently enough and by an increasing amount of people gains status. According to Andersson & Trudgill⁸⁵ slang can be traced as far back as 385 BC when Aristophanes was the first writer to use slang extensively. Also Shakespeare used a lot of slang in his plays, such as, *clay-brained* instead of *stupid*. In the sixteenth century the English word *blockhead* was first used, and it is still in use today. The term "slang" itself was used by British criminals to refer to their own language whereas "cant" was the word used by the outside world. The word *lad* (meaning "boy" or "son") is accepted in the northern parts of England but is considered as slang in the southern parts. Even journalists are beginning to use slang in their writing. Hip-hop is a culture that has a language of its own (jargon) which is very hard to understand if you are an outsider, e.g. *shackles* and *Seatown* which means "*handcuffs*" and "*Seattle*"⁸⁶ which of course aids in the acceptance of such language. Slang is mainly a question of vocabulary usage as there are not many grammatical features of slang. Within the hip-hop culture, a lot of newly

⁸⁴ Crystal D. & Davy D., *Investigating English Style*, Longman Inc., 1969, New York. p. 103

⁸⁵ Andersson L. & Trudgill P., *Bad Language*, Penguin Books, 1992, London. p. 14

⁸⁶ <http://www.urbandictionary.com/>

invented words can be found, such as, for *shizzle* or *bling*, which means “for sure” and “jewellery”. This invention of new words is called “coinage” by linguists. To fully conform to the style and exclude outsiders it is also very important how to dress and what music to listen to. Very often, however, slang is not so much about the invention of new words as it is about coming up with new meanings for already existing words such as *hot*, which originally was a word to describe temperature but now has various different meanings like “sexy”, “stolen”, “wanted by the police” or “popular”. What is slang to one generation may not be slang to the next generation, since language is constantly changing, and words and expressions can move from one form of it to another. As Andersson and Trudgill both agree that slang includes “uses of words or expressions which are extremely informal and which are often fashionable and therefore rather temporary.”⁸⁷ Different forms of slang quickly grow old and are replaced by new ones. For example, *super*, *groovy* and *hip* which all mean “really good” have been replaced by *dope*, *kickass* and *phat*. This is a very natural evolution as most adolescents do not want to sound like their parents and therefore need new slang words to distance themselves from that which was “cool” when their parents were young. The point of slang is often to be amusing or shocking.⁸⁸ This is also why the invention of new slang words or coming up with alternative meanings for already existing words is crucial. When words lose their shocking or amusing effect they need to be replaced with new words. This often goes hand in hand with other groups accepting these words and beginning to use them in everyday-language usage. Slang does not differ from other trends but is often invented in big cities and then spreads out to the rest of the country. The slang that people use may differ vastly according to age, gender, social class, social groups and context. Young males seem to be the most frequent users of slang and males are also the ones who are most unlikely to avoid the use of slang no matter what situation they find themselves in. Many young people, regardless of their ethnic background, now use

⁸⁷ Andersson L. & Trudgill P., *Bad Language*, Penguin Books, 1992, London. p. 16

⁸⁸ Pedersen T., *The Use of Slang in British English*, C-paper, 2007, Kalmar. p. 8

the black slang terms, *nang* ('cool,') and *diss* ('insult' — from 'disrespecting') or words derived from Hindi and Urdu, such as *chuddies* ('underpants') or *desi* ('typically Asian'). Many also use the all-purpose tag-question, *innit* - as in statements such as *you're weird, innit*.⁸⁹ It has been contested that slang has traditionally been a way to "include people into a social group, and exclude other people from entering."⁹⁰ Another way in which written slang deviates from spoken forms is in its use of words which may be considered taboo. David Crystal comments that taboo words are commonly "not so much a use of language as an outburst."⁹¹ This assertion is not altogether true when placed in the setting of an online chat room however, since in order to convey an outburst in such an environment, an individual must first spend the time writing it down and thus losing its spontaneous nature. In many instances, things are misspelt in order to defy restrictions which are put in place to ensure that taboo words are not able to be used within environments such as chat rooms and forums. Such an example is the word 'carp', which is not deemed inappropriate unless it is discerned as an intentional misspelling of the word 'crap'. The effect of these deliberate 'mistakes' is that very little can be done – even by the most conscientious moderators – to completely eradicate the utilisation of such terms. Despite Andersson and Trudgill's statement that as a rule, slang terms "come into language, be very popular, then die out again fairly rapidly"⁹² there is a lot of evidence which suggests that certain slang terms have been in constant use for over a decade.

⁸⁹ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/find-out-more/minority-ethnic/>

⁹⁰ Thorne T., BBC News Article, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8388545.stm>, 2010.

⁹¹ Crystal D., *Words Words Words*, Oxford University Press, 2006, Oxford. p. 132

⁹² Andersson L. & Trudgill P., *Bad Language*, Penguin Books, 1992, London. p. 16

1.3.3 Social and ethnic varieties of English

The concentrated study of ethnic and social dialects is more recent than that of regional ones but has been vigorously pursued. American English includes a very large number of ethnic dialects. Spanish-influenced dialects include those of New York City (Puerto Rican), Florida (Cuban), and Texas and California (different varieties of Mexican). Pennsylvania Dutch is actually a variety of High German brought to America by early settlers and here mixed with English. The Jewish dialect, derived from Yiddish, is important in New York, but has had pervasive influence on informal speech throughout the country. Scandinavian, especially Swedish, immigrants to Wisconsin created a distinctive ethnic dialect there. Louisiana has Cajun dialect, so called because the French-speaking settlers came from Acadie (or Acadia), their name for Nova Scotia. The Appalachian region has a distinctive dialect derived in part from its early Scotch-Irish settlers. The United States has had settlers from all over the world, and wherever communities of immigrants have settled, an ethnic dialect has sprung up.

One of the main ethnic groups in the present-day USA are African Americans (people of African plus American descent). They originally came through the Caribbean in the 17th century and later directly to the USA (18th century). The distinctive African-American vocabulary exerts a steady and enriching influence on the language of other Americans; for example, *nitty-gritty* came from black use, as did *jazz* earlier, and *yam* much earlier.⁹³ The origin of African-American English has been attributed to two sources. One is that blacks may have first acquired their English from the whites among whom they worked on the plantations of the New World, and therefore their present English reflects the kind of English their ancestors learned several hundred years ago, modified by generations of segregation. Another is that blacks, who originally spoke a number of different African languages, may have first learned a kind of pidgin—a mixed and limited

⁹³ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 197

language used for communication between those without a common tongue—perhaps based on Portuguese, African languages, and English. Because they had no other common language, the pidgin was creolized, that is, became the native and full language of the plantation slaves and eventually was assimilated to the English spoken around them, so that today there are few of the original creole features still remaining. The historical reality was certainly more complex than either view alone depicts, but both explanations doubtless have some truth in them. The reduction of final consonant clusters (for example, *lis'* for *list*), is a common feature of the African American English as is the loss of postvocalic r (*ca'* for *car*, *fo'* for *four*). The most usual context for deletion of such consonants is before a word beginning with a consonant. African American English differs from other varieties in having a higher rate of deletion before a vowel (for example, *lif'up* for *liftup*).⁹⁴ African American English is also characterized by deletion of a word-final single consonant after a vowel as in *ma'* for *man* or *boo'* for *boot*. As in many varieties of English, both standard and nonstandard, the *-ing* suffix occurs as [in], in *singin'*. Among the grammatical features of African American English, the verbal system is especially interesting in its systematic differences from Standard English. The verb to be is regularly deleted both as the linking verb and as the helping verb: for example *He tall* for Standard English *He is tall*, and *They runnin'* for *They are running*. There is a category of verbal aspect that represents habitual action that may occur over a period of time repeatedly, though not necessarily continuously; for example, *They be runnin'* for Standard English *They are usually running*, or *They usually run*. In African American English this structure contrasts with *They runnin'*, cited above, which means *They are running right now*. Other systematic features of the verbal system in African American English include the use of *done* to emphasize the completed nature of an action—for example, *He done did it* for Standard English *He's already done it*—and the absence

⁹⁴ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 361

of third person singular present tense *-s*, as in *He talk* for Standard English *He talks*.⁹⁵

Like African American English, Hispanic American English is a social and ethnic variety. Hispanics (people of Central American Spanish descent), are largely speakers of Chicano English, but some are Puerto Ricans (in New York) or Cubans (in southern Florida) by origin. Hispanic American English is unique among the major varieties of English in being the result of languages in continuing contact within a bilingual culture, and yet the complexity of the linguistic situation is such that some scholars have questioned whether it is a dialect at all. Many of the features of Hispanic American English do not appear in Spanish, and many of its speakers have low proficiency in Spanish or are monolingual in English. These facts make clear that the variety is learned and spoken like any other variety of English. Yet the situation is complex, because the community of speakers includes those who are fluently bilingual, those who are much more proficient in Spanish than in English, and those who are much more proficient in English than in Spanish. While features of pronunciation and intonation may remain stable, the selection of those features depends on numerous variables, including the context of speech and the attitude of the speaker. In a study of Mexican-American English, a variety often referred to as Chicano English, the authors conclude: "Within the Chicano community, there is a large span of social differences which are correlated to differences in language acquisition patterns, language usage—code-choice—and linguistic variables pertaining to Chicano English and other dialects. When considering Chicano English and patterns of language usage, it is perhaps a misnomer to refer to 'the Chicano community' when there is such wide variation within the community."⁹⁶ Code-switching between English and Spanish is a familiar feature of Chicano English. The lexicon of Hispanic American English

⁹⁵ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 362

⁹⁶ Penfield J. and Ornstein-Galicia J. L., *Chicano English: An Ethnic Contact Dialect*, Benjamins Pub., 1985, Amsterdam. p. 18

presents a more contemporary picture and a growing population in the United States and in other English-speaking countries knows the meaning of *tapas*, *seviche*, and *luminaria*. The categories of borrowed words include politics, from which we get *Sandinista*, *Contra*, *Fidelist*; food and drink, represented by *nachos*, *burrito*, *sangria*, *margarita*; and ethnicity, with *Chicano* and *Chicana*, *Latino* and *Latina* as prominent designations. In the past, Spanish borrowings have typically marked the regional dialects of Western and Border States—California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado—and then some have gained general currency in American English. A few of these words have become part of world English. Contact between Spanish and English will be a continuing source for the introduction of new or revived Spanish words into regional varieties of English.⁹⁷

1.4 Functional Varieties of the English Language

1.4.1 Formal versus Informal

Although English does not have a strong set of rules for formal language, speakers need to be careful how they speak in different situations. Formal language is often used in official public notices, business situations, and polite conversations with strangers. Formal language has stricter grammar rules and often uses more difficult vocabulary. It is more commonly used in writing than in speech. It follows the conventions of “standard” language and it uses language forms that often grammatically and lexically considered “correct” or agreed upon by most educated users of the language. For example: sentences are often long and complex; subject-verb agreement is observed; contractions are avoided; (*He is going to the dance tonight* not *He’s going to the dance tonight*). The passive voice is often used to make the speech more impersonal. It is better organized and thought out. The past tense of modal auxiliaries is common, and so on. Clear and precise

⁹⁷ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 367

vocabulary is used; hence, clichés, colloquialisms, idioms, phrasal verbs, proverbs and slang are avoided. Likewise, a lot of synonyms are used in order to avoid the repetition of the same words. Also, much vocabulary derived from French and Latin is used. Polite words and formulas like Please, Thank you, Madam, Sir, Mr. /Mrs. /Miss/Ms, Would you mind...?, May I...?, Could you please...?, etc. are often used in speech. When spoken, words are more carefully and more slowly pronounced than in informal English.

English is often spoken informally especially in the States, Canada, and Australia. Informal language is all right for friends, co-workers, host family, or service staff (at a restaurant for example). Informal language has less strict grammar rules and often has shortened sentences. It often violates the conventions of “standard” language. For example: sentences are often short and simple; subject-verb agreement is not necessarily observed; contractions and acronyms are very common; the active voice is often used; Words that express rapport and familiarity are often used in speech, such as *brother, buddy, man, you know* and when spoken, words are less carefully and more quickly pronounced. Vocabulary is often different as well. For example: *That’s legit / sweet / awesome* (informal). *That’s great* (formal). Informal language is usually spoken more than written. Because it is spoken, informal language can be very different in every area. People in California might say ‘legit’, but people in New York might say ‘sweet’. Informal language is also constantly changing. New words are added all the time and people stop using older words. This can make it difficult for a learner to understand the language. The speech is less organized and thought out. ⁹⁸

⁹⁸ <http://www.englishspark.com/informal-language/>

1.4.2 Written versus Spoken Language

Spoken vs. written language is a contrast which reflects two aspects of the same phenomenon. The spoken language is primary in the sense that it is learned before the written language is. Indeed, speakers of a language can be fluent and creative users of the language without necessarily being literate at all. Furthermore, numerous languages spoken in today's world do not have a writing system. The written language is, in the sense just mentioned, secondary, but it is not just a reflection of the spoken language from which is somehow abstracted. It relies on different ways of expressing the distinctions which speech makes by means of tempo, pitch, intonation, and stress, but it cannot replicate them fully, just as it cannot reflect the voice quality of the individual speaker. On the other hand, handwriting, too, is very individual and cannot be copied by speech style or voice quality. Furthermore, the written language can make use of symbols (e.g. @, , ,), tables, diagrams and other figures – all of which cannot be reproduced in the spoken language or at least not easily. The spoken language is more immediate (usually restricted to people close by), generally more short-lived, more spontaneous, and more individual while the written language is more independent of the circumstances of its production, accessible over a longer period of time, often carefully planned and even edited, and subject to conventions of standardization, including spelling in particular. Written grammar tends to be fussier and more complex than spoken grammar, but also more generally free of the lexical vagaries like *and stuff*, fillers such as *like* or *y'know*, false starts (*well, I, I ... she finally said yes*), hesitation signals (*uh*), and redundancies (*I liked it – it was really good, absolutely tops*) of speech.⁹⁹ Perhaps because of these differences many speakers of the language consider the written language to be the “real” language and miss the point that the two forms of the language fulfill different functions, each appropriate and legitimate in its own right. As far as English is concerned,

⁹⁹ Gramley S., *The History of English: An Introduction*, Routledge, Chapter 4, <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/gramley>

there are probably quite a few speakers of the language besides young children who are not (functionally) literate. On the other hand, as English spreads across the world as a global language there are probably very many users of the language who are more comfortable with the written than the spoken language, especially since spelling is highly fixed while accent varies enormously.

Chapter II

Features of American English - Phonology, Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar

“It is quite impossible to stop the progress of language—it is like the course of the Mississippi, the motion of which, at times, is scarcely perceptible; yet even then it possesses a momentum quite irresistible.”

—Noah Webster¹⁰⁰

2.1 History of the Making of American English

English developed in America after the arrival of English speakers in what was then seen as ‘the New World’. It is important to remember that the first British settlers in America would have spoken varieties of Early Modern English. Initially, then, varieties of English in America would have sounded like varieties of English in Britain. Over time, though, differences emerged as a result of numerous factors: contact with other languages, the influence of other cultures and power struggles. The forging of a national identity distinct from that of Britain was also responsible for developments in the language.

The Colonial, the National, and the International period.

The first British settlers in America came from a variety of places in England. London was just one of these. Additionally, settlers originated from such counties as Gloucestershire, Somerset, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Essex and Kent. What is particularly important here is that the early British settlers were drawn

¹⁰⁰ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 25

from the lower and middle classes of Britain, and consequently the English that was initially spoken in America included many regional dialectal features as opposed to being solely a form of Standard English. Research in sociolinguistics suggests that change and development in language is generally instigated by the middle-classes. Some of the factors that caused the development of English in the earliest American colonies include: the numerical majority — the dialectal forms that were most frequent in the colonies were the ones that were most likely to survive and develop into American English, for example, the larger was the group of settlers from a particular area of Britain, the more likely their regional dialect was to have an influence on what became the norm in the developing American English variety. Another factor could be the prestige — the linguistic forms used by community leaders would most likely have been viewed as prestigious and adopted into American English for this reason. Last but not least the lack of contact with Britain influenced the making of American English.¹⁰¹ The influence of British English was, over time, reduced as a result of diminishing contact between the settlers and their homeland. Conversely, the experiences of colonial life were more likely to affect the development of American English. Contact between English and other languages played a similarly important part in the development of American English during the *Colonial Period*.¹⁰² Languages and dialects that English came into contact with included those of the Native American Indians, as well as Dutch, Spanish, French and German. Contact with Native Americans brought into English a number of words having particular reference to their way of life: *wigwam*, *tomahawk*, *canoe*, *toboggan*, *mackinaw*, *moccasin*, *wampum*, *squaw*, and *papoose*. These are Native American words, but there are also English words formed at the same time and out of the same experience: *war path*, *paleface*, *medicineman*, *pipeofpeace*, *big chief*, *war paint*, and the verb *to scalp*. Native American words for Native American foods were taken over in the case of *hominy*, *tapioca*,

¹⁰¹ <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415444293/>

¹⁰² Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. pp. 6-20

succotash, and *pone*. Many other words illustrate things associated with the new mode of life: *back country*, *backwoodsman*, *squatter*, *prairie*, *log cabin*, *clapboard*, *corncrib*, *popcorn*, *hoe cake*, *cold snap*, *snow plow*, *bobsled*, and *sleigh*. Dutch contributed chiefly to the vocabulary and to a small extent to public culture. Among the words which entered American English from Dutch we find *cookie*, *cole slaw*, *pot cheese*, and *waffle*. *Boss* also comes from Dutch, as do *yacht*, *stoop*, *snoop*, *spook*, *dope*, *dumb*, and maybe even *Yankee*. From the French colonists they learned *portage*, *chowder*, *cache*, *caribou*, *bureau*, *bayou*, and others.¹⁰³ Because the early British settlers in America were not from the upper echelons of society and perhaps not as well educated, it is likely that spoken language more than written language determined the standard form of American English that developed. The standard that gradually emerged was not as socially charged as written Standard British English and Received Pronunciation, most likely because the social hierarchy of Britain had not been transplanted to the American colonies. English in the United States is most uniform in the domain of syntax and most variable in pronunciation. This is an observation also made by contemporary observers of American English like H. L. Mencken and Marckwardt.¹⁰⁴ This is overstated by the dialect levelling, a process by which the characteristic features of dialects are gradually lost as dialects converge. This development came about in part because of the establishment of schools wherein children would be exposed to standard forms. American English also retains a number of 'archaic' forms of British English. It is often the case that the form is still in use in dialects of British English other than Standard English. Archaisms in American English are often simply forms which are no longer in use in Standard British English. 'Archaism' is perhaps not, therefore, the best term to use when describing these differences. Albert H. Marckwardt, the American linguist and author of "*American English*" reports that the word *druggist* was used in England until around 1750, when it was replaced by *chemist*. However, *druggist* remained in use in the American colonies.

¹⁰³ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 340-344

¹⁰⁴ Mencken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 29

Nevertheless, as Marckwardt points out, while *druggist* fell out of usage in the Standard British English of the time, it was retained in some dialects of Scotland. In contemporary American English, while *druggist* may be used in the mid-West or on the East Coast, other dialects prefer *pharmacist*. Just to confuse things, you may find that *pharmacist* is now replacing *chemist* in some British English dialects. Older forms of English are preserved in American English, but it is also the case that these forms continued to be used in British English dialects. The only sense, then, in which they are archaic is when compared against Standard British English. By any matter the current status of English as a global language makes an untenable position to take and to imply that Standard British English is the measure against which all other varieties are to be judged.

The *National Period*, beginning with the American Declaration of Independence from England in 1776, brought political and cultural independence for the United States. This included linguistic self-awareness for Americans. With political independence achieved, many of the colonists began to manifest a distaste for anything that seemed to perpetuate the former dependence. An ardent, sometimes belligerent patriotism sprang up, and among many people it became the order of the day to demand an American civilization as distinctive from that of Europe as were the political and social ideals that were being established in the new world.¹⁰⁵ No one expressed this attitude more vigorously than Noah Webster (1758–1843). Webster saw the arrival of American Independence as an opportunity to get rid of the linguistic influence of Britain. The new nation needed a new language with a fresh identity. In his *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789) he proposed the institution of an American Standard. It was hardly possible for British English to continue to be the model for the American people. England was too far away.¹⁰⁶ The former colonies were forged into a nation not simply by sharing political or

¹⁰⁵ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. pp. 20-23

¹⁰⁶ Crystal D., *The Stories of English*, Penguin Group, 2004, London. pp. 419-420

geographical experience but by sharing linguistic experience. “*Language is the expression of ideas,*” Webster wrote, and he made it clear that the words of the English language were keyed to the experiences of its speakers. He was concerned with issues of spelling and suggested a moderate spelling reform. He respelled British words into American forms that are still used today, for example, simplifying *honour* to *honor* and *colour* to *color*. He also advocated dropping the “k” at the end of such words as *music*, *logic*, and *physic*. He spelled such words as *theater* and *center* with “er” at the end rather than “re” and *defense* with an “s” rather than a “c.” In general, Webster argued that spelling should be more representative of pronunciation than British convention had it. He favored the elimination of certain silent letters or of letter clusters that are not pronounced. Webster also recorded newer American pronunciations. In the pronunciation guide to his dictionary, he advised pronouncing full syllable counts in words.¹⁰⁷ American English was more distinctive from British in vocabulary and pronunciation than in grammar. But it was also distinctive in style. Another aspect of cultural independence was the development of a distinctive American literature written by American authors acknowledged internationally for their contributions to English literature. Developments which moulded the language of Americans during the nineteenth century included the settlement of the West, the extension of the railroads, the growth of industry, the labour movement, the invention of the telegraph and telephone, the expansion of education at all levels, and the publication of textbooks and dictionaries.¹⁰⁸

The *International period*, beginning with the Spanish-American War of 1898, brought the US to extend its overseas interests. An Open Door policy was affirmed for China, the US mediated the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, the Panamanian

¹⁰⁷ Lerer S., *The History of the English Language volume II*, The Teaching Company, 2008, Virginia. pp. 129-130

¹⁰⁸ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. pp. 34-37

revolution against Colombia was supported, intervention in Latin American affairs became frequent, to prevent European involvement and secure American interests. The Virgin Islands in the Caribbean were purchased from Denmark and in 1917 the US entered World War I.¹⁰⁹ Thereafter, Americans played an increasing role in world politics and economics with a consequent effect on American English usage. In turn, such US institutions as the movie industry in Hollywood, jazz and popular music from the South, participation in World War II, post-war technological developments such as the computer, and the activities and products of major US corporations and publications, from Coca-Cola to Time magazine, have helped disseminate Americanisms throughout the world. The worldwide dissemination of American English, affects other languages around the globe, but it also affects British English, which is changed by its contacts with other languages, just as it changes them.

¹⁰⁹ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. pp. 15-16

2.2 Features of American English and differences with British English

2.2.1 Phonology

*"Language does not consist of letters, but of sounds, and until this fact has been brought home to us our study of it will be little better than an exercise of memory."*¹¹⁰

A. H. Sayce

Pronunciation

Differences in vowel and consonant pronunciation, as well as in word stress and intonation, combine to create American and British accents. Speakers of both varieties pronounce the vowel of words in the *cat, fat, mat*, class with /æ/. For similar words ending in a fricative such as *fast, path, and half*, American English has /æ/, while some British varieties have /ɑ:/, the stressed vowel of *father*. Americans pronounce the vowel in the *new, tune* and *duty* class with /u/, as though they were spelled "noo," "toon," and "dooty." Varieties of British English often pronounce them with /ju/, as though spelled "nyew," "tyune," and "dyuty," a pronunciation also heard among some older Americans.¹¹¹ As to consonants, perhaps the most noticeable difference has to do with intervocalic /t/. When /t/ occurs between a stressed and an unstressed vowel, Americans and Canadians usually pronounce it as a flap [ɾ]. As a result *latter* and *ladder* are pronounced the same. By contrast, speakers of some British varieties pronounce intervocalic /t/ as [t]. Similarly, /t/ is often lost from /nt/ in *winter* ('winner'), *anti* ('annie'), *international* ('innernational'). As another example, most American varieties have a retroflex /r/ in word-final position in words such as *car* and *near* and also preceding a consonant as in *cart* and *beard*, whereas some British varieties,

¹¹⁰ Sayce A. H., *Introduction to the Science of Language - 4th ed. Vol. II*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1900, London. p. 339

¹¹¹ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 263-267

including standard British English, do not. With respect to this post-vocalic /r/, speakers of Irish and Scottish English follow the American pattern, while speakers of dialects in New York City, Boston, and parts of the coastal South follow the British pattern. The *l* at the end of words and between vowels like in *bill*, and *pillow* is typically dark: pronounced with the back of the tongue lifted toward the roof of the mouth. Secondary stress is normal on the penultimate syllables of words like *laboratory* and *secretary*, so that these words end like *Tory* and *Terry*. At the same time, syncope is common in words like *fam'ly*, *fed'ral*, *happ'ning*.¹¹²

Different Pronunciations for Individual Words

For the pronunciation of individual words, much the same situation holds true as for word choices: the differences are relatively inconsequential and frequently shared. For instance, in *either* and *neither* an overwhelming majority of Americans have [i] in the stressed syllable, though some, largely from the Atlantic coastal cities, have [ai], which is also found elsewhere, because of its supposed prestige. The [i] pronunciation also occurs in standard British English alongside its usual [ai]. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate* and the *Shorter Oxford* dictionaries each give both pronunciations without national identifications, although in reverse order. The pronunciation by which British speakers are distinguished is Received Pronunciation, Oxford English, BBC English, or standard British English, as it is variously designated. Received Pronunciation developed at the end of the eighteenth century, during the period of the American Revolution. At that time there was no pronunciation by which people in America could be distinguished from people in England.¹¹³ In the impressments controversies of the 1790s, naval officers on both sides found it so difficult to tell whether sailors were British or American that the American government considered providing certificates of

¹¹² Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 272-275

¹¹³ Algeo, J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. p. 71

citizenship. In view of the foregoing it would be hopeless to attempt to exhibit all the differences between English and American pronunciation, for many of them are extremely small and subtle, and only their aggregation makes them plain. The most important of them do not lie in pronunciation at all, properly so called, but in intonation. It is in this direction, that one must look for the true characters of "*the English accent*."¹¹⁴ Though they use the same words the Englishmen and Americans do not speak the same tune. Perhaps the most noticeable of these differences is in the vowel sound in such words as *fast, path, grass, dance, can't, half*. At the end of the eighteenth century southern England began to change from what is called a flat *a* to a broad *a* in these words, that is from a sound like the *a* in *man* to one like the *a* in *father*. The change affected words in which the vowel occurred before *f, sk, sp, st, ss, th,* and *n* followed by certain consonants.¹¹⁵ In parts of New England the same change took place, but in most other parts of the country the old sound was preserved, and *fast, path, etc.*, are pronounced with the vowel of *pan*. In some speakers there is a tendency to employ an intermediate vowel, halfway between the *a* of *pan* and *father*, but the "flat *a*" must be regarded as the typical American pronunciation. Next to the retention of the flat *a*, the most noticeable difference between English and American pronunciation is in the treatment of the *r*. In the received pronunciation of England this sound has disappeared except before vowels. It is not heard when it occurs before another consonant or at the end of a word unless the next word begins with a vowel. In America, eastern New England and some of the South follow the English practice, but in the Middle States and the West the *r* is pronounced in all positions. Thus in the received standard of England *lord* has the same sound as *laud* and *there*, the American *r* is either a retention of older English pronunciation or the result of north-of-England influence. This caused more comment than any other distinction in American pronunciation. A distinction less apparent to the layman is the pronunciation of

¹¹⁴ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 256

¹¹⁵ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 352

the *o* in such words as *not, lot, hot, top*.¹¹⁶ In England this is still an open *o* pronounced with the lips rounded, but in America except in parts of New England it has commonly lost its rounding and in most words has become a sound identical in quality with the *a* in *father*, only short. There are other differences of less moment between English and American pronunciation, because they concern individual words or small groups of words. Thus in England *been* has the same sound as *bean* but in America is like *bin*. *Leisure* often has in America what is popularly called a long vowel but in England usually rhymes with *pleasure*. There, too, the last syllable of words like *fertile* and *sterile* rhymes with *aisle*. Americans do not suppress the final *t* in *trait* or pronounce an *f* in *lieutenant*. A more important difference is the greater clearness with which Americans pronounce unaccented syllables. They do not say *secret'ry* or *necess'ry*. Bernard Shaw said he once recognized an American because he accented the third syllable of *necessary*.¹¹⁷ The suppression of syllables in Britain has been accompanied by a difference at times in the position of the chief stress. The British commonly say *centen'ary* and *labor'atory*, and *adver'tisement* is never *advertise'ment*. There is, of course, more in speech than the quality of the sounds. There is also the matter of pitch and tempo. Americans speak more slowly and with less variety of tone. There can be no gainsaying the fact that American speech is a bit more monotonous, is uttered with less variety in the intonation, than that of Britain. Other differences are sporadic and on the whole negligible. The differences between British and American pronunciation are not such as should cause any alarm for the future, any fear that the British and Americans may become unintelligible to each other.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. p. 74

¹¹⁷ Darragh G., *A to Zed, A to Zee - A Guide to the Differences between British and American English*, Editorial Stanley, 2000, Irun. p. 23

¹¹⁸ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 354

Stress, Intonation and Rhythm

Stress— is the relative prominence of the syllables in a word and of words in a sentence. The change of stress, contributes to differentiate the American accent from the British accent. Three important areas where American English differentiates from British English and are worth mentioning are the French loanwords, the ending *-ate*, and the suffixes *-ary*, *-ory*, *-berry*, and *-mony*. Loanwords from French were adapted by American English in a different way than there were by British English. Change of stress is the most noticeable difference.¹¹⁹ In General American French loanwords have a final-syllable stress, while Received Pronunciation stresses an earlier syllable. It seems that the American English phonology has respected the fixed accent of the French language, which in most cases falls on the last syllable. For example words like *adult*, *brochure*, *buffet*, *café*, *chalet*, *chauffeur*, *cliché*, *coupé*, *décor*, *detail*, *frappé*, *garage*, *parquet*, are first-syllable stress in Received Pronunciation but second-syllable stress in General American. While words like *attaché*, *consommé*, *décolleté*, *fiancé* are second-syllable stress in RP but last-syllable stress in GA. *Address*, *cigarette*, and *magazine* are common words where GA has a first-syllable stress and RP has last-syllable stress. Words ending in *-ate*, mostly verbs, have a different stress pattern in both accents depending on the length of the word. Verbs like *dictate*, *donate*, *locate*, *migrate*, *placate*, *pulsate*, *rotate* have first-syllable stress in GA and second-syllable stress in RP. There are exceptions where both pronunciations agree, as in *abate*, *checkmate*, *duplicate*, *evacuate*, *graduate*, *imitate*. Longer verbs ending in *-ate* are pronounced the same in GA and RP. There are a few exceptions where in RP has a first-syllable stress and in GA a second-syllable stress, as in *elongate*, *remonstrate*, *tergiversate*. There are also a few differences in pronunciation of suffixes *-ary*, *-ory*, *-berry*, and *-mony* between both accents. In general, in GA suffixes *-ary* is pronounced as [eri], whereas in RP the pronunciation is [əri]. Examples of this

¹¹⁹ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. pp. 28-31

difference are *contrary*, *corollary*, *honorary*, *imaginary*, and *sedentary*. On the other hand, the suffix *-ory* if the preceding syllable is unstressed, then RP still keeps the pronunciation [əri], but GA prefers [ɔ:ri], as in *accusatory*, *amatory*, *derogatory*, *exclamatory*, *mandatory*, *migratory*, *premonitory*.¹²⁰ Other examples are *inventory*, *laboratory*, *obligatory*, *oratory*, *repository*, *signatory*, *territory*, *transitory*. Exceptions to this last rule are *advisory*, *contradictory*, *compulsory*, *cursory*, *illusory*, *peremptory*, *rectory*, *satisfactory*, where both accents pronounce [əri]. In words with the suffix *-berry* GA tends to pronounce the full suffix as [beri] and RP tends to either substitute [e] by schwa, yielding [əri], or even elide the first vowel, yielding simply [bri], especially in informal or quick speech. The suffix *-mony* after a stressed syllable is pronounced [moʊni] in GA and [məni] in RP. Some of these suffixes corresponding to adjectives, can be converted into adverbs by adding the suffix *-ly*. This change also implies a shift in stress in GA, which is not generally found in RP. In GA the stress in adverbs falls on the antepenultimate syllable, as in *arbitrarily*, *contrarily*, *momentarily*, or *ordinarily*. When the word is long, a secondary stress normally appears on the first syllable of the word.¹²¹

English depends mainly on *intonation*, — or pitch pattern, to help the listener notice the most important word in a thought group. By making a major pitch change, higher or lower, on the stressed syllable of the focus word, the speaker gives emphasis to that word and thereby highlights it for the listener. This emphasis can indicate meaning, new information, contrast, or emotion.¹²²

Rhythm — the rhythm of English is largely determined by the “beats” falling on the stressed syllables of certain words in phrases and sentences. Stressed and unstressed syllables occur in relatively regular alternating patterns in both phrases and multi-syllable words. In phrases, “content words” (words that have meaning)

¹²⁰ Lerer S., *The History of the English Language volume II*, The Teaching Company, 2008, Virginia. p. 47

¹²¹ Ibidem. p. 125

¹²² Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. p. 2

rather than “function words” (words with grammatical function only) usually receive the stress.¹²³

2.2.2 Spelling

English spellings follow a relatively straight-forward set of phonetic principles. The reputation of English spelling is, however, notoriously bad. This lies in the fact the realization of the principles draws on a large number of traditional spellings which themselves go back to differing conventions of both spelling and pronunciation. Above all, English orthography has been relatively resistant toward a spelling reform. Among the important traditions we must count the presumed phonetic quality of the vowels associated with the letters of the Latin alphabet in OE times; French writing conventions which were adopted in part in the period after the Norman Conquest; differing regional spelling traditions based on sometimes clearly differing regional pronunciations of English; the unhistorical remodeling of spelling to conform to the etymological sources of individual words; the maintenance of older spellings despite often major changes in the pronunciation, as due, for example, to the Great Vowel Shift¹²⁴ ; and, finally, widespread borrowing from other languages along with the foreign spelling conventions. All of this is coupled with a great inertia in undertaking reform. There were some modest, but widely accepted changes in the Early Modern English period or shortly after it. But even the limited reforms generally prevailing in American English have not been embraced within the British English spelling tradition. Standard English spelling – be it British or American – continues to give general preference to etymological spellings, which help to increase inter-linguistic intelligibility, and it retains “silent” letters such as the <r> in words like

¹²³ <http://www.pronunciationinaction.com/top-down.php>

¹²⁴ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 152

car or *card* thus allowing a more universal acceptance of spelling, in this case between rhotic and non-rhotic accents.¹²⁵

Early Attempts to Reform Spelling in American English

The distinctive features of American spelling are mainly the legacy left by Noah Webster (1758-1843) whose "American Spelling Book" appeared in 1783 and was followed by his "American Dictionary of the English Language" in 1828.¹²⁶ Slowly, he changed the spelling of words, such that they became "Americanized." He chose *s* over *c* in words like *defense*, he changed the *re* to *er* in words like *center*, he dropped one of the *Ls* in *traveler*, and at first he kept the *u* in words like *colour* or *favour* but dropped it in later editions. He also changed "tongue" to "tung." Much, but not all, of what he proposed was accepted and is now normal American English usage.¹²⁷ The effects of his major changes can be seen in connection with the principles of simplification, regularization, derivational unity, reflection of pronunciation, indication of stress, and pronunciation spellings.

Principles Involved in the Reformation of Spelling

Principles involved in the reformation of spelling are the principles of *simplification, regularization, derivational uniformity, reflection of pronunciation, including stress indication, and spelling pronunciations*. Much of the variation, lies in the greater willingness on the part of American English users to accept the few modest reforms that have been suggested. *Simplification* is a principle common to both the British and the American traditions, but is sometimes realized differently.

¹²⁵ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 190

¹²⁶ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 347

¹²⁷ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. p. 199

It concerns doubling of letters, Latin spellings, and word endings such as in *catalogue* vs. *catalog*. Double letters are more radically simplified in AmE, which has *program* instead of *programme*. Other examples are *waggon* and AmE *wagon*; *counsellor* and AmE *counselor*, *woolen* and *woolen*. On occasion British English has the simplified form as is the case with *skilful* and *wilful* for AmE *skillful* and *willful*. BrE *fulfil*, *instil*, *appal* may be interpreted as simplification, but AmE double *-ll-* in *fulfill*, *instill*, *appall* may have to do with where the stress lies. AmE may drop the *-ue* of *-logue* in words like *catalog*, *dialog*, and *monolog* (but not in words like *Prague*, *vague*, *vogue*, or *rogue*).¹²⁸

Regularization is evident in AmE, which regularizes *-our* to *-or* and *-re* to *-er* as in *honor*, *neighbor* or in *center*, *theater*. This seems justified since there are no systematic criteria for distinguishing between the two sets in BrE: *neighbour* and *saviour*, but *donor* and *professor*; *honour* and *valour*, but *metaphor*, *anterior* and *posterior*. Within BrE there are special rules to note: the endings *-ation* and *-ious* usually lead to a form with *-or-* as in *coloration* and *laborious*, but the endings *-al* and *-ful*, as in *behavioural* and *colourful*, have no such effect. Even AmE may keep *-our* in such words as *glamour* (next to *glamor*) and *Saviour* (next to *Savior*), perhaps because there is something "better" about these spellings for many people. Words like *contour*, *tour*, *four*, or *amour*, where the vowel of the *-our* carries stress, are never simplified. *Centre* and *metre* become AmE *center*, *center* but the adjective form is *central*. The *-er* rule applies everywhere but *-re* is retained in *acre*, *mediocre* and *ogre* in order to prevent misinterpretation.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. pp. 35-36

¹²⁹ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 193

Derivational uniformity can be from noun to adjective, as in BrE *defence, offence, and pretence*, but AmE *defense, offense, pretense*. AmE follows the principle of derivational uniformity: *defense >defensive, offense >offensive, pretense >pretension, practice >practical*. BrE simplifies *-ection* to *-exion* in *connexion, inflexion, retroflexion*. AmE uses *connection* thus following the principle of derivational unity: *connect >connection, connective; reflect >reflection, reflective*.¹³⁰

Reflection of pronunciation — The forms *analyze* and *paralyze*, which end in *-ze*, may violate derivational uniformity, but they do reflect the pronunciation of the final fricative, which is clearly a lenis or voiced /z/. This principle has been widely adopted in spelling on both sides of the Atlantic for verbs ending in *-ize* and the corresponding nouns ending in *-ization*. The older spellings with *-ise* and *-isation* are also found in both AmE and BrE. AmE *advertise*, for example, is far more common than *advertize* (also *advise, compromise, revise, televise*). The decisive factor here seems to be publishers' style sheets, with increasing preference for *z*.¹³¹

Indication of Stress — determines the doubling or not of final consonants especially of *l* in AmE when an ending beginning with a vowel (*-ing,-ed*) is added to a multisyllabic word ending in *l*, the *l* is doubled if the final syllable of the root carries the stress and is spelled with a single letter-vowel. For example *con'trol > con'trolling, re'bel > re'belling or re'pel > re'pelled*. If the stress does not lie on the final syllable, the *l* is not double, like in *'travel > 'traveler or marvel > 'marveling*.¹³²

Pronunciation spellings — are best-known in the case of *-gh-*. AmE tends to use a phonetic spelling so that BrE *plough* appears as AmE *plow* and BrE *draught* ("flow

¹³⁰ Gramley S. and Pátzold M., *A Survey of Modern English*, Routledge, 2004, New York. p. 280

¹³¹ Ibidem. p. 281

¹³² Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 28

of air, swallow or movement of liquid, depth of a vessel in water"), as AmE *draft*.¹³³ The spellings *thru* for *through* and *tho'* for *though* are not uncommon in AmE, but are generally restricted to informal writing (but with official use in the designation of some limited access expressways as *thruways*). Spellings such as *lite* for *light*, *hi* for *high*, or *nite* for *night* are employed in very informal writing and in advertising language. But from there they can enter more formal use, as is the case *lite*, which is the recognized spelling in the sense of low-sugar and low-fat foods and drinks. In other words, an originally advertisement-driven spelling, from *light* to *lite*, has gained independent status in its new spelling guise.¹³⁴

Specific Features of Spelling

Hyphenation varies in the way it is used in the spelling of compounds – be it as two words, as a hyphenated word, or as a single unhyphenated word varies. In general, AmE avoids hyphenation. BrE writes *make-up* and AmE *make up* and BrE *neo-colonialism*, but AmE *neocolonialism*.¹³⁵ No hard and fast rules exist, however; and usage varies considerably, even from dictionary to dictionary within both AmE and BrE.

Individual words have different spellings without there being any further consequences. The following list includes a few of the most common differences in spelling, always with the BrE form listed first: *aluminium* / *aluminum*, *cheque* / *check*, *jewellery* / *jewelry*, *pyjamas* / *pajamas*, *sulphur* / *sulfur*, *tyre* / *tire*, *whisky* / *whiskey*. Finally, it should be noted that AmE usage is not completely consistent; for example, we find *advertisement* with *s* and many people write *Saviour*, a reference to Jesus, with a capital, with *u* and *theatre* with *-re* as if the BrE spelling lent the

¹³³ Darragh G., *A to Zed, A to Zee - A Guide to the Differences between British and American English*, Editorial Stanley, 2000, Irun. p. 17

¹³⁴ Lerer Seth, *The History of the English Language volume II*, The Teaching Company, 2008, Virginia. pp. 130-131

¹³⁵ Darragh G., *A to Zed, A to Zee - A Guide to the Differences between British and American English*, Editorial Stanley, 2000, Irun. p. 11

word more standing. Much of the variation in AmE lies in the greater willingness on the part of its users to accept the few modest reforms that have been suggested.¹³⁶

Non-standard spelling has been in retreat as a result of the normative pressure of schooling, especially after the advent of universal education, chiefly from the 19th century on. Standard English spelling may be associated with a wide variety of accents. Consequently, non-standard spelling shows up largely where writers are less trained in the standard. Examples of non-standard spelling can be found in advertising, in literature aiming to be comical, at dialect literature, and in informal writing such as texting. Attitudes toward innovative spellings vary, as mentioned, from the clearly negative, e.g. “*digital virus, alien, outlandish, slanguage, dyslexia, mental laziness, illiterate,*” to a more neutral evaluation as “*textese, hi-tech lingo, hybrid shorthand,*” to a positive view that emphasizes it as inexpensive, unobtrusive and convenient.¹³⁷

2.2.3 Vocabulary

Ways of Vocabulary Enrichment

American English has borrowed words from those who have come into its contact. From the Red-Indian words such as ‘*catalpa*’ (a flowery tree), ‘*hickory*’, ‘*tapioca*’, ‘*canoe*’, etc. have been borrowed. Also there are American terms which are translated from Red Indians language like ‘*fire water*’, ‘*pale face*’, ‘*pipe of peace*’ and ‘*war path*’. From the French have been borrowed the words like ‘*leave*’, ‘*seep*’, ‘*shanty*’, ‘*prairie*’, ‘*rapids*’, ‘*portage*’, and ‘*caribou*’. From Spanish have come ‘*creole*’,

¹³⁶ Darragh G., *A to Zed, A to Zee - A Guide to the Differences between British and American English*, Editorial Stanley, 2000, Irun. p. 21

¹³⁷ Crystal D., *Language and the Internet*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, Cambridge. p. 88

'quadroon', 'stampede', 'chile', 'ranch', etc.¹³⁸ There are also many Spanish place names, especially saint's names like 'St. Barbara', and 'San Francisco'. From Dutch have been borrowed 'boss', 'cold', etc. From Irish 'cadger', to let on (pretend), jumpy, jaw (impudent, talk), wad (bundle), to quit (stop), etc. have been taken.¹³⁹ But the largest number of loans are from German has given the words like 'dumb' (slow, stupid), 'loafer', 'frank-furter', 'hamburger', and educational terms like 'semester' and 'seminar'.¹⁴⁰ The American pioneers have also invented new uses for older English words as in 'run' (brook), 'bluff' (steep, broad faced, head land), 'clearing' (cleared land), 'rollingcountry' (undulating plains). American plants and animals have also required the invention of new names like 'eel grass', 'blue grass', 'egg plant' and 'monkey nut'.¹⁴¹ Indeed, in the coining of new words and phrases the Americans in modern times have been more exuberant and uninhibited than the British.

Selected Vocabulary Differences between British and American English

The largest divergences between British English and American English are perhaps in vocabulary. Usually the words that are used by Americans pertaining to travel and transport are different from those used by the English men. The Americans use 'travel by rail' instead of 'travel by train'. Instead of 'registering of luggage', they use 'checking of baggage'. The 'luggage van' is referred to as the 'baggage car'. Instead of 'notice board', they have 'bulletin board'. 'Time-table' is known as 'schedule'. The 'driver' of the train is the 'engineer' and the 'guard' is the

¹³⁸ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. pp. 156-157

¹³⁹ <http://www.encyclopedia.com>

¹⁴⁰ McArthur T., *American English - Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language*, Oxford University Press, 1998. Published online at <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O29-OFFICIALLANGUAGE.html>

¹⁴¹ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 13

'conductor'. A 'railway station' is known as 'a railroad depot'. The 'car' is invariably an 'automobile' and it is taken to a 'gas station' for being supplied with petrol.¹⁴² But these differences are not such as to cannot be easily removed and are not very formidable to any intelligent traveller. The films and American literature have made people in England quite familiar with the new words and terms of expression in America at the same time. There are so many reasons that bear a great impact upon the American English vocabulary. In the USA many features of the language of the 17th century English settlers have been retained as such.¹⁴³ For example, old words and phrases that have been totally vanished from the British English region are still retained in American English. We find words like 'critter', 'figger', 'git', 'jine', 'ketch', 'sartin', 'vermint', and 'afeared' instead of modern British English like 'creature', 'figure', 'get', 'join', 'catch', 'certain', 'vermin' and 'afraid' respectively.¹⁴⁴ It is a fact that the literary language of the USA and that of Great Britain are more or less the same. At least they have not diverged perceptibly so as to give the feeling that British English and American English are two entirely different things. In spite of all that has been said it has still to be admitted that the American vocabulary is mainly the same as English. Even it differs from English, it can be understood with a little effort and specifically American objects and ideas are becoming more and more familiar to English day by day.

Same Words, Different or Additional Meanings in one Variety

In many cases, when speaking about American and British equivalents, the distinction is not really a matter of one nation having one word or expression which the other variety is not familiar with and vice versa. It's more a matter of one of the expressions being prevalent and most widely used in one of the

¹⁴² Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 376

¹⁴³ Gramley S. and Pätzold M., *A Survey of Modern English*, Routledge, 2004, New York. pp. 289-293

¹⁴⁴ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 341-342

varieties, while the majority of speakers using the other variety of the two are more familiar and comfortable with the other, if the equivalents form a pair, which is not always the case (*fall* is the most frequently used term for one of the four seasons of the year but *autumn*, which is considered a purely British expression, can also be found in the writing of American authors, mainly when striving for a higher stylistic form).¹⁴⁵ Words like *bill* (AmE "paper money", BE and AmE "invoice") and *biscuit* (BE's "scone", AE's "cookie") are used regularly in both AmE and BE, but mean different things in each form. Sometimes the two connotations carry totally opposite meanings. ("I am through", when given to a partner in a telephone conversation, would mean a totally different thing to a Brit than to an American. The Brit would think it means "We've made the connection, we can talk.", whereas the American would suppose the phone call is over as the Brit is apparently implying "I am finished, it's over."; another example is the adjective "inflammable", which in American English means that it is not possible to set the material on fire, while in British English it means Watch out! This material can go ablaze very easily. Other examples are: *freight* which in British English refers exclusively to a load transported across a body of water but in American English the meaning of *freight* has become broader and includes pretty much all kinds of cargo, even one transported solely by the railroads; *corn*, meaning grain in general, and American English *corn*, meaning one special kind of grain, otherwise called maize in BrE; *homely*, meaning pleasant and *homely* meaning not good looking.¹⁴⁶

Same Concept, Different Terms or Expressions

Sometimes, two different words are used but their meaning is quite obvious, such as the American 'luggage' and the British 'baggage' or 'elevator' and 'lift', 'gasoline' and 'petrol'. In other cases, some words that are common in one place are rare in

¹⁴⁵ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 116

¹⁴⁶ Darragh G., *A to Zed, A to Zee - A Guide to the Differences between British and American English*, Editorial Stanley, 2000, Irun. p. 7

the other, such as the words 'soppy' or 'row': although they are listed in American dictionaries, they are very uncommon in American speech but they are quite well known in the UK.¹⁴⁷ Some words retained in Great Britain have been dropped by Americans, such as 'fortnight' and 'constable' and many no longer used in British English are retained in American English, such as 'mad' (in the sense of angry). The use of dissimilar terms can also be due to different cultural usages and connotations of those terms. The American "restaurant" has been translated as "café," and "six" as "half a dozen."¹⁴⁸ That is, the same term either exists but is used in slightly different spheres of meaning, or it exists synonymously with another, also commonly-used expression.

Euphemistic References

All languages employ euphemisms which are alternative expressions used to make something sound 'better', or 'more acceptable'. Across the variants of English, some euphemisms are similar. But often those things which have been euphemized, and in turn how they have been euphemized, are culture-specific. The American, probably more than any other man, is prone to be apologetic about the trade he follows. Some examples of American euphemisms are *mortician* for undertaker, *realtor* for real-estate agent, *electragist* for electrical contractor, *aisle manager* for floor-walker, *beautician* for hairdresser, *exterminating engineer* for rat-catcher, and so on.¹⁴⁹ Euphemisms for things are almost as common in the United States as euphemisms for avocations. Dozens of forlorn little fresh-water colleges are called *universities*, and almost all pawn-shops are *loan-offices*. *City*, in England, used to be conned to the seats of bishops, and even today it is applied only to considerable places, but in the United States it is commonly assumed by any town

¹⁴⁷ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. p. 18

¹⁴⁸ Gramley S. and Pätzold M., *A Survey of Modern English*, Routledge, 2004, New York. pp. 43-44

¹⁴⁹ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 210

with paved streets, and in the statistical publications of the Federal government it is applied to all places of 8000 or more population. The American use of *store* for *shop*, like that of *help* for *servant*, is probably the product of an early effort of magnification. Before Prohibition saloons used to be *sample-rooms*, *exchanges*, *cafés* and *restaurants*; now they are *taverns*, *cocktail-rooms*, *taprooms*, *American-bars*, *stubs*. The terms used for Americans descended from African slaves continue to fluctuate as members of the group by which name they prefer to be known. At one time, *colored person* was the preferred term, replaced by *Negro*, then by *Black*, and more recently *African American* has been favoured.¹⁵⁰

Idiom Differences and Usage

English is a language particularly rich in idioms. Nowadays American English is in this position. It is hard to find an AmE idiom that has not established itself in "worldwide English". This is not the case with British English idioms which are not as widespread. It has to be remembered that it is hard to say which idioms are actively used in English and which are dying out or have already died. Idioms are constantly dying and new-ones are born. An originally American English idiom from the Red Indians is "*A happy hunting ground*" (Place where one often goes to obtain something or to make money). "*To have the edge on/over someone*" is an originally American English idiom, now established in almost every other form of English. Some of these early American idioms and expressions were derived from the speech of the American natives like the phrase that "*someone speaks with a forked tongue*" and the "*happy hunting ground*" above.¹⁵¹ These idioms have filtered to British English through centuries through books, newspapers and most recently through powerful mediums like radio, TV and movies. American English adopts and creates new idioms at a much faster rate compared to British English. Also the

¹⁵⁰ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 221-226

¹⁵¹ McArthur T., *American English - Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language*, Oxford University Press, 1998, New York. pp. 96-102

idioms of AmE origin tend to spread faster and further. After it has first been established in the U.S., an American idiom may soon be found in other "variants" and dialects of English. Nowadays new British idioms tend to stay on the British Isles and are rarely encountered in the U.S. British idioms are actually more familiar to other Europeans or to the people of the British Commonwealth than to Americans, even though the language is same.¹⁵² The reason for all these facts is that Britain is not the world power it used to be and it must be said that the U.S. has taken the role of the leading nation in the development of language, media and popular culture. Britain just doesn't have the magnitude of media influence that the United States controls. Other idioms that have arose in America are, "*big as all outdoors*", "*cool as a cucumber*", "*wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole*", and "*three sheets to the wind*". These arose in America after the colonization. Newer idioms are, "*son of a gun*", "*in back of*", "*I guess*", and "*okay*", though okay is spelled literally "OK" in Britain. A number of English idioms that have essentially the same meaning show lexical differences between the British and the American version; for instance: *sweep under the carpet* in American English is *sweep under the rug*; *a drop in the ocean* is *a drop in the bucket*; *storm in a teacup* is *tempest in a teapot*; *skeleton in the cupboard* is *skeleton in the closet*; *touch wood* is *knock on wood*; and *haven't a clue*, *have no clue*.¹⁵³

Concluding Remarks

In particular, attention must be paid to false cognates. For instance, British English '*suspenders*' are called '*garters*' in US English, which uses '*suspenders*' for the British '*braces*'. This also occurs for American '*shorts*' that are British '*underpants*'; American '*pants*' are British '*trousers*'.¹⁵⁴ Naturally, awareness of lexical differences

¹⁵² Gramley S. and Pátzold M., *A Survey of Modern English*, Routledge, 2004, New York. pp. 55-57

¹⁵³ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 34-36

¹⁵⁴ Johnson N., *Telecommuting and Virtual Offices: Issues and Opportunities*, Idea Group Publishing, 2001, London. p. 83

is not only needed for the sake of linguistic curiosity: globalisation has increased the possibility of interaction between speakers of the two varieties. The problem is not confined to dialogue and dialect speech. A fundamental difference is in the date format. Throughout the English-speaking world the date is notated *dd/mm/yyyy* with the exception of the U.S. where it is marked *mm/dd/yyyy*. This can create some misunderstandings. Dates usually include a definite article in UK spoken English, such as "*the 11th of July*", or "*July the 11th*", while American speakers say "*July 11th*". When saying or writing out numbers, the British will typically insert an "*and*" before the tens and units, as in "*one hundred and sixty-two*" and "*two thousand and three*". In America, it is considered correct to drop the "*and*" as in "*two thousand three*"; however, this is rarely heard in everyday speech, "*two thousand and three*" being much more common. In the case of years, however, "*twelve thirty-four*" would be the norm on both sides of the Atlantic for the year 1234. The year 2000 and years beyond it are read as "*two thousand*", "*two thousand (and) one*" and the like by both British and American speakers. For years after 2009, they are frequently said "*twenty ten*", "*twenty twelve*" etc. When referring to the numeral 0, British people would normally use "*nought*", "*oh*", "*zero*" or "*nil*" in instances such as sports scores and voting results. Americans use the term "*zero*" frequently.¹⁵⁵ American typography differs from British. There are differences in the punctuation that are immediately evident, such as the em dash without spaces used for a dash, whereas the British use an en dash with spaces. Modern American English abhors colons and uses them rarely.

¹⁵⁵ Chamizo-Domínguez P. D., *Semantics and Pragmatics of False Friends*, Routledge, 2008, New York. p. 100

2.2.4 Confronting grammar in American and British English

Grammatical differences between American and British English have been treated mainly by individual scholarly studies focused on particular grammatical matters. Extensive and comprehensive treatment is rare. Popular writers on grammar are aware that British and American differ in their morphosyntax but tend to be sketchy about the details. Although many, few of the grammatical differences between British and American are great enough to produce confusion, and most are not stable because the two varieties are constantly influencing each other, with borrowing both ways across the Atlantic and nowadays via the Internet. When a use is said to be British, that statement does not necessarily mean that it is the only or even the main British use or that the use does not occur in American also, but only that the use is attested in British sources and is more typical of British than of American English.¹⁵⁶

Differences in verbs

In American English, the –ed form is used with some verbs that in British English are irregular, such as *to learn* (*learned* in American, *learnt* in British), *to dream* (*dreamed/dreamt*), *to spell* (*spelled/spelt*) etc. Other verbs, regular in British English, are used in the American variant with irregular forms. For example, verbs like *to light*, *to forecast*, *to knit*, tend to receive, at past tense and present participle, the irregular forms *lit*, *forecast*, *knit*, instead of *lighted*, *forecasted*, and *knitted*.¹⁵⁷ However, this is not a general rule, because these irregular forms are also encountered in British English. Another peculiar aspect in American English is the use of certain forms of past participle, such as *gotten*, *proven*, *shrunk*, *boughten*, which are considered very old-fashioned, or simply not used by British speakers.

¹⁵⁶ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. p. 2

¹⁵⁷ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 337-339

In British English, the past tense of “get” is “got”, while American English usually use its past participle “gotten”. For example, *John has got much better during the last week* (BrE). *John has gotten much better during the last week* (AmE). According to the custom that British English usually uses “got” while American English “gotten”, we can quickly tell the nationality of the speaker. The former is British and the latter is American. When Americans use “got”, they mean “own, possess and dominate”, such as the following example: *They’ve got no pride*. Another example is “have”. British English usually uses “Have you any children?” or “Have you got any children?” whilst Americans commonly express the same meaning with “Do you have any children?”

In British English, collective nouns (e.g. *team, police, army, audience, staff, company, government* etc.) are often followed by a plural verb, while in American English, these are always followed by a singular. For instance: *Manchester have won the match*, is in American English: *Manchester has won the match*.¹⁵⁸

Use of the present perfect differs as well. When referring to an action which has begun in the past, but is going on in the present, speakers of British English use the present perfect, while Americans tend to use the past simple tense. For example: *John has already finished his work* is in American English: *John already finished his work*.

According to Algeo,¹⁵⁹ British syntax and American syntax differ for what are called mandative constructions – finite clauses that occur after certain expressions of will. In standard American English, speakers are more likely to use a subjunctive form of the verb: *I insist that he give you the sugar*. Educated British speakers tend to prefer an expanded auxiliary: *I insist that he should give you the sugar*. Both forms are possible within standard American English, and the two will

¹⁵⁸ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. p. 112

¹⁵⁹ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. pp. 326-327

be understood equally well. According to Algeo,¹⁶⁰ the use of the indicative is also common in Britain: *I insist that he gives you the sugar.*

Negative Concord

Negative concord refers to the phenomenon in which more than one negative element occurs in a clause but the clause is interpreted as having a single instance of negation. The following three examples are translated with their roughly equivalent meaning in Standard English: *I ain't never been drunk.* / *'I've never been drunk.'* (Alabama English). *Nobody ain't doin' nothing' wrong.* / *'Nobody is doing anything wrong.'* (West Texas English). *I don't never have no problems.* / *'I don't ever have any problems.'* (African American English).¹⁶¹ Negative Concord is a widespread phenomenon in varieties of North American English. It can be instantiated in a number of configurations: the occurrence of postverbal *n*-words with sentential negation as in: *I don't eat no biscuit; I ain't never lost a fight.* The occurrence of preverbal *n*-words with sentential negation: *Nobody couldn't handle him* and *neither of the boys can't play a lick of it.* The occurrence of *n*-words in an embedded clause with sentential negation in the matrix clause: *We ain't never really had no tornadoes in this area here that I don't remember. It ain't no cat can't get in no coop.*¹⁶²

Tag Questions

The term question tag is used to designate in a general way the interrogative part of the statement. On the other hand, question tag serves in some cases to refer to

¹⁶⁰ Algeo J. edited by, *The Cambridge History of the English Language volume IV - English in North America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Cambridge. p. 338

¹⁶¹ Ibidem. p. 306

¹⁶² Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 363-364

the whole statement and in other cases to refer to the tag only.¹⁶³ British and American English differ in the use of tag questions on several levels. American speakers employ tag questions with negative-positive polarity (*This is not what you said, is it?*) rather than British, whereas the latter use twice as much with constant positive polarity (*You think that's funny, do you?*). It is peculiar for an American to hear a question followed by a question tag: *Have they got a new car, have they?* The operator with the most frequent employment in question tags in both varieties is the verb *be*, occurring once in two instances in British and slightly less in American English. Following is the auxiliary *do*, again in both varieties but with major frequency in American English. As for the other verbs acting as operators in tags, like *will*, *have*, and *can*, a slightly higher frequency in British English is recorded. British speakers also show a preference for *have* tags, while Americans favour *do* tags, which can be ascribed to the different expression of past time as well as to the different treatment of *have* in the anchor in the two varieties. Speaker age is an important conditioning factor in both varieties, with older speakers using more canonical tag questions and younger speakers significantly fewer. Younger speakers of British English prefer invariant tags like *yeah*, *eh*, *okay*, *right*, and *innit*, so the total use of tag questions and other hedging devices may still be fairly similar across age groups.¹⁶⁴

Differences in use of nouns

Differences in use of nouns are differences in forms: in British English words like: *candidature*, *centenary*, *cookery book*, *racialist*, *racialism*, *sparkling plug*, *transport* are in American English: *candidacy*, *centennial*, *cook book*, *racist*, *racism*, *spark plug*, *transportation*. There are also some words expressing different meanings in British

¹⁶³ Burchfield R. W., *The Cambridge history of the English language- volume V English in Britain and Overseas: Origins and Development*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, Cambridge. p. 567

¹⁶⁴ Tottie G. and Hoffmann S., *Tag Questions in British and American English*, Sage Publications, 2006, Journal of English Linguistics. Online at: <http://eng.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/34/4/283>

and American English.¹⁶⁵ Generally speaking, there are two types. The first one is to add meanings. When Americans want to express a new thing or object, it seems to them that the most convenient method is to add a new meaning to one existing word. For example: “*clout*” refers to power, influence or prestige, especially in politics. “*Family*” means one of the operational units of the Mafia. “*Point*” indicates a charge of fee discounted by lender from a loan, by which the effective interest rate is increased. The other is to change the meaning. Many words that originate from the UK now possess a totally different meaning in the US. “*Bill*” is a bank note in American English, *a billion is a thousand million*, a *newspaper man* is an operator of a printing office in American English. When expressing certain object, thing or concept, British and American English will adopt different words. An *American bar* is a *public house* or *pub*, a *can* (as a can of soup) is a *tin*, *candy* is *sweets*, *railroad* is a *railway*, a *superhighway* or *speedway* is a *motorway* in British English.¹⁶⁶

Differences in pronouns

British English and American English use different pronouns to repeat the indefinite pronoun “*one*”. British English uses “*one*”, for example, “*One cannot succeed unless one tries hard*”, while American English uses “*he*”, for example, “*One cannot succeed unless he tries hard*”. Other examples are as follows: *One should learn to take care of oneself.* (BrE); *One should learn to take care of himself.* (AmE). *One can't be too careful, can one?* (BrE); *One can't be too careful, can he?* (AmE).¹⁶⁷ America has *y'all*, a standard Southern form, which, though regionally marked, is socially unrestricted in Southern dialect and is a phonological variant of the universally standard *you all*. It tends to be used as a pronoun of solidarity to indicate that the speaker considers those so addressed as forming a community with the speaker. A

¹⁶⁵ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 359

¹⁶⁶ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. pp. 69-77

¹⁶⁷ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 351

more recent colloquial form is *you guys*, applied to males, females, or mixed groups; it is younger generation in use but widespread in the United States and has spread to British use as well. British has *you lot*, which is affectively marked: it often indicates annoyance or disdain or impatience with the referents. Occasionally, it is an affectionate form, although even then tinged with a tone of condescension. Because of their difference in emotional tone, the new British and American plural pronouns are by no means equivalent. Another variant is *you chaps*, which is a friendly option, close to American *you guys* in tone, though not in the typical age of its users. It is also rare and old-fashioned.¹⁶⁸ Pronoun order sometimes differs between British and American. For example: *What's the matter with them all tonight?* We also find different use of demonstrative pronouns between British and American English. American English tends to use *this* in contexts where British prefers *that*. Brits ask *Who is that?* and Americans *Who is this?* In many contexts it is possible to use either *this* or *that*, e.g., *This/That is true* and *This/That is the problem*. Extended forms of the demonstratives are *these ones* and *those ones*. It appears that *these ones* is more characteristic of British than of American English, but that the frequency of *those ones* is closer in the two national varieties. Americans very often use *that* to introduce restrictive clauses. Writers and speakers of British English use *which* to introduce just about any clause they want. For indefinite pronouns referring to persons, English has a choice between compounds with *-body* (anybody, everybody, nobody, and somebody) and with *-one* (anyone, everyone, no one, and someone). British strongly prefers the compounds in *-one* over those in *-body*.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 353-354

¹⁶⁹ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. pp. 110-113

Differences in articles

Most phrases of British English have articles, while those of American English do not. British English may use *the* in certain expressions of time where American English would have no determiner. The “the” in the standard expressions in British English “all the afternoon”, “all the winter”, “all the week”, “this time of the year”, etc. are usually omitted in American English. For example: *The swimming pools are open all summer; I’ll be here all afternoon; He has been gone all week.* British English uses articles in front of “sickness”, “river” etc., while American English does not. For example, British English expresses in the form of “the measles”, “the mumps”, “the flu”, “the Niagara Falls” and “the Black Creek”, while American English says “measles”, “mumps”, “flu”, “Niagara Falls” and “Black Creek”. However, there are exceptions. In some expressions, British English does not use articles, while American English does. British English has *in hospital* and *at university*, where American English requires *in the hospital* and *at the university*. Sentences are as follows: *In future, I’d like you to pay more attention to detail.* (BrE) *In the future, I’d like you to pay more attention to detail.* (AmE). British athletes play *in a team*; American athletes play *on a team*. Both may play for a particular team. British English and American English are different from each other in the use of “a” or “an” with “half”. In British English, “a” follows “half”, for example, “half a dozen”, “half an hour”, “half a mile”, and “half a pound”. In American English, “a” is put in front of “half”, for example, “a half dozen”, “a half hour”, “a half mile” and “a half pound”.¹⁷⁰

The different use of prepositions

In American English there are different uses of prepositions in the construction of phrases. *These dresses are in a sale* (BrE). *These dresses are on sale* (AmE). Where

¹⁷⁰ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. pp. 43-52

British people would say "*She resigned on Friday*", Americans often say "*She resigned Friday*", but both forms are common in American usage. Similarly, "five past nine" can be expressed in American English by "five after nine" or "nine five". In front of "weekend" and "Christmas", British English uses "at" or "over", while American English adopts "over" or "on": *At the weekend / Christmas* (BrE), *over the weekend / Christmas* (BrE, AmE), *on the weekend / Christmas* (AmE). In British English, before "day", "week" or "certain day", preposition "on" shall be used, while it is not so in American English: *I'll see you on Monday.* (BrE) *I'll see you Monday.* (AmE) *The new term begins on September 1.* (BrE) *The new term begins September 1* (AmE). The preposition can also be absent when referring to months: "*I'll be here June*". In American English, when "home" is used as an adverb, the preposition "at" is not needed. But in British English, "at" is required before "home". Hence, "at home" is used in British English. For example: *Is he home?* (AmE); *Is he at home?* (BrE)¹⁷¹ The use of prepositions without an expressed object, when the implicit object is expressed earlier in the clause, are reported with examples as *My socks have got holes in (them)*, *I'd like a piece of toast with butter on (it)*, *All the trees have got blossom on (them)*, and *He was carrying a box with cups in (it)*.¹⁷²

Differences in adjectives and adverbs

In non-formal American English, adjectives can be used as adverbs, for example "a real good meal". However, in British English and formal American English, only adverbs can be used, "a really good meal". In American English, adverbs can be used more freely in respect of position. They can either be placed in front of auxiliary verbs or behind them, while the meaning of the sentences remains the same. For example, we can either say "They never will agree to it" or "They will

¹⁷¹ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. pp. 159-168

¹⁷² Ibidem. pp. 197-198

never agree to it". For another example, "You probably could have done it yourself" means the same as "You could probably have done it yourself". However, in British English, adverbs are usually placed behind the first auxiliary verb. For example: *They will never agree to it.* ; *You could always have called us first.* In British English, the adverbs "yet" and "already" cannot be used in past tense and can only be used in past perfect tense. However, in American English, they can be used both in past tense and past perfect tense. Let us see the following examples. *I haven't bought one yet.* (BrE, AmE) *I didn't buy one yet.* (AmE); *Have you read it already?* (BrE, AmE) *Did you read it already?* (AmE).¹⁷³ British and American differ somewhat in form, frequency, and use of adverbs. American has certain characteristic uses, such as *some* in *The wound bled some* and *any* in *That doesn't help us any*. The common-core adverbs *anywhere, everywhere, nowhere, and somewhere* have minority American options *anyplace, everyplace, no place* (usually spelled as two words), and *someplace*. The use of "flat" adverbs, that is, adverbs identical in form with corresponding adjectives (such as *fast*) rather than distinguished by the suffix *-ly*, is said to be particularly widespread in American colloquial use, as opposed to British. Adverbial uses of adjectives, such as *good, bad, and real*, now thought to be characteristic of American developed between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries in Britain. Other adverbial forms identified as distinctively American include *in back* with reference to the rear seat of a car and *pretty much*. The order of adverbs of probability (such as *certainly* and *probably*) before or after an operator (such as *has*) differs between British and American English. Adverbs of frequency (*generally, never, usually*), like those of probability, tend to occur in medial position, after the first auxiliary, if there is one. However, with these also American has a higher tolerance for placement before the first auxiliary than does British: *She usually is at work from nine to five/ She is usually at work from nine to five*. Although British and American share a common inventory of adverbial particles, with only a few differences of form (e.g., *on and off* vs. *off and on*), they differ in

¹⁷³ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 361-362

their use of those particles. American English is relatively more favourable to *off and on*: *He lived for forty five years in Italy off and on but never learnt to speak Italian.*¹⁷⁴

Collocations

A collocation is two or more words that often go together. These combinations just sound "right" to native English speakers, who use them all the time. On the other hand, other combinations may be unnatural and just sound "wrong". For example, we talk about *heavy rain* but not *heavy sun*, or we say that *we make* or *come to a decision*, but we don't *do* a decision. So, *heavy rain* and *make a decision* are often referred to as collocations. In British English, you can "*do sport*". In American English you can "*play sports*". However, in American English you can use the verb *practise* or *practice* to mean "*to train*": *The team is practicing for tomorrow's competition*. Verbs like *have*, *get*, *make*, and *do*, are often referred to as delexical verbs. These are verbs which don't have a lexical meaning of their own, but take their meaning from the words that they collocate or are used with. For example, the verb *make* has a different meaning in each of the expressions *make a cake*, *make a decision*, and *make fun of*, so it is sensible to teach verbs like these in expressions, as collocations instead of trying to identify and distinguish basic meanings, which is difficult and, in many cases, almost impossible.¹⁷⁵ Examples of different collocations in British and American English are: *board and lodging*, the American analog is *room and board*. *Bacon and eggs* is the norm in common-core English; but *egg(s) and bacon* in American English. *There and then* is the choice in British English while *then and there* is used more frequently by Americans.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. pp. 132-152

¹⁷⁵ McCarten J., *Teaching Vocabulary*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, New York, pp. 5-6

¹⁷⁶ Algeo J., *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Cambridge. p. 200

Chapter III

Lexical Influence of American English on British English

3.1 American English versus British English

A porter in a British hotel comes upon an American tourist impatiently jabbing at the button for the lift.

"Sir, the lift will be here in a moment."

"Lift? Lift?" replies the American. "Oh, you mean the elevator."

"No sir, here we call it a lift."

"Well, as it was invented in the United States, it's called an elevator."

"Yes sir, but as the language was invented here, it's called a lift."

from The Reader's Digest¹⁷⁷

English is unmistakably one language, with two major national varieties: British and American. American English marks off the people of the United States as a separate community in the Anglophone world, with their own characteristics, values, and assumptions. Yet, despite a multitude of differences between it and British English, the two are remarkably similar in their standard forms. Even after four hundred years of physical separation, the American and British varieties of the English language have maintained a great deal of sameness or similarity. Although there are many individual differences between these two, the everyday communication between Englishmen and Americans is not hampered to such an extent as the impression may be. American English and British English are converging thanks to increased transatlantic travel and the media. This convergent

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.rd.com/>

trend is a recent one dating from the emergence of Hollywood as the predominant film making center in the world and also from the Second World War when large numbers of American GIs were stationed in the UK. This trend was consolidated by the advent of television. Before then, it was thought that American English and British English would diverge as the two languages evolved and absorbed words brought to their respective countries by immigrants and their colonies.

In 1789, Noah Webster, in whose name American dictionaries are still published in to this day, stated that: *“Numerous local causes, such as a new country, new associations of people, new combinations of ideas in arts and some intercourse with tribes wholly unknown in Europe will introduce new words into the American tongue.”* He was right, but his next statement has since been proved to be incorrect. *“These causes will produce in the course of time a language in North America as different from the future language of England as the modern Dutch, Danish and Swedish are from the German or from one another”*.¹⁷⁸

Webster had under-rated the amount of social intercourse between England and her former colony. Even before Webster had started to compile his dictionary, words and expressions had returned from the Americas and had infiltrated the mother tongue, for example *'bluff'*, *'canoe'*, and *'hatchet'*.¹⁷⁹ Very few people in Britain realise how many of the words they use are of American origin. Often this importation of American words has encountered a linguistic snobbery by the British, which was a manifestation of the cultural snobbery that bedeviled Anglo-American relationships for a long time. This is not, thankfully, the case now. There are some generalizations that can be made about American and British English which reveal the nature of the two nations and their peoples. British speech tends to be less general, and directed more, in nuances of meaning, at a sub group of the population. This can become a kind of code, in which few words are spoken because each, along with its attendant murmurings and pauses, carries a wealth of

¹⁷⁸ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 20

¹⁷⁹ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. p. 4

shared assumptions and attitudes. In other words, the British are preoccupied with their social status within society and speak and act accordingly to fit into the social class they aspire to. This is particularly evident when talking to someone from 'the middle class' when they point out that they are 'upper middle class' rather than 'middle middle class' or 'lower middle class'. American speech tends to be influenced by the over-heated language of much of the media, which is designed to attach an impression of exciting activity to passive, if sometimes insignificant events. For example, 'firing off a letter' and 'grabbing some lunch'.¹⁸⁰ Yet, curiously, really violent activity and life changing events are hidden in bland antiseptic tones that serve to disguise the reality. British people tend to understatement whereas Americans towards hyperbole. A Briton might respond to a suggestion with a word such as 'Terrific!' only if they are expressing rapturous enthusiasm, whereas an American might use the word merely to signify polite assent. The American language has less regard than the British for grammatical form, and will happily bulldoze its way across distinctions rather than steer a path between them. American English will casually use one form of a word for another, for example turning nouns into verbs (e.g. 'author' a book) and verbs and nouns into adjectives. In Britain, a disrespect for grammatical rules, particularly amongst the middle classes, would immediately reveal you to be 'not one of us'. British teenagers have long been accused of being poorly educated by politicians, parents and employers since they have little regard for grammar in their speech. As a consequence of American culture and speech patterns being commonplace on children's television programs in the UK, most young British children now play with their toys in an American accent with the attendant syntax and grammatical structures. American teenagers have taken this disregard for grammatical form one step further and have almost abandoned syntax altogether. For example, a

¹⁸⁰ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 186

teenage girl might describe the time she met her new boyfriend by saying 'I looked at him and I was, like, whoa!' ¹⁸¹

What is an Americanism?

The first person to use the term Americanism was John Witherspoon, one of the early presidents of Princeton University. In 1781 he defined it as “*a use of phrases or terms, or a construction of sentences, even among persons of rank and education, different from the use of the same terms or phrases, or the construction of similar sentences in Great Britain.*”¹⁸²

An Americanism is a word or one of its meanings, which is currently used in American English and has a different equivalent in the British variety; a word which refers to something exclusively characteristic of American realia; a word which originated in American English but has since spread to other varieties of English; a word or an expression which originated in British English but is no longer used among the Brits, is extinct in the English of the British Isles, but is still used on the North American continent. Many Americanisms have been adopted by Brits and can be commonly heard on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁸³ English adventurers had penetrated the mystery of the North American continent and had brought back wonders – animals and plants unknown in England. America was reflected in the English language half a century before these first-hand contacts, however. The first word of American origin to reach English was *guaiacum*.¹⁸⁴ That word took a roundabout route from the Taino language of the Bahamas where it was used for a tropical plant and the medicine derived from its resin. When

¹⁸¹ Phillipson R., *Linguistic Imperialism*, Oxford University Press, 1991, Oxford. pp. 117-121

¹⁸² Mathews M. M., *The Beginnings of American English*, Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser, 1931, Chicago. p. 17

¹⁸³ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 28

¹⁸⁴ Finegan E. and Rickford R. J., *Language in the USA - Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, New York. p. 4

speakers of English began to arrive on American shores to create permanent settlements, they found themselves in a very diverse linguistic culture. Historians of the language have interpreted the evidence very selectively and have offered as evidence of cultural contacts among the many languages of early America the borrowings from indigenous languages that have survived into modern usage. *Chocolate, canoe, iguana, tobacco, tomato* and other such words from the Caribbean and known everywhere suggest wonderment at the novelty of the American landscape and the things found in it. As evidence of how early American English reveals the experience of English settlers, however, they give a skewed and misleading picture. Other similarly exotic words were used in English and then disappeared.¹⁸⁵

3.2 Lexical Influence of American English on British English

In order to attempt to understand how lexical items from one variety of English are being imported into another variety, one must first try to understand the processes of language change. America is reflected in the English language. The common myth in American society is that the English language is now following a single path of change under the irrepressible, homogenizing influence of mass media. The truth is that language is far too resourceful and social structure far too complicated to follow any single path. Change is one of the inevitable facts in the life of any language. People often assume that change begins with the upper class, modelling language for other social groups to follow. In fact, most language change starts subtly and unconsciously among middle-class speakers and spreads to other classes. People collectively pressure it to change in order to enhance its communicative efficiency. On the other side of language innovation lies resistance. Even when certain changes seem natural and reasonable, they are resisted by socially dominant classes. Higher-status groups may often suppress natural

¹⁸⁵ Baugh A.C. & Cable T., *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. pp. 368-370

changes taking place in lower-status groups to maintain their social distinction through language. Language change can spread via several paths. Can be that change starts in heavily populated metropolitan areas that serve as cultural focal points. From these areas, the change spreads to smaller cities and communities, affecting the rural areas lastly. But it's not always simply a matter of population dynamics. Sometimes expressions spread from its rural roots to larger urban areas rather than the converse. Sometimes the farther the location is from the site of the innovation, the later the change will take place. Language change is inevitable.¹⁸⁶ Because in the course of recent history Americans have acquired greater commercial, technical, and political importance, it is perhaps natural that the British and others should take a somewhat high-handed attitude toward American speech.¹⁸⁷ American English seems to affect all the other varieties of English, mostly due to the impact of show business as well as the economic and political influence of the United States around the world. There's a twofold influence of American English on British English: on the everyday vocabulary and on the vocabulary of functional varieties.

3.2.1 American Influence on Everyday Vocabulary

General View on American Influence on Everyday Vocabulary

British English has been extensively infiltrated by American usage, especially vocabulary. The transfer began quite a while ago, long before films, radio, and television were ever thought of, although they have certainly accelerated the process. Sir William Craigie, the editor of *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* says "for some two centuries . . . the passage of new words or senses

¹⁸⁶ Bauer L., *Watching English change: an introduction to the study of linguistic change in standard Englishes in the twentieth century*, Longman Publishing, 1994, New York. pp. 11-13

¹⁸⁷ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 186

across the Atlantic was regularly westwards ... with the nineteenth century ... the contrary current begins to set in, bearing with it many a piece of drift-wood to the shores of Britain, there to be picked up and incorporated in the structure of the language"¹⁸⁸ In recent years many Americanisms have been introduced into British usage: *cafeteria*, *cocktail*, *egghead*, *electrocute*, *fan* 'sports devotee,' *filling station*, *highbrow*, and *lowbrow*. Other Americanisms—forms, meanings, or combinations—appear in the writings of some authors on both sides of the Atlantic: *alibi* 'excuse,' *allergy* 'aversion' (and *allergic* 'averse'), *angle* 'viewpoint,' *blurb* 'publicity statement,' *breakdown* 'analysis,' *crash* 'collide,' *know-how*, *maybe*, *sales resistance*, *to go back on*, *to slip up*, *to stand up to*, *way of life*. *Fortnight* 'two consecutive weeks,' a Britishism to most Americans, is being replaced by American *two weeks*.¹⁸⁹ While American and British English show some differences in vocabulary related to many common activities, all evidence suggests that the two varieties of the language are moving closer together. The movement is mostly eastward. Each year, more words that were once exclusively American are found in the spoken and written language of both Britain and the U.S. H. W. Horwill, in his "Dictionary of Modern American Usage,"¹⁹⁰ notes a large number that have "become naturalized since the beginning of the present century," e.g., the compounds *hot-air*, *bed-rock*, *come-back*, *high-brow*, *jay-walker*, *round-up* and *foot-wear*, the simple nouns *crook* (a criminal), *boom*, *kick* (a powerful effect), *publicity* (advertising) and *conservatory* (musical), the verbs *to park* (automobile), *to rattle* and *to boom*, and the verb-phrases *to put across*, *to blow in* (to turn up), *to get away with*, *to make good*, *to get a move on*, *to put over* and *to turn down*; and an even larger number that are "apparently becoming naturalized," e.g., the compounds *bargain-counter*, *bell-boy*, *schedule-time*, *speed-way*, *chang-dish*, *carpet-bagger*, *come-down*, *joy-ride*, *hold-up*, *horse-sense*, *soap-box*, *frame-up*, *dance-hall*, *key-man*, *close-up*, *close-call*, *rough-house*, *gold-brick*, *log-rolling* and *money-to- burn*, the

¹⁸⁸ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 189

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*. p. 184

¹⁹⁰ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 179-180

simple nouns *rally, bromide, cub, cut* (in the sense of a reduction), *engineer* (locomotive), *fan* (enthusiast), *pep, machine* (political), *quitter, pull* (political), *pointer, mixer* and *cereal* (breakfast-food), the simple verbs *to ditch, to feature, to re (dismiss), to pass* (a dividend) and *to hustle*, the verb-phrases *to bank on, to get busy, to come to stay, to crowd out, to fall down (or for), to try out, to pick on, to hand-pick, to iron out, to see the light, to deliver the goods, to soft-pedal, to sand-bag, to sit up and take notice, to snow under, to stay put, to side-step, to side-track, to stand for and to win out*, and the miscellaneous idioms *good and, on the side, up to and up against*.¹⁹¹ American English has a marked tendency to use nouns as verbs such as *pressure, interview, advocate* and so on. Compounds such as *bandwagon, hitchhike* and hyphenated attributive adjectives like *for-profit, ready-for-all* are major influences. Many compound nouns such as *stop-over, add-on* and Americanisms formed by alteration of existing words like *phony, bossy, pry* are very productive. Native American loanwords such as *tomato, barbecue*; a large inventory of words designating real estate concepts like *outlands, apartment, backyard*; terms connected with the U.S. political institutions like *gubernatorial, filibuster*; transport and road infrastructure terminologies such as, *overpass, downtown, subway*; household words describing occupations such as *bartenders, bouncers; merger, downsize*, delisting from the world of finance and a lot of sports terminologies such as *Monday-morning quarterback, game plan* are great examples of how American influence has added to the English vocabulary. In this context we cannot ignore the hoards of slang word which have found their way into the vocabulary owing to American influence through movies and slangs. For example, *dumb* for stupid, *pass out* for die, *tube* for television, *shades* for sunglasses.¹⁹² These terms are often used at a colloquial level. A *Daily Mail* article on the analysis of 74,000 children's entries to a short story competition found that the written work was littered with such Americanisms as *garbage* (rubbish), *trash can* (dustbin), *sidewalk* (pavement), *candy* (sweets), *sneakers*

¹⁹¹ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. pp. 180-184

¹⁹² <http://beamingnotes.com/2013/06/29/americanism-or-the-influence-of-american-english-upon-british-english/>

(trainers), *soda* (fizzy drink), *smart* (clever), *cranky* (moody), and *flashlight* (torch). The *Daily Mail* prognosticated ominously that *the "future of written English will owe more to Hollywood films than Dickens or Shakespeare, if the findings of a study into children's writing are anything to go by"*.¹⁹³ It can be concluded that American influences has revitalized and invigorated British English and at the same time also caused impoverishments. American English which derives its linguistic legacy from the Queen's language is fast disseminating across the globe owing to America's cultural imperialism on a global scale due to its status as a super-power.

American Influence on Conversational Words, Phrases and Expressions

The American propensity to coin words and phrases dates back to the American Revolution. Americans invent more words and phrases in a month than other English speaking nations do in a year. Many believe it is this very inventiveness that has propelled American English past British English in worldwide popularity.¹⁹⁴ *Like* as a quotative — is one of the most influential ways of indicating speech which spread over the last 25 years. Twenty-five years ago, speakers who used *like*, as in, "*She's like, 'Don't leave the house!'*" were largely confined to Southern California and strongly associated with a stereotypical way of speaking. Today, the specialized use of *like* to introduce a quote (what linguists call the "quotative like") has spread in Britain and in many other countries where English is spoken.¹⁹⁵ There is an important difference between the *like* quotative and *say*. When people use *say*, they are making some sort of claim. With a *like* quotative, that claim of literalness is not necessarily there. Consider these two sentences: Tiffany said, "*I'm it. Look at me. I shine.*" Tiffany's *like*, "*I'm it. Look at*

¹⁹³ http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/13681#.U8hBOZR_tZ4

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/>

¹⁹⁵ [http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/Public Broadcasting Service \(PBS\)](http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/Public%20Broadcasting%20Service%20(PBS))

me. I shine.“ In the first one, the hearer assumes that the quoted material represents Tiffany’s exact words but in the second, there is no claim that Tiffany actually said those words. It is more likely that it was Tiffany’s attitude that the speaker wished to characterize. Sometimes the *like* quotative is used to express an “inner monologue,” representing what the speaker thought to herself/himself but did not actually say aloud. For example: *Then they all graduated, so I was like, “What am I gonna do now?”* This example would work with “I thought” or even “I’m thinking,” but not with “I said.”¹⁹⁶ In the 1940’s or so, a new quotative appears to have come into American English, namely *go*. He *goes*, “Do you know the make and the model of your phone?” She *goes* to me, “By the way, do you have the tickets?” At some point, probably in the 1970’s but possibly a decade earlier, people started using the *like* quotative. In the other context, *like* corresponds to “as if to say”: *We looked at each other like, “Where did everybody go?”* The rapidity with which the *like* quotative has spread throughout American English and through much of the rest of the world has led the sociolinguist William Labov to call it a “tsunami.”¹⁹⁷ It has gone in a quarter of a century from being virtually unknown to being the primary way for expressing speech for millions of younger Americans. The use of the *all* quotative is apparently spreading: Then, after a while, I was *all*, “See you later, good luck!” He was *all*, “I don’t know.” The use of the *all* quotative is apparently greatest in California. It seems to be the case that many highly salient features of American English today, particularly those that are associated with youth, originated in California and then spread to the rest of the country. To date, the *all* quotative is apparently only widespread in California and neighbouring states. It is a fact about language that it is always changing. From that perspective, neither the *like* quotative nor any other construction is certain to be a part of English forever.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/like/#1>

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/like/#like>

¹⁹⁸ Bauer L. and Trudgill P., edited by, *Language Myths*, Penguin Group, 1998, Suffolk. pp. 180-182

3.2.2 American Influence on Functional Varieties

Journalism - Broadcasting - Politics and Economics - Travelling and Transport

The English newspapers of wide circulation make a heavy use of Americanisms in their headlines and their more gossipy articles, and in the popular magazines a large number of the stories are set in American situations, or are at least written from an American viewpoint, in a semi-American language. *Help Wanted* advertisements are occasionally printed in English newspapers. The American *to phone* is now in general use, and "Hello" has displaced "Are you there?" as the standard telephone greeting. English journalists are ceasing to call themselves *pressmen*, and have begun to use the American *newspaper men*. They begin to write *editorials* instead of *leaders*. *To collide* is barred by many English newspapers, which prefer *to come in collision*. The same consideration influences English politicians too, and "a veteran Parliamentarian" was lately saying:

"Every time the House [of Commons] meets things are said in a phraseology that would shock and baffle Mr. Gladstone.... Even Mr. Baldwin, one of the few authorities on the King's English in the House, used in his speech yesterday the expressions *backslider*, *best-seller* and *party dog-fight*. I have heard him use *to deliver the goods*. The House is undoubtedly Americanized in some of its phrases. I have heard *whoopie* and *debunked* in the debating chamber, and *oh, yeah* and *you're telling me* in the lobby. *To pass the buck* is a well-known House expression and it is often used."¹⁹⁹

But before the great invasion of England by American movies, beginning in the first years of the World War, Americanisms commonly had to linger a long while before they were accepted, and even then they were sometimes changed in

¹⁹⁹ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p.180

meaning. The cases of *caucus* and *buncombe* are perhaps typical. The former, it was not until 1878 that it came into general use in England, and then, in the words of the Oxford Dictionary. In the United States it had the settled meaning of a meeting of some division, large or small, of a political or legislative body for the purpose of agreeing upon a united course of action in the main assembly, but in England it was applied to what we would call the *organization*. It was used by Benjamin Disraeli to designate the faction of Birmingham Liberals otherwise known as the Six Hundred, and in this sense was used thereafter by the Times and other English newspapers.²⁰⁰ *Caucuser* is a derivative invented in England; it is never used in the United States. Also *caucusdom*, which appeared in England in 1885.²⁰¹ *Buncombe* got into Standard English just as slowly as *caucus*, and suffered a change too, though it was of a different kind. The word has been in use in the United States since the beginning of the last two centuries but it did not come into general use in England until the late 1850's, and then its spelling was changed to *bunkum*. But when the American clipped form *bunk* arose toward the end of the World War it began to appear in England almost instantly, for it had the influence of the American movies behind it, and when the verb *to debunk* followed ten years later it got into use quite as quickly. Hundreds of other Americanisms have followed it, often in successful competition with English neologisms. The argot of English politics has naturalized many Americanisms beside *caucus* and *buncombe*. While American politicians '*ran*' for office, British politicians always '*stood*'. Now in Britain both words are used interchangeably.²⁰² In areas of technology that developed before the British settled "the colonies"—for example, sailing—the differences in vocabulary are minor because the new settlers brought the language with them. Technologies developed throughout the nineteenth century show the greatest vocabulary differences. For example, the vocabulary for rail and automotive

²⁰⁰ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 179

²⁰¹ Ibidem. p. 181

²⁰²<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1282449/Americanisms-swamping-English-wake-smell-coffee.html#ixzz36iFyq6lT>

transportation varies significantly: a car has a *hood* versus a *bonnet*, a *trunk* versus a *boot*. Everyone in the world learns American English because it is today's *lingua franca*. It's the principal means for disseminating ideas and getting work, as Latin used to be. People stopped using French when that country went into decline and lost influence in the nineteenth century, and it was the same story for British English in the twentieth.²⁰³ But neither language has disappeared, and neither is 'threatened' by American English. It's also worth remembering that as America declines, so will its influence and the importance of its language. No empire lasts for ever.

3.3 Extent of Influence of American English on British English

3.3.1 Influence of American English on British English – Fact or Fiction?

British and American started to become different when English speakers first set foot on American soil because the colonists found new things to talk about and also because they ceased to talk regularly with the people back home. The colonists changed English in their own unique way, but at the same time speakers in England were changing the language too, only in a different way from that of the colonists. As a result, over time the two varieties became increasingly different. American and British evolved in different ways. Both Americans and the British innovate in English pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. British people, however, tend to be more aware of American innovations than Americans are of British ones.²⁰⁴ The cause of that greater awareness may be a keener linguistic

²⁰³ West P., article at http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/13681#.U8jIR5R_tZ5

²⁰⁴ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. p. 183

sensitivity on the part of the British, or a more insular anxiety and hence irritation about influences from abroad, or the larger number of American speakers and their higher prominence in fields that require innovation, or perhaps the fact that present-day Americans have cultural rootlets all over the world and so are less aware of the British Isles. Perhaps Americans do innovate more; after all, there are four to five times as many English speakers in the United States as in the United Kingdom. So one might expect, on the basis of population size alone, four to five times as much innovation in American English. Moreover, Americans have been disproportionately active in certain technological fields, such as computer systems, that are hotbeds of lexical innovation. The result is a political, educational, economic, and artistic international gathering during which American words or phrases passed into the traditional standard of British English.²⁰⁵

3.3.2 Reasons of Influence of American English on British English

Although the United States is not, geographically-speaking, the colonial power that England was, it had some direct role before this century in exporting its own brand of English. It is in the current century that American English has made its mark internationally. Technology has virtually assured the dominance of American English on a scientific as well as a popular level. With a 250 million strong block of first language English speakers, and the rise of the United States as a military, industrial, and political superpower after World War II, Americans can certainly claim a prime responsibility for boosting English to world prominence. But, the world dominance of the United States rests partially on what the British had achieved in the 19th century. With as many theories as there have been on the divergence of the "two streams of English," it is still virtually impossible to

²⁰⁵ Algeo J., *Americans are Ruining English*, 1999, online article at <http://www.pbs.org/speak/ahead/change/ruining/#myth>

consider them separately or even sequentially.²⁰⁶ It is true that the use of English predates the European settlement of America, but it has gained impetus concurrently with the rise of the United States to international status, as well as with the rise of the United Kingdom to that same status.

The reason that there is so much American influence in British English is the result of the following:

- ❖ Magnitude of publishing industry in the U.S.
- ❖ Magnitude of mass media influence on a worldwide scale
- ❖ Appeal of American popular culture on language and habits worldwide
- ❖ International political and economic position of the U.S.

All these facts lead to the conclusion that new words and idioms usually originate in the U.S. and then become popular in so-called "worldwide English". This new situation is completely different from the birth of American English as a "variant" of British English. When America was still under the rule of the Crown, most idioms originated from British English sources. Of course there were American English expressions and idioms too, before American English could be defined as dialect of English.²⁰⁷ Where was the turning point? When did American culture take the leading role and start shaping the English language and especially idiomatic expressions? There is a lot of argument on this subject. Most claim that the real turning point was the Second World War. This could be the case. During the War English-speaking nations were united against a common enemy and the U.S. took the leading role. In these few years and a decade after the War American popular culture first established itself in British English. Again new idioms were created and old ones faded away. The Second World War was the turning point in

²⁰⁶ Crystal D., *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, Cambridge. p. 78

²⁰⁷ Algeo J., *The Origins and development of the English Language - sixth edition*, Wadsworth, 2010, Boston. pp. 492-493

many areas in life. This may also be the case in the development of the English language.

3.3.3 Debt of British English to American English

“Every Englishman listening to me now,” said Alistair Cooke in a radio broadcast from London,²⁰⁸ “uses thirty or forty Americanisms a day.” “We seem to offer less and less resistance,” said Professor W. E. Collinson of the University of Liverpool,²⁰⁹ “to the new importations.” “Creeping” is a favorite word of the British with respect to American influence on “their” language. It suggests a surreptitious intrusion by a criminal, a cat burglar violating the cozy domesticity of the Englishman’s castle. Even quite enlightened Englishmen are prone to adopt that attitude. Under the influence of American English the use of the subjunctive is creeping back into British English. American English, in which the subjunctive has never gone out of fashion, is apparently regarded as irrelevant. United Kingdom is on the verge of being inundated by a flood of Americanisms, drowning every true-blue Briton. Of course, there is a considerable influence by American English on British. After all, Americans outnumber Britons by some four to one and have been fairly active in science, technology, communication, entertainment, business, scholarship, and literature during the past fifty or so years. American influence on the language of the UK might therefore be thought of as a form of continuing lend-lease. H. L. Mencken, in 1930 gave Englishmen a glimpse of the future in an article on “What America Is Doing to Your Language” written for the London Daily Express where he observed:

²⁰⁸ Mencken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 232

²⁰⁹ Collinson W. E., *Contemporary English: a Personal Speech Record*, Teubner, 1927, Leipzig. p. 114.

“The Englishman, whether he knows it or not, is talking and writing more and more American.... In a few years it will probably be impossible for an Englishman to speak, or even to write, without using Americanisms, whether consciously or unconsciously. The influence of 125,000,000 people [now increased to about twice that number], practically all headed in one direction, is simply too great to be resisted by any minority [that is, the British], however resolute.”²¹⁰

The majority in the UK, is aware of American influence on the language of the Old, but very few people in either the UK or the US are equally aware of British influence on the language of the New World. Innovations spread in both directions across the Atlantic quickly and with little resistance (except on the part of those—mainly British—who feel threatened by new forms from the other land), so that it is often difficult to distinguish Briticisms (or Americanisms) from common English in current use. Third, dictionaries vary greatly in what expressions they label as Briticisms, and in general do a spotty job of such labeling. Few Americans are aware of the extent to which the UK is affecting their language but on the other hand American influence on British is obvious.²¹¹

3.3.4 Influence of American English on British English – Corruption or Normal Change?

In the 19th century when Noah Webster introduced the first American English dictionary and American English began to be regarded as a distinct variety of English, Americans were often accused of corrupting the English language by introducing new and unfamiliar words, when in fact, they continued to use terms

²¹⁰ Menken H. L., *The American Language*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2006, New York. p. 29

²¹¹ Algeo J., *The Briticisms Are Coming! How British English is Creeping into the American Language*, paper presented in 1990, University of Missouri, Columbia.

that had become obsolete in England. Perceiving the injustice of this, the Americans began to defend their use of English and demand parity for their speech with British English.²¹² British English is considered to be the more prestigious variety while American English is regarded as vulgar by many people. Despite this, American English is regarded as slower, clearer and easier to follow, while the 'slurred' quality of British speech makes it more difficult to understand. Until recently, American English was considered less educated, less cultured and less beautiful than British English, but with its status in media, international business, computing and science, American English has gained as a world language. Furthermore, American English is more accessible to a larger number of native and second language speakers and, naturally, this has made American English more international. In the early days, British travellers in the American colonies often commented on the 'purity' of the English spoken in the new world. It wasn't until the American impertinence of 1776 that Americans seem to have begun ruining English. Yet, as early as 1735, a British traveller in Georgia, Francis Moore, described the town of Savannah: 'It is about a mile and a quarter in circumference; it stands upon the flat of a hill, the bank of the river (which they in barbarous English call a *bluff*) is *steep*.' The Americans had taken an adjective of nautical and perhaps Dutch origin, meaning 'broad, flat and steep', to use as a noun for the sort of river bank that hardly existed in England and for which, consequently, earlier English had no name. In 1995, 260 years earlier, the Prince of Wales was reported by *The Times* as complaining to a British Council audience that American English is 'very corrupting.'²¹³ Particularly, he bemoaned the fact that '*people tend to invent all sorts of nouns and verbs and make words that shouldn't be.*' By this time the barbarous use of *bluff* for a steep bank had been civilized by being adopted into the usage of the motherland, but doubtless if the Prince had lived about nine generations earlier, he would have agreed with Francis Moore that *bluff* was a word that shouldn't be. The Prince concluded: '*We must act now to*

²¹² Baugh A.C. & Cable T. *A History of the English Language*, Routledge, 1993, London. p. 368

²¹³ <http://www.pbs.org/speak/ahead/change/ruining/>

insure that English – and that, to my way of thinking, means English English – maintains its position as the world language well into the next century.’ Languages are highly patterned cognitive systems. The plural of *mouse* – *mouses* – would have seemed unthinkable to any standard English speaker a few decades ago, but this regularized plural is now commonly used to refer to the hand-held computing device. Over time and place, language itself will pressure exceptions into conforming to dominant patterns. The term *holiday*, once limited to a religious event, now refers to any day away from work. In a similar way, the shape associated with the nautical vessel *submarine* was extended to refer to the fast-food sandwich based on the shape of the roll wrapped around the contents. The use of the word *like* to introduce a quote as in, “He’s like, What are you doing?” simply extends this grammatically versatile word, already used as a noun, verb, adverb, adjective and conjunction, to set off quoted statements. The human mind organizes language and uses it to communicate thought in a way that predisposes it to certain types of change.

In an article entitled “The emergence of Mid-Atlantic English in the European Union” (1997), Modiano claims that an Americanization of British English is currently taking place and that:

“Since World War II, and to a greater extent since the 1970s, the influence which AmE exerts on BrE is on the increase. While it does not threaten the existence of BrE, it signifies the direction in which the language is moving.”²¹⁴

This influence of American English on British English doesn’t threaten in any way the future of the English language in the United Kingdom because language change is inevitable and the only language not in a perpetual state of flux is a dead language. Language itself provides the seeds of change, and social circumstances

²¹⁴ Modiano M. & Söderlund M., *Swedish Upper Secondary School Students and their Attitudes towards AmE, BrE, and Mid-Atlantic English. Studies in Mid-Atlantic English*, HS-Institutionens, 2002, Gävle. p. 243

provide fertile ground for their growth and spread. In England, on the other hand, a perception that America is ruining the language pervades the discourse of the chattering classes. Indeed, a fair number of British intellectuals regard 'new', 'distasteful', and 'American' as synonymous. Change in language is, however, inevitable, just as it is in all other aspects of reality. Particular changes will be, in the eyes of one observer or another, improvements or degenerations. But judgements of what is beautiful or ugly, valuable or useless, barbarous or elegant, corrupting or improving are highly personal idiosyncratic ones.²¹⁵ We don't have to like particular changes, or even the fact of change itself. But a language or anything else that does not change is dead.

²¹⁵ <http://www.pbs.org/speak/ahead/change/ruining/#myth>

Conclusions

British English has been influenced by American English since the 17th century.

Despite their continuous existence separately, America and Britain have never really lost sight of a common standard of English, because of their political link, the common literary tradition, the common reading material, and the fact that the earliest lexicographers, the early dictionary editors in the United States came from New England. American English although it has exercised a greater influence on world English than any other variety, it seems to slowly lose its status as the dominant version. A good example in this direction is the situation of the Internet. According to David Crystal,²¹⁶ the Internet used to be 100 percent English, but nowadays it is down to something like 75 percent, and falling fast. It remains to be seen what happens in a few years' time. The reason why there will definitely not be a taking over by American English is that people use language not only to communicate, but also to express their social and personal identity. The language is in a constant state of motion. And unfortunately, there is no predictable direction for the changes that are taking place. Maybe American English will continue to influence other varieties of English. But it will remain a trickle, because while the British want to be able to talk intelligibly with Americans, they do not actually want to be Americans! In the contest between identity and intelligibility, identity wins.

²¹⁶ Crystal D., *Language and the Internet*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, Cambridge. p. 37

In my opinion the whole world witnesses the increasing unification of English towards the status of a world language, as English has some kind of special administrative status in over seventy countries, it achieves a special role when it is made a priority in a country's foreign-language teaching policy, and communication in the worlds of business and education is expected to be conducted in English. The answer to the question which arises in this case - what might happen to modern Standard English as it becomes global? – is that predictions are made towards a diglossic language – one with two quite different standards: one standard for everyday communication and another one for formal, especially written, communication.

The final conclusion is that the influence of American English on British English was much greater in the beginning, but nowadays words and phrases are filtered and everything useless, pompous, or simply fashion is to be eliminated. The more necessary an item proves to be, the more quickly it will be absorbed into the language and it will accommodate in such a manner that will not be perceived as an intruder anymore. British English will probably continue to be influenced by American English, especially as long as this influence is manifest in fields of activity where the lack of appropriate words and phrases demands it.

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